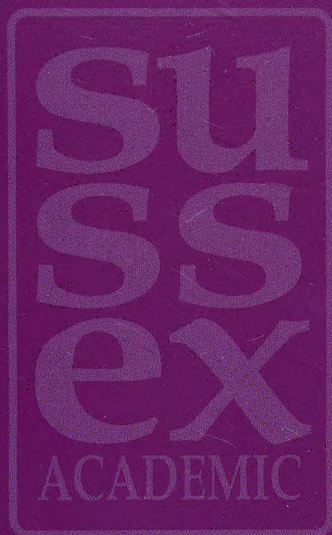# Israelis in Conflict

## HEGEMONIES, IDENTITIES AND CHALLENGES

### Edited by

## Adriana Kemp, David Newman, Uri Ram and Oren Yiftachel

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# Preface

In our globalized world, issues of identity and citizenship have become increasingly complex. The traditional boundaries linking the place of residence with a single national identity, determined in large part by the territorial compartmentalization of the post-Westphalian world, has broken down. Boundaries have become more permeable, with greater movement of people, goods and ideas. Within states, local and regional identities have come to the fore in tandem with global identities that traverse state boundaries. Movement of people has brought about greater social and cultural diversity within states as notions of multi-culturalism and national identity have taken on new meanings.

The impact of globalization and increased cultural heterogeneity have had a major impact on states whose identity has been defined in terms of a single, often socially constructed, allegiance to the state and a single hegemonic ideology. Agencies of state socialization are no longer able to impose their own versions of unchallenged state identity, as populations become increasingly aware of alternative and, in many cases, multi-identities to which they are all subject.

Nowhere are changing notions of identity more prevalent than in Israel, a country whose dominant (Jewish) society has been subject to understanding their past and present in terms of a single ideology of state formation, namely that of Zionism. The social construction of this dominant form of identity has been used as a means of creating social cohesion, often justifying acts on the part of the State with respect to its minority populations who are continually portrayed as presenting a collective threat. Internal schisms and divisions have tended to be wall-papered over in this search for a lowest denominator of national (Jewish) unity. In recent years, this single form of identity has been broken down, as Israeli society has become increasingly heterogeneous on the one hand, and more aware of the dilemma posed by this single notion of state identity for its minority population on the other. In addition the Arab-Palestinian minority, the voices and narratives of marginalized groups have come to the fore.

The chapters in this book, presented as part of a seminar series held at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev during 1997–98 on the topic of

"Citizenship and Identity in Contemporary Israel", discuss the diversity of identity narratives that are prevalent within Israel today. In addition to the Arab-Palestinian minority, the identities of Mizrahi, religious and gender groups are discussed, the relationship of these groups to the state, and the way in which they are presented, or ignored, as part of the general culture of socialization, literature and music. The book seeks to present the diversity of Israeli culture and society as the state continues into its second fifty years of existence. It attempts to raise the basic problems inherent in a diverse society, in which the state continues to define itself in terms of a homogeneous political and cultural entity.

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# Introduction: Hegemonic Identities

## David Newman and Uri Ram

### Prologue

One picture is worth a thousand words. The picture overleaf depicts the state of Israeli nationhood, or, if you will, the state of collective identity in Israel during the 1990s. Well, not directly so. In fact, it depicts the response of the state to what it perceives as a threat to its internal cohesiveness. The response is presented in an idealized manner, a manner laden with good intentions on the one hand, and replete with deceit, on the other. The poster is not displayed here because it 'speaks' the truth, but rather because the truth 'is spoken' through it. Rather than being a depiction of society, it should be read as a text authored from a specific position in society: the position of the challenged hegemony. Deciphering this picture will usher us into the topic of this book, namely "Israelis in conflict", and into the argument emerging from the book concerning the identities that challenge hegemony in Israel. The picture raises basic questions concerning Israel in its post-jubilee stage of development, especially those relating to notions of freedom, social justice and equality – lying at the very core of the jubilee concept – and the way in which they are expressed in daily practices and life experiences.

First things first. Who is the author of the poster and what is its purpose? The picture was published as a full page advertisement in Israeli daily newspapers during the country's 50th anniversary. It is signed by the "Minister for Social Affairs and the Diaspora, the Prime Minister's Office" and it declares that the theme for the fiftieth year of independence is "Different but Equal – Together in a Diverse Socio-Cultural Fabric". The text reads: "Despite the disagreements there must be an agreement about how to disagree".

So what is the message? The message embodied in both the graphics and the text is one of liberal pluralism: a plea for a benign way to live together despite disagreements; the message is one of a multi-cultural democracy, a plea for mutual understanding and acceptance among those who differ.

The first noticeable feature of the picture is its graphic style, which may be characterized as old-time naive realism, reminiscent of an old elementary-school textbook illustration. Had a contemporary graphics designer proposed such a style for any commercial advertisement, he would have been shown the door. This graphic style will not be found in mainstream Israeli newspapers, although it would appear in the papers published by the Orthodox and religious sectors of the population. This gives us some indication not only about the cultural location and source of these messages of 'unity', but also about the marginality and lack of sincerity with which the state itself relates to its 'unity' messages (as distinct from the practice of unity).

The picture depicts four figures holding together the flag of the State of Israel. The flag is in the center, and it is shared by all four equally. In the bottom left corner of the poster the flag appears again as a framed icon, the title of which dissolves any possible doubt that this is the "flag of the unity of different opinions". The four figures are depicted in a 'typical' or a stereotypical way. In a clockwise direction they represent four sectors in the population – the 'Arab' sector is represented by the man in the upper-right-hand corner, wearing a *kafiya* head cover; the Jewish secular Ashkenazi, middle class sector, is represented by the woman in the bottom-right-hand corner. Thus only one of the four figures in the picture is a woman (or rather the artist's fantasy of it). Indeed, this is the only one of the four groups in contemporary Israeli society in which women have the opportunity to play a role. Easily recognizable in the bottom left-hand corner is a figure, representing the 'religious-national' sector. He is dressed in the manner associated with the Jewish settlers: 'biblical' sandals, blue trousers and white shirt, together with the 'chupah' or canopy, itself possessing religious significance. In the upper left-hand corner of the flag appears the representative of Orthodox Judaism in Israel, with the typical black coat or gown and shtrymel. Incidentally, we see no eyes in the picture. The orthodox man doesn't want (is not allowed to) look at the blond woman facing him, while the Palestinian doesn't want to look at the settler opposite him.

So what do the people, the text and the sub-text, tell us? A deconstruction of the picture and its images enables us to arrive at several alternative understandings of the same narrative, none of which are meaningless in terms of current schisms in Israel:

1   One figure representing the 'elites'; and the remaining three representing the 'others'. Among the four figures only one represents the veteran elite of Israel (the woman). All the others represent groups which are increasingly challenging the hegemony exercised by the secular Ashkenazi identity – the identity of the elites. Yet, in a

reading of the text, the appearance of the women may represent global cultural influences, while the 'true believer' of old Zionism is the settler. His appearance – excluding the canopy – in fact emulates the old-time Labor pioneers.

2   Three Jews; one 'Arab'. In this narrative, hegemony is represented by the three Jewish figures, while only one figure, that of the Arab, represents 'the other' of the Zionist Jewish identity. The text is careful to relate to 'Arabs' – never to Palestinians. The state recognizes a minority of Arab individuals in its midst, not their national collectivity.

3   Two religious figures; one traditional; one secular. The two figures at the left end of the flag represent the Jewish religious sector: one is an Orthodox Jew, the other is national-religious. The 'Arab' figure is also 'traditional'. The woman represents secular Israel. According to this, two-thirds of Jewish Israel is religious, while only a third is secular, i.e., the country is run by a minority.

4   Three men; one woman. Looked at from a gender perspective we find that the picture grants men an overall domination by making them an absolute majority: three quarters. In addition, a close look reveals that the figure of the woman is positioned slightly further away from the flag, as compared to all three men. A cursory look reveals the notion of a 'secular woman' entertained by the author: blonde hair, black business suit, red high-heel shoes, someone representing the new economic and corporate elites of Israeli society.

So far, so clear. Different sectors, which compose various 'coalitions', all share the same flag, all are centered around the flag. This is the explicit 'truth' of the poster.

Let us now turn to some implicit 'untruths' portrayed by the picture. It begins in the title: "Despite disagreements . . .". The use of the term "disagreements" is a moderate description of the contemporary situation. Is this a new euphemism for fifty years of oppression and discrimination of the Arab population in Israel? "Disagreements"?! Is this a new euphemism for the violence and brutality inflicted by the Jewish settlers against Arabs and Jews? The title expresses the half-truth that "there must be a way to agree about how to disagree"; it 'forgets' that such a genuine accord can only be reached upon the basis of equal citizenship and full democracy. The poster does not promise to tackle this challenge. It deals with the superficial messages and rituals, rather than the structural issues themselves. And matters of inequality are glaring, even in this very poster. The author, as said, is the "Minister for Social Affairs and the Diaspora, the Prime Minister's Office". The "Diaspora" is, needless to say, the Jewish diaspora. The Palestinian dias-

pora – the refugees –are not related to by the Jewish state – yet the flag, the flag of the 'Jewish state' is 'equally shared' by Jews and Arabs, in the picture. Not only do Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel not identify with the flag, and other symbols of the Jewish State, but the picture reinforces the artificial construction of the notion of a separate national identity between Arabs (not 'Palestinians') who are citizens of Israel, and their Palestinian counterparts in the West Bank, Gaza and the refugee camps. The former are citizens of the state, the latter remain – at this point in time – stateless.

And more . . . We have seen that at the four corners of the flag are represented four sectors of Israeli society. One major 'sector' is missing – Mizrachi Jews (those Jews whose place of origin before migrating to Israel was in North Africa or Asia and who constitute the poorer and more underprivileged sectors of Israeli society). Mizrachi Jews are the 'present absentees' of Israeli politics. While being the major 'identity' group who 'challenged' Labor 'hegemony', and deposed it from power in 1977, via the instrument of the Likud party, and while being the electorate behind the most dynamic movement in Israel in the 1990s', Shas, Mizrachi identity is not only absent but has, until recently, been taboo in official Israeli discourse. The 'ethnic gap' is recognized in socioeconomic terms, and dealt with (or not) by state policies. The inter-Jewish ethnic split is perceived as a threat to Jewish national unity, the very justification of the Jewish state. So in the poster in front of us Mizrachi Jews are (once more) left out.

Such is the state of the Jewish state in its 50th anniversary. Hegemony is challenged by different identities, and responds half-heatedly with half-truths. The nation-state reigns, but is certainly challenged, raising questions concerning the monopoly of the state over the construction of identity.

## Globalization, Identity and Citizenship

In our globalized world, issues of identity and citizenship have become increasingly complex. Despite its unique history, Israel can, and must, be examined from a comparative perspective on the continuum of identity change which parallels the transition from a highly nationalist to post-nationalist society. This can be seen in a number of ways:

1. In the formative period of state formation, the creation of hegemonic ideologies are central to the way in which national belonging is defined. These ideologies are socially constructed through agencies such as the educational system, the media and other forms of public dissemination of information. The messages focus on the need for an

all-encompassing ideology, to which all – or most – of the population identify and demonstrate a basic allegiance and loyalty. Such messages relate to the very raison d'être of the state's existence, a common theme without which the pre-state struggle for independence, and the contemporary justification for continuing to exist as a self-defined nation state, would be difficult to uphold. Where states have come into being as a result of a struggle for independence, and/or where a state perceives itself as being under threat and in a state of existential danger, the socialized messages of a single ideology are all the more important, as states seek to construct the glue which will hold the population together as part of a common cause. Such hegemonic ideologies often reflect a lowest common denominator, building on a common fear of existential threat, while papering over the many internal differences – ethnic, economic, religious – which are ignored in preference for the 'common' good.

**2**. The impact of globalization, coupled with an increased awareness of cultural heterogeneity and the politics of identity that ensue, have had a major impact on states whose identity has traditionally been defined in terms of an exclusive, often socially constructed, allegiance to the state and a single hegemonic ideology. The traditional boundaries linking the place of residence with a single national identity are breaking down. Boundaries have become more permeable, with greater movement of people, goods and ideas. Within states, local and regional identities have come to the fore in tandem with global identities that traverse state boundaries. Movement of people has brought about greater social and cultural diversity within states while notions of multiculturalism have begun to compete with the hegemonies represented by exclusive national identities.

**3**. Agencies of state socialization are no longer able to impose their own versions of unchallenged state identity, as populations become increasingly aware of alternative and, in many cases, multi-identities with which they affiliate – wholly or partially – and as populations who were marginalized and peripheralized in the past become more aware of their rights as they undergo political and cultural empowerment. Not only are hegemonic ideologies socially constructed in the first place, but they also become increasingly out of touch with the realities of daily life, as social and demographic realities change over time. Institutional perceptions of 'what constitutes' the 'correct' ideology display a high degree of inertia, drawing on historical and national semantics and symbols as a means of expressing exclusive attachment and loyalty to the state.

Nowhere are changing notions of identity more prevalent than in Israel, a country whose dominant (Jewish) society has been subject to

understanding its past and present in terms of a single ideology of state formation, namely that of Zionism. The social construction of this dominant form of identity has been used as a means of creating social cohesion, often justifying acts on the part of the state with respect to its minority populations, some of whom are portrayed as presenting a collective threat. Internal schisms and divisions have tended to be wall-papered over in this search for a lowest denominator of national (Jewish) unity.

In recent years, this single form of identity has began to be broken down, as Israeli society has become more heterogeneous on the one hand, and more aware of the dilemma posed by this single notion of state identity for its minorities and marginalized populations on the other. This has paralleled the gradual empowerment of these populations who are increasingly demanding their fair share of power and resources within society.

There is also a growing cognitive dissonance between the hegemonic ideologies of the veteran state founder generation, with those of the younger residents of the country. The former, many of whom were holocaust survivors, had to fight for the establishment of a state. The latter were born into a reality of an existing state. The former still see themselves as part of an isolated and besieged entity, hated by the rest of the world. The latter perceive their geopolitical location differently, as part of a wider global marketplace, within which they can trade and travel freely and, for whom, ethnic differences are less significant than they were – and continue to be – for their parents and grandparents' generations. The latter seek a less rigid, less exclusive definition of citizenship and formal belonging to the political entity within which they reside, as defined by its territorial boundaries and state sovereignty.

## The Book

The collection of essays in this book deal with the emergent identities within contemporary Israeli society that are challenging the traditional hegemonies of the past fifty years. Most of the essays were originally presented as part of a seminar series held at Ben Gurion University of the Negev during 1997–8, as part of a multi-disciplinary debate organized by the Humphrey Center for Social Research on the topic of "Citizenship and Identity in Contemporary Israel". A common theme is that they all focus around the trilogy of citizenship, equality and identity in a country experiencing a dialectical relationship between a difficult transition from hegemonic state ethos to multi-cultural civil society on the one hand, and a strengthening of ethnonationalist sentiment and awareness on the other. The essays reiterate the identity

problem experienced by societies undergoing the transition to the first stages of post-nationalism.

The book represents a step away from much of the traditional analysis of Israeli society, not only in the topics it raises, but also in its multi-disciplinary scope which includes sociologists, political scientists, geographers, anthropologists and educationists. It crosses the traditional disciplinary boundaries much in the same way as its subject matter challenges the boundaries of what was considered acceptable or non-acceptable as part of the public discourse.

The book is divided into three parts – Hegemonies, Identities, and Challenges – but these are by no means exclusive. Most of the chapters deal with all three of these aspects. It is important to note that the sections cut through the specificity of any particular identity, be it Israeli, Palestinian, gender, mizrahi or immigrant, instead focusing on the process – hegemony, identity and/or challenge – underlying the analysis of that particular group. However the book is read, the central argument/theme remains the same, namely the challenges to hegemonic and socially constructed identities that are coming to the fore in contemporary Israeli society.

## Old and New Hegemonies

Israel is generally perceived, especially from the outside, as being a homogeneous, united society. At the very most, it is seen as being a country consisting of two national groups – Jews and Arabs – at conflict with each other. The raison d'être of the state is perceived by the vast majority of Jewish Israeli citizens as being focused around a single state ideology of Zionism At the very least, national unity (amongst the eighty or so percent of the population defined as Jewish) is perceived as being held together by common feelings of destiny and fear of existential threat, a socially constructed form of negative unity. The extent to which internal diversity, past or present, amongst this population has been a subject of analysis or discussion, it has usually been perceived as being relatively marginal to the overall theme of national unity and/or it has been perceived as a negative discourse undermining the very tenets of national unity and, as such, to be discouraged and rejected.

Israel has, during its short fifty years history, faced a structural dilemma in terms of its desire to be part of the western family of post-World War II democracies on the one hand, while maintaining an ethnonational ideological and institutional character on the other. The attempt to create a combination of the two has always been problematic. This problematic situation has been exacerbated by the existential dilemmas facing the state in terms of the Arab–Israel conflict, and hence,

the relationship of the state to its Arab-Palestinian minority. The notion that the Jews are a single, united people, despite their internal ethnic diversity, because they have a common cultural/religious tradition and/or because they face a common external threat from the neighboring countries, has constituted the socially constructed, ideologically imposed, hegemonic way of looking at the state since its inception.

The hegemonic ideology consisted of a number of key components:

- Israel is a Jewish State and, as such, is a homeland for Jews desiring to leave their countries of birth and residence and take up citizenship.
- Israel is in a state of existential threat, faced on all sides by hostile neighbors, and as such it is the duty of every (Jewish) citizen to take up arms in defense of the state.
- The Jewish population of the state, regardless of their background or geographic origins, constitute a single group, with common culture and beliefs, who have more in common with each other than with any other external group.
- Israel is, at one and the same time, a Jewish State and a democracy, such that the Arab-Palestinian minority population only have equal rights at the formal level, but not necessarily in practice.

Internal differences within Jewish society, such as that between the 'haves' and 'have nots', the Ashkenazi and the Mizrahi Jews, gender differences, and religious-secular animosities, were normally perceived as being no more than insignificant sub-constructs that would, over time, sort themselves out as society modernizes. All of these groups were seen as being party to the common struggle for existence, expected to rally to the call of the flag and the sound of the siren. When the ethnic differences and the economic gaps were posited as problems to be dealt with, they were, more often than not, relegated to secondary significance, often with the argument that "we have more important things to deal with right now", such as the defense of the boundary with Syria, or the suppression of the Intifada (Palestinian uprising).

The nature of the hegemonies is raised in a number of essays which appear in the first section of the book. In the opening essay, Uri Ram sets the tone for what follows by presenting a framework for the analysis of contemporary challenges to Zionism as the single state ethos of Israel. He draws on a dual focus of 'local' and 'global' as a means of categorizing the struggle for ideological hegemony in Israel as that between the neo-Zionist and post-Zionist discourses. The former represent the local neo-ethnic identities who focus on uniqueness and exclusivity and is, according to Ram, communal and inherently anti-democratic, as contrasted with the latter who are affected by post-national global

networks and form the core of a liberal civil society. The dual threat of fundamentalism and capitalism is typical of that faced by each and every nation-state in the contemporary world. States face a crisis of capacity, nations a crisis of legitimacy. The old national ethos of a homogeneous and unified nation state has been on the decline in Israel since the 1970s, becoming particularly evident during the past decade. Ram raises the question whether there is a third way, one which combines peace and social responsibility. He argues that this question should lie at the core of critical social studies in Israel during the era of global and local transformation.

In the economic, corporate sphere, Dani Filc discusses the principal features of the transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist hegemonic model. He elaborates on the changes in the Israeli health care system as an example of the neo-liberal reduction of the concept of citizenship. Filc argues that the classic, Fordist, Welfare state, with its inclusive mode of domination, allows the development of a new dimension of citizenship, namely social rights. The recommodification process that takes place in the transition to a neo-liberal, post-Fordist model limits, almost abrogates, the concept of social rights. Services that were traditionally provided as part of citizen rights become transformed into commodities that may, or may not, be purchased by the citizen, who is now seen as no more than a consumer. Neo-liberalism thus reduces citizenship to a combination of homo economicus and homo consumator. Filc's analysis of the recent changes in Israel's health policies demonstrates some of the ways in which the process of recommodification is taking place in Israel, and consequently, bringing about a reduction in the importance of citizenship.

In their study of the "de-Arabization of the Bedouin", Yonah, Abu-Saad and Kaplan offer a partial assessment of the efforts to separate the Bedouin Arabs of the Negev from Israel's Palestinian Arab National community, thus transforming them into a de-Arabized ethnic group loyal to the interests and institutions of the state. Focusing on Arab youth of the Negev, the authors show that despite the efforts to de-Arabize them, they have become pronouncedly alienated from the state of Israel and are increasingly perceiving themselves as an integral part of Israel's Arab Palestinian national minority. They argue that the failure of the state in this regard can be attributed to the fact that Israel's national identity is constructed in a manner that leaves little or no room for real integration of non-Jews and encourages discriminatory policies against them. Thus, the shift toward Palestinian national and cultural identity found among Bedouin youth can be partly explained as a result of their growing awareness of this political reality and their decreasing readiness to accept it.

The nature of Palestinian identity is further raised by Amal Jamal in

his study of the dynamics of Palestinian self representation. Using an essentialist/constructivist framework for his study, Jamal examines the transformations taking place in the construction of Palestinian national identity. He shows how during the first two decades in exile after 1948, Palestinians constructed their national identity as a monolithic entity, based on essentialist, stable and naturalist foundations. This later gave way to a more complex and multiple form of self identity, presented increasingly in antagonistic terms and countering the efforts made by the Palestinian national leadership to maintain its own hegemony over self representation. The process mirrors the growing differentiation amongst Palestinians and marks the failure of the national leadership to answer the growing political gaps between the different Palestinian communities, especially between those living in exile and the residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

## Rethinking Identities

The second section of the book deals with the way in which the notion of hegemonic and state constructed identities has been rethought in recent years. This process of rethinking focuses on diversity and hetere-ogeneity as compared with the traditional notions of uniqueness and homogeneity. Not only does the hegemonic ideology not speak to all constituent populations residing within the state, but also over time the state ethos has become increasingly out of touch with the belief systems of a growing number of the population. We can identify at least four major groups of citizens, all of whom are discussed in the book, who do not necessarily identify with the single ideology of Zionism as consti-tuting the raison d'être for the existence of the state:

1   Groups that have been disenfranchised within the Jewish collective – such as the Mizrahi population, women, ultra-orthodox – but have undergone a process of empowerment in recent years and are demanding more say in the corridors of power and amongst the decision making elites.
2   Palestinian-Arab community, making up nearly twenty percent of the citizen population of the state, but who have been disenfran-chised – economically, politically and socially with respect to the Jewish majority and who, for many Israelis, can not be full members of the Jewish State.
3   Third and fourth generation Israelis, born into the reality of a state which no longer faces the threat of extinction, and are also part of a globalized generation of citizens who are much more aware and cognizant of the realities of an outside world. They realize that

Israel is not beleaguered or isolated, and refuse to accept the impo-
sition of an exclusive, isolationist state ideology as being of major
relevance to their daily lives.
4    Immigrant populations, notably nearly one million Russians, who
have arrived in Israel during the past decade, many of whom do not
identify with Zionism as a state ideology with which they auto-
matically express an unquestioning loyalty.

The process through which identities are rethought, and eventually
challenged, can be seen from two complementary perspectives. In the
first instance, the social construction of internal homogeneity is seen as
being historically contingent and imposed by the power elites who were
influential in establishing the state in the first place, and who have
continued to dominate the corridors of power (political, economic and
social) ever since. Thus, historically, there has been an attempt to wall-
paper over the cracks of ethnic diversity that already existed (in terms
of the Jewish population) and to exclude additional national groups (in
terms of the Palestinian population). The second perspective focuses on
the present, rather than the historical, presenting Israel as a country
which, even were we to reject the arguments based on historically
contingent social construction of artificial homogeneity, has become
increasingly heterogeneous during the past decade, as new groups join
the population through migration (Russians, Ethiopians), and as other
groups who have traditionally been disenfranchised (Mizrahim,
Palestinians, orthodox) undergo processes of empowerment and
demand their equal rights as citizens in a civil society.

In addition to the religious/national and the corporate/economic, the
concept of hegemony in Israel has also been strongly associated with a
territorial discourse. The formation of national identity is often tied in
with a sense of attachment and belonging to a 'national territory'.
Notions of 'homeland" and 'territorial hearth' play a major role in the
way in which national identity is constructed and maintained, and
explains the extent to which national groups are often prepared to go in
order to defend their home territory against any form of alternative
claim. Territory is imbued with symbols, myths and historical signifi-
cance as part of the process of territorial socialization that is promoted
by the state and its agencies of education. In his essay, Newman shows
how Zionism has been closely linked with the notion of territorial exclu-
siveness and attachment as a central part of the process of state
formation. These notions became even stronger following the Six Day
War and the occupation of the West Bank which, for some, constitute
the very heartland of the national territory. Drawing on Ram's distinc-
tion between neo-Zionism and Post-Zionism, Newman argues that the
national identity of Neo-Zionist groups of the right have placed terri-

tory, particularly the notion of a Greater Israel, at the very core of their ideology and, as such, are unable to face the notion of territorial withdrawal or compromise as part of a negotiated Israeli–Palestinian peace process. In his chapter, Newman argues that despite the relevance of the post-nationalism discourse to the contemporary Israeli experience, it is nevertheless unable to adequately deal with the territorial component of national identity. The Zionist *raison d'être* of the state on the one hand, and the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict on the other, prevent this specific post-nationalism discourse from taking on the trappings of a deterritoralized and borderless socio-spatial entity.

The rethinking of Palestinian identities is discussed in the chapters by Ahmad Sa'di and Dan Rabinowitz. Sa'di's study of the "identity of resistance" explores the conceptual field used for the analysis of the national identity of the Palestinian minority in Israel. While in the hegemonic discourse a highly subjectivized notion of identity has been employed, outside the mainstream a diversity of concepts have been introduced that explore the impact of various inter-subjective factors on identity formation. The interface of politics and social research on identity is discussed as Palestinian identification has become, for many Israeli policy makers and mainstream academics, a short cut for characterizing the political orientations of Palestinians. In addition to a critical analysis of existing debates, Sa'di proposes alternative concepts for a scholarly understanding of Palestinian identity, including the impact of the inter-subjective experience of different generations and the self-othering as a strategy of avoiding the dilemmas that Palestinian identity in Israel entails.

The notion of the Palestinian citizens of Israel as constituting "trapped minorities" is analyzed by Dan Rabinowitz. Such minorities are marginalized twice since they are absent from the mother nation and are also a minority (or alien) within their state of residence. The predicament of such trapped minorities is discussed within the context of the contemporary discourses on globalization and trans-nationalism. Rabinowitz argues that the combination of territorial shrinkage, weakening of the state and globalization have exposed the intricate relationships that link the Palestinian communities of the West Bank and Gaza with those in Israel, Jordan and elsewhere. As such, the entrapment of the Palestinian citizens of Israel no longer seems as deep as in the past.

Immigrant identities are the subject of Lisa Anteby-Yemini's chapter. This is of particular interest given the hegemonic focus on Israel as a melting pot for all (Jewish) immigrants, regardless of their place of origin. In her comparative study of Russian and Ethiopian immigrants who have arrived in Israel during the past decade, Anteby-Yemini discusses the ways in which each of these groups has undergone a process of partial integration, and how this process is closely linked to

the modes of segregation practiced by each group. It is not always clear whether segregation, social and spatial, is an outcome of an unwillingness, or inability, to integrate into the host society, or whether the inability to integrate is a direct outcome of the preference of migrant groups to practice tight segregation. She argues that a growing number of the "olim" population are becoming transmigrants, resembling deterritorialized populations in other parts of the world, and that the notion of "post-Zionization of the olim" is simply a form of "Israelization" that allows immigrants to participate in the public sphere and integrate into the local civil society while undermining the cultural and hegemonic domination of Zionism as the state ethos, thus suggesting an alternative way of constructing Israeli nationhood.

The final two chapters of **Part II** deal with the way that emerging identities are expressed and come to the fore. Motzafi-Haller discusses the place of Mizrahi women – a case of double marginality – in Israeli academic discourse. She shows how the marginality of this group in society as a whole is also reflected in the relatively small attention they are afforded in research on Israeli society. She argues that mainstream feminist discourse continues to ignore the Mizrahi population, although modern scholarship has began to replace the openly paternalistic studies carried out during the previous decades. A small but growing Mizrahi feminist discourse is beginning to place Mizrahi women at the center, but there remain serious problems concerning the way in which knowledge about marginal groups is constructed within Israeli academia.

A very different type of discourse is that discussed by Motti Regev in his study of the way that the ideology of nationalism is expressed through art. Regev argues that while the use and consumption of art is supposed to evoke the deepest emotions and strongest feelings of attachment and belonging to the nation as a community, the universal character of art, spurred on by the globalization of culture in recent years, has exerted a strong challenge on the unique and singular dimensions of this national form of expression. Using Israeli rock music as an example, Regev argues that contemporary artists attempt to combine the uniqueness of their collective identity (usually the nation) with the universal developments and innovations in their own specific art form. Within the Israeli context, there is an attempt to preserve a sense of "Israeliness" while, at the same time, a desire to create music that is in line with contemporary trends in global rock. The music provides a major contemporary cultural tool for the construction of these identities using such strategies as "rock as-such", "imitation", and "hybridity". Regev argues that rock aesthetics in Israel, especially the strategy of "hybridity", has been critical in the construction of Israeli music cultures as major tools for sustaining an experience of

Israeliness that is perceived by its participants to be part of contemporary global culture.

## Emergent Challenges

The process through which groups rethink their identities engenders greater awareness and self empowerment and, hence, active mobilization in challenging the hegemonic identities and their related power structures. The disenfranchisement of the country's Mizrahi population is taken up in the chapter by Yiftachel and Tzfadia. Their chapter focuses its empirical investigation on Israel's peripheral and economically deprived 'development towns', which were established during the 1950s and have been mainly inhabited by low income Mizrahi ('eastern') Jews. It examines the links between the construction of an Ashkenazi (Jewish 'western') 'ethnocracy' in Israel, its cultural, spatial and economic development policies, and processes of political mobilization and identity transformation among residents of the towns. The data show that although persistent anti-governmental protest activity did take place in the towns, it did not seriously challenge the Israeli regime, despite decades of deprivation. The nature of Mizrahi urban protest thus reflects their 'trapping' at the margin of the Israeli ethnocratic regime. This 'trapping' is expressed by their weakness *vis-à-vis* an expanding state and its Ashkenazi elites, and the lack of meaningful space for mobilization from which to challenge their structural predicament. The 'trapping' of peripheral Mizrahim manifests in their long-term position as a *marginalized ethno-class* within Israeli-Jewish society.

In her chapter on "absent voices", Hanna Herzog examines how Palestinian women, another case of double marginality, who are Israeli citizens struggle with the tensions which are the result of negating locations in the State of Israel, in the wide Palestinian national community and within the local national community. Based on 50 in-depth interviews with Palestinian women who are members of various peace organizations, Herzog reveals these women as social actors who critically examine the dominant discourse on peace, citizenship, national boundaries, ethno-cultural codes and the gendered regime. The study underlines the split between the women's everyday life and the dominant cultural frames. While negotiating with Israeli dominant perceptions of citizenship a multi-tier discourse of citizenship emerges. Palestinian women challenge the Israeli nation-state conception of citizenship and call for the incorporation of Israeli Palestinians. Peace, for them, is not only peace between states or representative of states but also between the state and its citizens, and between the citizens and their

communities. Whereas the dominant discourse emphasizes work in joint organizations as an expression of equality, the Palestinian women proposed an alternative, multicultural, discourse, reflected in the demand for work in separate organizations as an expression of equality and mutual recognition and respect. Though they positioned themselves in the Palestinian national community they simultaneously create a border between the Israeli Palestinian community and the Palestinians in the territories.

Unlike the other groups discussed in this collection of essays, the disenchanted youth of the country are largely to be found amongst the elites and the center, rather than the margins and the periphery. As such they represent the classic middle class concern with civil society and quality of life issues as sources of challenging the traditional national and security concerns of their parent generation. In the one essay in this collection to address these issues, Ben Eliezer discusses the rise of civil protest in Israel during the past decade. He shows how, prior to this period, notions of protest were limited to groups concerned with issues of peace, security and the national conflict, and that while these issues remain central to much of the Israeli public discourse, there has nevertheless been a transformation in the nature of protest and self organization during the past decade and that this is likely to become even stronger as Israel slowly undergoes a process of conflict resolution on the one hand, and, on the other, the younger generations are affected by the global and corporate marketplace.

In contrast with those who have migrated to Israel as part of the policy favoring Jewish migration from anywhere in the world, Israel is also experiencing its own version of migrant labor who do not possess the same civil rights and privileges. The emergence of these new minorities is discussed in the chapter by Kemp, Raijman, Resnik and Shamah in their case study of black African migrant workers in Israel. Drawing on the experience of immigrant receiving societies in America and Western Europe as their framework for analysis, they argue that there is no such thing as temporary migrant workers. These "temporary migrants" become permanent residents even against the official 'will' of their host countries', giving rise to the emergence of new ethnic communities which call into question the limits of membership and citizenship in these western states. Since Israel is a relative 'latecomer' to the group of labor importing states, it provides a useful laboratory for the study of new ethnic minorities and their modes of incorporation and participation into the host society and polity. Their comparative study of African and Latin American migrant workers shows that the unwillingness to accept immigrants who do not belong to the ethnic nation is expressed through a double standard policy consisting of an exclusionary model for non-Jews and an acceptance-encouragement model for Jews.

Notwithstanding the predominance of the linkage between the citizenship and the 'dominant Nation state', questions are being raised as to whether the formation of non-Jewish ethnic communities of guest workers can bring about a redefinition of the limits of membership in the State of Israel.

## Awareness, Knowledge and Discourse

The essays raise questions confronting a society that is faced with an awareness of growing internal diversity and empowerment, but whose state apparatus desires, at the same time, to maintain its ideological hegemony through a single state ethos. A debate that began as part of a fringe academic discourse has now moved into the center of the public arena, and has broken beyond the boundaries of the academic ivory towers to the real day life activities of power brokers and policy makers, at both the local and national level. It raises interesting questions concerning the social construction of knowledge, the historical contingency of power and the relationship between the two. During the past decade, notions of pluralism, ethnocracy, post-Zionism, Palestinianism, to name but some of them, which were initially rejected as illegitimate subjects for discourse, and then were begrudgingly accepted as the discourse of the radical left, have gradually infiltrated their way into mainstream academia as well as the non-ivory tower public discourse and debate. The way in which hegemonies, identities and challenges are displayed in both academic and public discourse, together with the nature of awareness through which marginal groups locate themselves along the societal continuum and undergo parallel processes of empowerment, are constant themes in many of the essays in the book.

In concluding, a note of caution is necessary. Israel is, at present, undergoing a dynamic of change. The old hegemonies are being challenged but they have not disappeared. Though they are being challenged in both academic and public discourse, the concrete political challenges are only just beginning to be heard and to make a mark. The dissolution of the Histadrut, the partial abolishment of obligatory national service, the political role and influence of the Shas party, the candidacy of a Palestinian citizen for the post of prime Minister (in 1999) and the collective absence of the Palestinian citizens of the country from the polling booth in the elections of February 2001 and January 2003, are the first indications that the challenges presented by the discourse are being translated into action. The very fact that members of the political elite increasingly feel the need to publicly debate and attempt to reject or negate the significance of the emergent chal-

lenges to the state ethos and hegemony is itself a sign that the public discourse is undergoing a process of change. But this is still a far way from a redistribution of power away from the traditional elites, who continue to control the reins of the major sources of social, political and economic power in the country.

# Hegemonies

# From National to Post-National Territorial Identities in Israel-Palestine

David Newman

This chapter attempts to refocus the identity discourse in Israel around notions of territory. In particular, it is an attempt to link some of the recent conceptual work on notions of reterritorialization and the spatial configurations of power with some of the empirical evidence on post-nationalism in general, and post-Zionism in particular. The final section of the chapter contrasts the territorial dimensions of neo- and post-Zionist ideologies. It is argued that while the neo-Zionist territorial ideology is strongly rooted in the historic and symbolic discourse, the post-Zionist discourse is characterized by a transition, at best, to an instrumentalist discussion of territory – the spatial compartment within which power is organized and citizenship derived – and, at the worst, ignores the issue of territory altogether. The lack of an adequate territorial analysis is, in the view of the author, a major problem in all analyses of post-nationalism, and this is equally reflected in the evolving debate over post-Zionism within Israel-Palestine.

## Territory, Boundaries and the Formation of National Identity

Recent discussions of the role of territory and boundaries in a post-Westphalian world have assumed an almost mystical disappearance of the nation state along with its territorial compartments that make up the world political map. Notions of a 'borderless world' and political 'deterritorialization' have been posited as signaling a new world order in which the territorial component in world affairs is no longer of any importance, or at the least has become greatly diminished in the formation of national identities (Guehenno 1995; Ohmae 1995). But territory continues to play a central role in the social and spatial configurations of contemporary statehood. This is not only reflected in the concrete

dimensions of the shape and size of the state, how boundaries are demarcated and the strategic or economic importance of any particular piece of territory, but also the way in which territory has been, and continues to be, an essential part of the process through which national identity is formed and constructed.

The compartmentalization of the world into Nation states has constituted the normative means of territorial organization since the Treaty of Westphalia. The notion of territorial fixation through state boundaries and territorial sovereignty, by which each state acknowledges the right of the Other to undertake its own rule within its respective territory, has been the accepted mode of territorial power. Empires and colonial powers have exported this notion of territorial fixation to other non-European regions, thus leaving in their wake a form of territorial organization which has not always corresponded to the identity spaces within which nomadic and tribal groups carry out their daily life activities and with which they identify. But even nomadic groups, like their settled counterparts, identify with core areas akin to a form of homeland territory, margins which represent the transition zones between their own territory and the territory of the Other, and have formed an identity around the mythical and sacred sites within the territory they regard as their own. The political organization of these groups, like states, is focused around these identity territories, prepared to defend the territory and its contents from any outside intervention or invasion which would challenge the territorial integrity of the group.

In recent years, processes of globalization have brought with them the 'end of nation state' argument which assumes a deterritorialization of the world political order, a disappearance of the Westphalian state system and a transition to a borderless world. Traditional forms of boundary are, according to this argument, rendered meaningless, as information, economic flows and migrant workers all cross the boundary which no longer acts as a barrier to these movements. At the same time, the world is experiencing a process of reterritorialization, a process of spatial reconfiguration, as territorial compartments retain their importance at a variety of spatial scales, ranging from the global to the local. State boundaries remain important inasmuch as they determine the citizenship rights of individuals, regardless of whether citizenship coincides with group or national identity. The political organization of a post-Westphalian space remains very territorial, albeit the notion of territory becoming hierarchical and multi-dimensional, rather than simply reflecting the lines which separate states on maps. Processes of reterritorialization and the increased permeability of boundaries are more relevant in the area of economic and information globalization than they are in the formation and continued demarcation of ethno-territorial boundaries.

The 'end of boundaries' and a borderless world that accompanies the 'end of the nation state' discourse is both discipline and cultural specific. It is a discourse which is rooted in the economic focus on globalization (Ohmae 1995; Shapiro and Alker 1996) and the notion that capital and corporatism know no boundaries, as well as the impact of cyberspace and the dissemination of information which flow freely across and through boundaries (Brunn et al 1994; Brunn 1999; Morley and Robins 1995). Although notions of the 'borderless world' are closely linked to notions of globalization, the discourse is also rooted in the Western European and North American experiences, locations where the integration of markets and the technological advances in information dissemination have made significant regional impacts. But these same conditions do not always apply to other world regions, notably in Africa and large parts of Asia, such that even globalization is geographically differentiated in that its impact is not necessarily global.

But beyond the economic and information discourse, territorial lines of demarcation retain a strong influence in the continued institutionalization of compartmentalized national identities (Newman 2000; 2001). The concept of shared spaces may be in vogue in Western Europe, but national identities remain strong barriers to ultimate European integration, while notions of boundary removal in other parts of the world, especially those regions where ethnic and territorial conflicts continue to be played out with much force, such as in Israel/Palestine, are simply irrelevant. It is worth noting that in the so-called 'borderless world,' forty new land boundaries have been created since 1989. The barrier function of territorial boundaries, particularly as they relate to the transfer of capital, the flow of information and, to a smaller extent, the free movement of workers, may be much more permeable than in the past, but the identity functions of these territorial lines as places of separation, of national inclusion and exclusion, at both micro and macro levels of spatial activity, remain strongly in place.

Groups continue to fight over their right to control that territory which, they believe, constitutes the very heart of their homeland territory, a territory without which the national group would no longer derive its legitimacy for self-government and sovereignty. Territory and borders remain central to the spatial (re)configuration of political power as the world political map undergoes significant changes as a result of globalization on the one hand, and the break up of the Soviet Union on the other. In some cases, the territorial reordering of the world political map is accompanied by the growth and consolidation of new ethnoterritorial identities, rather than their disappearance, thus giving rise to new states, new boundaries and new nation state configurations. For others, particularly those outside the Western European and North American borderless ecumene, ethno-territoriality continues to be the

major factor around which the spatial configuration of the state and the demarcation of boundaries is determined.

These trends are reflected in the Israel–Palestine contested spatial arena and are expressed in both the internal nationalism post-nationalism dialogue amongst Israeli citizens of the state, as well as the Israeli–Palestinian dialogue aimed at bringing about national conflict resolution. To a certain extent, the outcome of one (the internal dialogue) determines the approaches brought to the other (the external dialogue), with the latter being modified as power hegemonies within Israel undergo change. Territory has played a major role in the formation of Israeli-Jewish national identities. At the symbolic level, it represents the ancient core of the 'homeland' territory, deriving its source from the Biblical narratives and from the historical experience of the ancient Israelite peoples. At the tangible level, the physical extent of the political territory of the state encloses the area within which sovereignty and control are exercised, settlements are constructed, security is provided and demographic hegemony is maintained. This chapter discusses the way in which territorial knowledge has been, and continues to be, constructed through processes of political and territorial socialization, both in the pre-state Diaspora period as well as the period of statehood, aimed at creating a bond between a people and a particular piece of land. This bond is strengthened and weakened at one and the same time. It is strengthened through the institutional agencies of the state, while in some cases it is even transformed into a form of territorial religion, narrative by those groups who are not prepared to compromise and who insist on retaining every centimeter of land of the 'ancient homeland.' But the attachment to exclusive homeland territory is also weakened as a result of conflict resolution and a willingness to undertake territorial withdrawal from places and spaces which form part of the national historical territorial hearth. As Israel moves from a national (Zionist) to post-National (post-Zionist) phase of societal development, so too do territorial ideologies match these phases of transformations. The national identity of neo-Zionists become focused even more strongly around territory in their struggle to retain hold over a dream that is gradually disappearing, while the citizenship identity of post-Zionists views territory as a constraining element, although by no means irrelevant, in its movement towards non-exclusive forms of binational participation. Thus territories and identities are experiencing parallel and related processes of reconfiguration as part of the contemporary dynamics of Israeli society and space.

At both the conceptual (national/post-national) and empirical (Zionist/post-Zionist) levels of analysis, this paper rejects the polarized notions of 'borderless world' versus 'exclusive nationalism' alternatives. Instead, we recognize a continuum between the two polarities

along which different levels of globalization and, by association, spatial and territorial compartmentalization are relevant for different societies and groups within different time and space contexts. In line with Kelly (1999) it rejects the political orthodoxy of neoliberal globalization and its automatic association with such notions of borderlessness and deter-ritorialization and argues for a 'relational view of scale' through which the territorial dimension of group and national identities are located within the continued dynamics of societal change. This is parallel to the notion of "nested identities" (Herb 1999; Kaplan 1999; Knight 1999), in that the impact of globalization in 'opening' boundaries and making them more permeable to all sorts of trans-boundary movement means that the individual defines him/her self through a hierarchy of both social and spatial identities ranging from the family group to the national collective, and from the neighborhood to the state and supra-state territories. Territorial reconfiguration, partly – but not entirely – brought about through globalization, and the interplay between terri-torial irredentism and territorial pragmatism will be critical to our understanding of the relative role of territory in continuing to shape the diverse and hierarchical identities of individuals and groups who define themselves along the continuum of Zionism, ranging from the neo-Zionist to post-Zionist polarities. As such, the discussion will focus on the dual dimensions of boundaries, namely the physical lines which separate territories and are continually being reconfigured, as well as the 'meaning' of boundaries as the metaphor by which territorial iden-tities and notions of territorial exclusion and inclusion retain their importance even in a globalized world (Sibley 1995; Paasi 1996b; 1999; Newman 2002; Newman and Paasi 1998).

## Territory and Homeland: The Discourse of Zionism

The formation of national identity is strongly tied in with territory. The link between nationalist aspirations for self-government, autonomy or sovereignty and the eventual formation of a state is dependent on the parallel formation of a national territory, defined as 'homeland.' The homeland is a territory within which the historical evolution of the group took place, within which place and space take on supernatural dimensions and whose territory is perceived as being more important than the territory of the 'Other.' The homeland territory is, more often than not, the area within which the national group is resident, where they constitute the entire, or at least the dominant, population group, and around which they desire to demarcate their territorial boundaries.

The State of Israel, as defined as a 'Jewish' State, has, as its formative raison d'être, a territorial ideology, namely Zionism. The concept of

Zion became synonymous with abstract notions of homeland which were later to form the basis of national identity and state formation. It is impossible to understand the birth of Zionism as a modern nationalist movement without recourse to the ongoing processes of territorial socialization and territorial indoctrination which were an integral part of the diaspora narratives. Such narratives were particularly predominant in religious texts and practice, whereby religious precepts took on a specific territorial focus. Notions such as the 'promised land,' the 'mythical Jerusalem,' and the more abstract notion of 'Zion' were all part of this narrative, while the formalization of religious observance and precepts attributed special importance to those precepts that could only be observed or put into practice by people residing in the 'special' territory, namely the 'Land of Israel.'

Boundaries of state do not always coincide with boundaries of national identity (Hooson 1994; Knight 1982; 1994; Newman 2001). The concept of the nation state, not to be automatically confused with the Westphalian state, was such that the territorial configuration of sovereignty coincided with the geographic dispersion of people belonging to the national group, often constituting the justification for claims by national groups to sovereignty over that specific area (Burghardt 1973; Murphy 1990; 1996). But realpolitik dictated that most states, at least from a functional perspective, became binational and multinational, with more than one national group residing within the given boundaries, while in other cases the national group was dispersed across the state boundaries, often constituting significant minority populations within neighboring territorial compartments. Nevertheless, the concept of homeland territory meant that even for those populations not physically residing within the state, there was a territorial focus which continued to act as a spatial core around which national identity was, and continues to be, formed. Citizenship of an alternative state does not automatically create an alternative territorial identity, although the extent to which the existence of minority national groups within the territorial homeland of the 'Other' gives rise to political stability or instability is largely dependent on the extent on which democratic means of ethnic cooptation replace imposed forms of coercion, allowing minority groups to take a full and equal part in the life of the state within which they reside.

Where the territorial boundaries of the state are used as the means of political compartmentalization through which control is imposed upon minority groups (Taylor 1994; Yiftachel 1991; 1998), the latter will often seek to secede from the state and, where the geographic conditions are such, to promote irredentist policies aimed at transferring the minority ethnic territory to that of the neighboring state as part of an exercise that would entail the redrawing of the boundaries and the creation of a

greater coincidence between the boundaries of national identity and the territorial boundaries of the nation state.

It is, however, more common for populations to be transferred through processes of ethnic cleansing, as a means of creating territorial homogeneity and 'purity,' rather than for the boundaries of the state to be redemarcated in accordance with the ethno-territorial realities. This assumes, a priori, ethnopolitical situations in which minorities are excluded, or at the very least feel excluded, from the system of government and representation and/or the equal allocation of public resources. The inherent contradiction in international law, which recognizes the right of ethnic and national groups to self determination while, at the same time, rejecting the automatic right of secession from the state, itself gives rise to many of the ethno-territorial tensions which result in coercive forms of control and, in extreme cases, the transfer or forced expulsion of the population as part of the process of ethno-territorial cleansing.

Demography is tied up with the territorial discourse in Israel. The basic notion that a 'Jewish' state means the maintenance of a Jewish majority within the boundaries of the state is central to most political thinking – of the right and the left alike. The fact that the West Bank was never annexed to Israel even by the most right-wing of governments because of the 'demographic dilemma,' the constructed fear of Palestinian refugee repatriation, and the fact that some extreme parties, such as the outlawed Kach party of Meir Kahane and the Moledet ('Homeland') party of Rehavam Zeevi promote population 'transfer' is all part of the attempt to create a homogeneous territorial entity in which the boundaries of the state coincide with the boundaries of national identity of the people who reside within this territorial compartment.

The West Bank is, in this case, exceptional in that while the rights of self determination apply to the Palestinian population residing therein, the territory in question does not have any formal sovereign status – it is neither part of Israel or of neighboring Jordan. It is a territory 'whose jurisdiction is yet to be decided.' As such, the inherent contradiction between the right of self-determination and the right of secession does not apply in the case of the West Bank and, as such, from an international legal perspective it is much simpler to recognize an alternative Palestinian sovereignty within this territory. The perceptual boundaries of future Palestinian statehood are slowly being reconfigured and becoming identified with the territorial boundaries of the West Bank, despite the fact that this is less than thirty percent of Mandate Palestine.

From this perspective, homeland territories remain a major element on the contemporary world map. Political control of a particular territory remains closely tied up with the notion of national identity and the turf of the 'self,' in which the ethnic other is, at the best, afforded the

right to reside, while, at the worst, is excluded, both socially and spatially. The renewed formation of nation, or nation-dominant, states in the ex-Soviet Union, in Yugoslavia, the Czech and Slovak republics, as well as the so-called fourth world states of Western Europe (such as the Basques, the Catalonians, the Scottish) focus on renewed notions of homeland at the local and intra-state level, while at the same time enjoying the benefits of economic and information globalization in a world whose boundaries have become more permeable. Homeland territories remain the key element through which political identities continue to be configured and lie at the very heart of the contemporary processes of territorial reconfiguration of political power.

The homeland narrative was an abstract one. It presented the territory as utopian, possessing qualities which had little to do with the reality of a semi-arid region in the Middle East. Homeland was something to be attained in a future, Messianic era and, as such, it was an imagined homeland in which the past myths and historical narratives of a people undergoing formation were to be expressed through a 'return' to the ancestral territory. It was a place in which the 'exiles would be ingathered' into a single territorial compartment, and in which national aspirations of sovereignty would be realized. It was an exclusive territory in which the 'Other' simply did not exist, or at the very least would be 'allowed' to reside providing they accepted the rule of the majority.

## The Social Construction of Territorial Identity

The inculcation of a territorial identity is an integral part of the process of political socialization. Together with territorial practice, notably the agents of planning control, perceptions of territorial identity and belonging are strengthened amongst national and ethnic groups (Yiftachel 1991; Shnell 1994; Rabinowitz 1997). This may be as a direct result of the constructed processes of socialization (Jews in Israel) as it is a reaction against policies of control aimed at excluding certain groups from the territory they perceive as belonging to them (Palestinian citizens of Israel). The relationship of territory, boundaries and identity is a constructed process, often used by the agencies of the state in strengthening the notions of homeland and territorial belonging on the part of the constituent population who are expected to retain a loyalty to the state (Paasi 1995; 1996a). As indicated above, the process through which concepts of territory were an integral part of the creation of religious narrative, strengthening the bonding between a Diaspora people and an abstract homeland, were central to the pre-state formation of national identity (Davies 1982; Sickler 1992; Newman 1998b;

1999b). This was reflected in the reading of Scriptural texts and the interpretation of these texts in religious and theological polemics, all of which served to place the 'Land of Israel' territory on a higher pedestal than all other territories, including those within which the people studying these texts resided at any point in time. In a sense, one could argue that this was a form of territorial narrative which crossed state boundaries and formed part of a pre-technological globalized cyberspace in which information and knowledge were disseminated to an identity group – Jews – regardless of their geographical location. Jews were, by definition, an a-territorial group, linked by ties of common religion and custom, but not by place. An orthodox Jew then, as today, had more in common with an orthodox Jew elsewhere in the world than with any non-Jewish neighbor he/she and his/her family have lived with for centuries. The notion of territory, the 'promised land' played a role in religious practice (at least for the very few that actually resided in that territory) but was not central to the formation, and maintenance, of a common people identity. But, paradoxically, at the same time, the utopian and abstract notion of a 'national territory' was an important part of the socialization cement for which Jews, often a persecuted minority, yearned. Thus, while territory did not play any role in the daily life experience of hundreds of Jewish communities scattered throughout the world, it did play a role in the formation of a single identity that went beyond the confines of religion and which, at the end of the nineteenth century, provided an important component of the growth of Jewish territorial nationalism – namely, Zionism.

The precise borders of this homeland territory were unclear. The scriptural description of the real extent of the national territory varied from maximal demarcations that stretched from the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris in the northeast as far south as the River Nile, encompassing much of the Middle East. Minimalist territorial descriptions focused on the Levant heartland and the spaces and places within which the ancient Israelite kingdoms are thought to have existed, today's West Bank constituting the geographical core of this region. One territorial description of the 'national homeland' is that which determines the geographical extent of the area as being 'any place where your foot treads,' thus leaving the eventual concrete manifestation of contemporary state boundaries open to virtually any form of definition.

This abstract notion of territory, with a clear territorial focus but with undetermined and undefined margins and boundaries, was summed up in the notion of 'Zion.' Adopted by other religions and cults, the concept of Zion became a keyword for the utopian territory, the spiritual homeland and heartland of the religious/national experience. Zion became the abstract notion of territorial yearning for Diaspora Jewry. The use of the term 'Zionism' as the name given to the contemporary

movement of Jewish nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century draws strongly on this abstract and metaphysical notion of 'Zion.'

The process through which territory constitutes a central part of political socialization is continued through the contemporary period via the agencies of state. The teaching of history and geography place a major emphasis on notions of homeland territory as a means through which contemporary claims to territorial control and sovereignty are justified to pupils faced with contested claims to territory and, in defense of which, they are obligated to serve in the army and, perhaps, lay down their lives (Bar Gal 1993). Until the term was hijacked by an extreme right wing political party, the name 'Moledet' (literally translated: 'homeland') was the name of a subject taught at schools throughout Israel, including geography, history, hiking and cementing a bond between the students and the land.

The precise delineation of boundaries, while constituting part of this process, is less important than the process through which a territorial bonding is created, imbuing place with a sense of historical and mythical meaning. Places of historical and archaeological significance take on modern political connotations, to the extent that the practice of geography, history and archaeology itself becomes part of the process through which scientific research justifies the interests of the state in determining primordial attachment of 'our' people to the land, thus strengthening even further the contemporary claims for territorial control and sovereignty.

The naming of places as part of the process of state formation also plays a major role in the creation of identity landscapes. Imagined Biblical territories of the past are transformed into concrete, living, territories of the present, thus forging the link between historical myth and contemporary political reality. The reality of Israeli hegemony, coupled with the out-migration of Palestinian refugees, left in its wake tens of deserted Palestinian villages, most of which were erased and have been replaced by Israeli-Jewish communities bearing Biblical or modern Zionist names in their place (Cohen and Kliot 1981; 1992; Benvenisti 2000). This has been termed alternatively as the "hebraization" (Benvenisti 1988) or "Israelization" (Falah 1989) and "designification" (Falah 1996) of the contemporary human landscape of this region, while Sa'di (2004) discusses these ideas as part of the politics of archaeology and naming. Most Israelis are completely unaware of the alternative territorial identities which underlie the very places in which they live, viewing such alternative claims as false and part of a process of political propaganda aimed at driving them out of what they perceive as their exclusive homeland.

Maps and cartography take central stage in the process of territorial socialization (Wood 1993; Black 1997; Herb 1997). While Israeli and

Palestinian maps of the region may show the same external boundaries – the Mediterranean Sea in the west, the Jordan River in the east – the text within these boundaries is entirely different. They each include the places and spaces of the self, while excluding the places and spaces of the Other. They include historical sites and mythical narratives of places which played a role in the formation of national identity, while denying a place for the historical myths of the Other. Israeli schoolchildren are taught history and geography with maps of the ancient Israelite kingdoms and of the modern Zionist enterprise, while maps depicting the two thousand year interim period are barely mentioned. Official maps do not show the green line boundary which separated Israel from the West Bank between 1949–67, despite the continued administrative presence of this boundary and the fact that different laws apply to the residents of the two separate territories. Maps are also used as a means of depicting the smallness of the state relative to its neighbors, the strategic threat emanating from the pre-1967 boundaries or from the Golan Heights, and so on (Newman 1999a). As texts, the display of maps constitute a powerful image both in the strengthening of national identity through the linking of Biblical and historical sites to contemporary Israel, and as a means of focusing on the perceived importance of retaining as much territory as possible if the state is to maintain its strategic superiority.

The formation of territorial national identities assumes, implicitly, a form of exclusive attachment to space and place. Territories imbued with the myths of the nation belong exclusively to that nation. Alternative claims are, at best, of only secondary importance, and, at worst, false. Thus, in a state, such as Israel, where ethno-territorial conflict remains part of the daily political agenda, counter claims to territorial control take on an existential dimension. Territory belongs to 'us' or the 'other,' but not to be shared. Notions of a democratic bi-nationalism in which two national groups reside, equally, on the same territory, sharing political power, is largely unacceptable to the majority of people on both sides of the conflict – Israelis and Palestinians – including those who desire peace and reconciliation between the two peoples. The creation of separate states is, for the majority, preferable to the sharing of space, however difficult the implementation of the process of separate territorial configuration and boundary demarcation may actually be (Newman 1996; 1998a). For those groups, to whom the notion of separate territories is unacceptable because their own national identity is tied up with places and spaces located in the state belonging to the 'Other' (such as the relationship of West Bank settlers to historical and Biblical sites in a Palestinian West Bank State, or Palestinian refugees and their descendants for their homes in pre-1949 Palestine), the alternative political options (assuming bi-nationalism is not an

option) are to either maintain political control through force, or to insti-
gate ethno-territorial cleansing through the physical removal of the
'Other' group. The use of 'polite' terms, such as "voluntary transfer" of
population, such as that used by the Moledet Party in Israel, can not hide
the basic desire to instigate a process of ethno-territorial change through
which the Israel territory will be transformed into an ethno-homoge-
neous space.

Thus, ethno-territorial separation is based on a pragmatic desire to
achieve conflict resolution and greater personal security, but does not,
for either group, mean surrendering the ideological attachment to
places central to the self-determined process of national identity forma-
tion. Hermann and Newman (1999) note that the rhetoric of territorial
symbolism is an effective tool for stating one's case under conditions of
heightened conflict, but it is relegated to secondary significance under
conditions of conflict resolution. In the latter case, it is the concrete argu-
ments, especially those relating to security and strategic issues, that
carry far greater public consensus than do the historic/religious argu-
ments (Newman 1999b). Contemporary instances of ethno-territorial
conflict, be they Israel–Palestine, Bosnia, Kosovo or Cyprus, all high-
light this basic problem of the inability to optimize the demarcation of
territorial boundaries with the desired boundaries of national identity.
The alternative options in all cases are threefold: either instigate popu-
lation transfer (ethnic cleansing), create a bi-national shared democratic
space, or, as is normally the case, draw boundaries around which new
minorities and new ethno-territorial tensions are created.

## National and Post-National Territorial Identities

We automatically assume that nationalism as a socio-political ideology
is a territorial ideology, inasmuch as the formation of national identity
is focused on notions of homeland, and that attaining statehood and
sovereignty requires a 'national territory.' It is, however, unclear to
what extent post-nationalism assumes an equal territorial detachment,
excepting the abstract idea that the globe constitutes the single territory
for a post-national world. The internal discourse of the national group
reflects diverse territorial ideologies. As Israeli society undergoes
internal change it has also become more polarized. There has been, at
one and the same time, an increase in right wing territorial irredentism
and nationalism on the one hand, and, at the same time, a growth of
what has euphemistically become known as post-Zionism on the other.
For some, post-Zionism means the reformulation of the state of all of its
citizens, regardless of ethnic, religious or national origin or identity and,
as such, may be related to the wider notions of post-nationalism and the

'end of the nation state' thesis. But for much of the eighty percent Jewish population, even a state which adopts a more pluralistic, less Zionist ethos, remains a well defined social and national entity, a state which was created as a Jewish homeland (with the concept of 'Jewish' being defined as a broad cultural and historic construct, rather than narrowly defined in religious terms) for a specific people. The socially constructed cement holding this diverse eighty percent of the state's citizens together has been the threat emanating from outside the country's borders – an essentially negative definition of a state ethos. As Israel approaches a post-conflict era, the citizens of the state are required to reformulate their senses of identity and belonging, by defining what the state 'is,' rather than what it is 'not.' It is at this level, a refocusing of national identity away from conflict and perceived existential threat, that requires an all-inclusive definition of citizenship as part of a post-Zionist paradigm, to include not only the diverse strands of the Jewish population, but the Arab-Palestinian, and other non-Jewish minorities, as well.

This reformulation of identity and citizenship is, in turn, reflected in two contrasting approaches to the role of territory as constituting a central part of the national discourse. Applying notions of nationalism (with a strong territorial focus) and post-nationalism (with perceived notions of deterritorialization of state power) to Israel, the parallel notions of neo-Zionism and post-Zionism (Ram 1996) do not, by definition, reflect a transition from a territorial ideology to a non-territorial ideology. The territorial emphasis is diminished in the latter, but does not necessarily disappear altogether. The notion of 'a state of all its citizens,' as contrasted with a 'Jewish state,' is one in which the territorial dimension of political identity is reconfigured but does not disappear, precisely because, as mentioned above, post-Zionism remains a nationalist ideology for the eighty percent Jewish population of the state. At the center of the continuum the notion of 'pragmatic Zionism' (some would argue that this is a contradiction in terms) remains the default national ideology of the major part of the Jewish citizenry of this territory. Only an all-inclusive definition of a post-conflict state, to include the Arab-Palestinian minority, can reformulate the territorial configuration of the state in such a way that would point to shared places and spaces, with neither claiming exclusive territorial control over all, or part, of the area. The final section of this chapter explores the territorial dimensions of the two polarities – neo- and post- Zionism. It does not in any way reflect a definitive statement, but rather poses questions for further elaboration and discussion.

## Territorial Irredentism: the West Bank Settler Movement

Territorial identity is a central tenet of the West Bank settler movement. The capture of this territory in 1967 was perceived, by them, as being no more than a further stage in the process of national redemption, whereby the national homeland territory was being 'returned' to and 'liberated' by its ancient owners. The creation of the Gush Emunim movement in the mid-1970s was aimed at preventing any future territorial withdrawal from this region through the practical means of settlement colonization and hence the (re)creation of a bond between the people and the homeland territory (Sprinzak 1985; Lustick 1988; Newman 1986; 1998b; Newman and Hermann 1992). Their ideology was implemented through practical means, not least the establishment of settlements/colonies throughout the West Bank as a means of expanding their territorial control in the 'historic heartland' (Newman 1984; 1985). The identity of religious Zionists, of which Gush Emunim was the flag bearer, is closely tied up with that of the West Bank, even more so than some more densely populated areas of contemporary Israel, such as the Tel Aviv metropolitan region.

This group argues that territorial withdrawal from the West Bank, the 'heart' of ancient Zion, an abstract term which became associated with the yearning for the ancient homeland during two thousand years of Diaspora history and ritual (Newman 1998b), negates the Zionist claim to any part of the territory, including Tel Aviv and the coastal plain. From the perspective of Zionism as constituting the very source of the territorial socialization process through which national identity has undergone its formative stages of evolution, this claim is perceived as being ideologically 'pure,' certainly for as long as the pragmatic considerations of political realities and the existence of another national group laying claim to the same territory is ignored.

In the case of the West Bank settlers, the process of territorial socialization is transformed into a process of territorial indoctrination (Shilhav 1985). Despite the fact that the ideological hard core of the settler movement, the Gush Emunim movement and their offshoot organizations, base their claims to the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) around notions of the 'promised' land for the 'chosen' people. For many, territory has become the very core element of their ideology, having replaced other religious precepts as the very foundation stone around which their religious and national affiliation is based (Newman 1998b). Their inherent 'right' to settle the West Bank is seen as part of a Divine process, of which pre-1967 Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 were stages through which abstract and metaphysical notions of space have been transformed into concrete notions of statehood following two thousand years of exile and territorial dislocation,

and through which the 'homeland' territory has returned to its 'rightful owner,' and been 'liberated' from foreign control. In their prayers, neo-Zionists bless the State of Israel as constituting the 'beginnings of the redemptive process.' Thus the establishment of the state, with its tangible boundaries, did not bring about the transformation of the abstract notions of homeland territory to more pragmatic notions of contemporary statehood. The social construction of territorial knowledge, based on biblical and historical narrative, continued to play a central role in the formation and strengthening of national identity, even amongst younger generations who were born into an existing reality of a state and sovereignty. Contested territories between Israelis and Palestinians has meant that the process through which mythical spaces continue to form a central part of identity formation are strengthened, rather than diluted, through the agencies of the state itself and its institutional and educational practices.

The semantics of space indicate the strong level of territorial attachment. As such, the West Bank is Judea and Samaria, the territory was liberated, rather than occupied or conquered, in 1967, the names of virtually all the Jewish settlements are renamed after the ancient Biblical and Israelite sites that are supposed to have been in or around their current locations, while the names of some West Bank cities and towns, even if they are populated entirely by Palestinian residents, are known by their Hebrew names (Shechem, Hebron) rather than their Arabic names (Nablus, Al-Khalil). Landscape is exclusive; it is a Hebrew landscape, while the national identity of two million Palestinian residents of the region – almost the entire residential population – is totally ignored. Within the realm of national identity, the landscape of the 'Other' simply does not exist. The obliteration of the previous Arab-Palestinian landscape which existed in Israel prior to the refugee outflow in 1948–9, was part of the process through which the landscape underwent a transition of identity. The practices through which this occurred – at both the concrete and symbolic levels – are well brought out by Meron Benvenisti (Benvenisti 2000) in his discussion of landscape change. Practices used include renaming, remapping, as well as contested academic discourses between geographers, historians and archaeologists, all of whom use their findings to 'prove' that the landscape belongs to a particular group, based on historic presence and ownership claims.

The settler movement draws on a combination of symbolic and concrete dimensions of the territorial argument as a means of gaining public support for their irredentist stance. While it is the symbolic, namely the religious and historical associations of territory, which form the core of their territorial ideology, it is the concrete dimensions, particularly the perceived security and strategic characteristics, of the area in question that are used as part of the public discourse. While the seman-

tics of religious attachment and Divine promise of land are only relevant to those groups within Israeli society for whom religion is a normative concept, the strategic and defense dimensions of territory speak to a much wider audience (Hermann and Newman 1999). Notions such as the retention of defensible borders, strategic upland areas, and security bypass roads are concepts with which all can identify, as contrasted with the language of religion, which is relevant to a much smaller proportion of the population, and not all of whom (ultra-orthodox non-Zionists) have adopted the territorial ideology of neo-Zionism. That does not mean to say that for a large sector of the population the historical and emotional attachment to territory plays no part in the formation of their national identity and determination to 'defend the land,' but for them the existence of a state, with fixed boundaries and a strong army, is a sufficient component through which national identity has become transformed into statehood. The precise determination of these boundaries, to include or exclude additional areas such as the West Bank is not, for them, a sufficient reason to prolong the conflict or to deny the national aspirations of the Palestinians, so long as territorial withdrawal from these areas does not clash with their perceptions of what is necessary for national security and defense.

For the ideological hard core of the settler population, identity has become so tied up with territory that there are some, albeit a minority, who have stated their preference of remaining in situ and living under Palestinian Authority rather than evacuate their place of residence, or even unilaterally set up an alternative state by the name of Judea if, and when, Israel were to withdraw from the remainder of the West Bank. During periods of Israeli–Palestinian negotiations, it has become common practice for the spiritual leaders of the Neo-Zionist movement to make public declarations against the 'surrender' of territory to foreign rule, arguing that this is against the 'Divine plan' and therefore negates Gods' law. At the ideological level, the signing of the interim Israeli–Palestinian agreements, from the first Oslo Agreement in 1993 and through to the Wye and Sharem Agreements in 1998 and 1999 respectively, have signaled the 'end of the Greater Israel dream,' constituting an ideological crisis for those for whom territory lies at the very heart of their national identity and struggle for complete hegemony. At the concrete level, the establishment of settlements throughout the West Bank coupled with the fact that Israeli negotiators have been unable to relocate or evacuate these settlements as part of the interim Agreements for fear of internal violence and opposition on the part of the settlers, has brought about territorial reconfiguration of the respective Israeli and Palestinian national territories, a process which, at the time of writing, has yet to undergo its final stages.

Thus, neo-Zionism displays a strong link between religious and fundamentalist beliefs and practices of ultra-nationalism. As religions and Divine promises are exclusive, so too are territories. If a territory is 'promised' to one people by a divine being, then it cannot be open to claims by others. If territory is 'liberated' by its 'rightful' owners in a 'miraculous' war, it cannot be given up by human decision (not even by a democratically elected majority parliament). If a territory takes on 'holy' or 'sacred' dimensions, this, for the neo-Zionists, is proof that all other territories and spaces are less significant. And if a certain people are self-defined as 'chosen,' this means that all other peoples are less important. As such, neo-Zionism as an ideology appeals to the very gut instincts of an ultra-nationalist ideology that is displayed through a variety of social, political and territorial practices.

As such, the neo-Zionist approach to territory is one in which territory becomes a fetishism, takes predominance over all other ideological components and is totally exclusive in the sense of belonging and ownership. It is an ideology that, by its very nature, is conflictual and does not allow for compromise. It is presented here not as a valid alternative to territorial reconfiguration within a post-national Israel, but as the opposite end of the continuum to that of a Statist territorial ideology, such as that posited by other groups, both mainstream and left of center, within the Israeli collective. For the neo-Zionists, territory has become the central focus around which their notions of nationalism, state, citizenship and belonging are based. For other groups, to be outlined in the next section, territory constitutes an instrumental framework within which national belonging and citizenship can take place, but which is subject to change and modification according to the realities of the changing geopolitical situation.

## Post-Zionism: Rethinking the Territorial Link

Drawing on notions of globalization and post-nationalism, Ram (1996) has argued that the struggle for ideological hegemony within Israel has refocused around the contrasting perspectives of neo-Zionism and post-Zionism (Silberstein 1999). The neo-Zionist camp constitutes the territorial maximalists and irredentists for whom territory remains central in their social construction of national and ethnic identity, with the most extreme manifestations being those of Gush Emunim and the West Bank settlers. For its part, some definitions of post-Zionism are subsumed within general ideas of post-nationalism, in which the national construct of group identity is diminished, although does not necessarily disappear altogether. Post-nationalism is tied up with notions of territorial reconfiguration and decentralization of power

away from the exclusive concern of the state and its institutions, the rights of the citizens based on residence rather than national, ethnic or religious identity, and the potential for trans-boundary movement and shared citizenship. As such, the post-Zionism construct assumes a diminishing of Zionism as the key factor determining identity and, by association, group and individual rights. It refocuses the debate around notions of residency and citizenship, through which residents of the region – be they Jewish, Israeli, Moslem or Palestinian (or any self defined combination of these) – have rights by virtue of their geographic location, as contrasted with the rights of those who belong to the national or religious group but reside elsewhere (notably, Jews in the Diaspora) but whose citizenship rights are derived in other countries and political entities.

In territorial terms, post-nationalism and its post-Zionist sub-construct as discussed here, are not, by definition, a-territorial ideologies, if only because in the post-Westphalian era and the reterritorialization of the world political map, bounded territories – be they local, state, regional or global – remain the basic spatial compartments within which life is ordered and controlled. In formal terms, the existence of a system of democracy, in which the accepted practices of democracy are carried out (such as the freedom of speech, the right to participate in elections, the right to a fair trial, and so on) take place as part of the state framework and are, as such, territorial in nature. But this does not have to be the case when extended to wider definitions of democracy which do not focus exclusively on the practices and agencies of the state, but include wider, non-territorial issues, such as human rights, freedom to act as an individual and to associate with any form of religious, social or ethnic group – whether they be part of the state consensus or not – and the right to security, not in the military sense, but in terms of the right to employment, food and sustenance. At the same time, the decrease in the extent to which territory plays a major, or minor, role in the formation of group identities is reflected in a parallel decrease in the intensity of territorial symbolism as constituting one of the key factors in the social construction of group identity. As such, the territorial configuration of statehood and sovereignty constitutes an instrumental approach by which the territorial boundaries of the state play an important role by default, rather than constituting the central element around which national identity and belonging is constructed. Boundaries are subject to change as a result of peace negotiations and territorial compromise. Equally, boundaries could be removed altogether under a scenario of a single binational state.

Contextually, the Israel–Palestine peace process, accompanied by territorial withdrawal from parts of the West Bank by Israel, is indicative of the victory of a pragmatic territorial policy over an irredentist

one. While for proponents of a Greater Israel this has been described as the shattering of their territorial dream, the converse is not, by definition, true. In their comparative analysis of Gush Emunim and Peace Now, Newman and Hermann (1992) discuss the relative importance of territory for each of the groups, but do not conclude from this that because the pro-peace camp favors territorial withdrawal, that the territorial component of their national identity becomes insignificant. Indeed, since the territorial debate for these groups takes place entirely within the 'concrete' paradigm (namely, the demarcation of boundaries, the delimitation of security zones, the control over water resources, etc), the territorial component remains as strong, if not stronger, in the spatial imaginations and practices of much of the pro-peace groups – although their respective territorial configurations are very different to those of the neo-Zionists.

The territorial dimensions of post-nationalism are problematic. It is important to distinguish between notions of identity, tied up as they are with symbolism, semantics and homeland socialization, with an instrumental approach to territory. The latter recognizes the fact that even in a globalized world, territory remains the spatial compartment within which citizenship and rights of the individual are defined. The physical configuration may change, but place of birth and/or residence (in some cases accompanied by a process of formal naturalization) determine the formal affiliation. For a small elite, there may be the luxury of dual or multiple citizenship, but this is still a far cry from a theorized form of global citizenship. Post-Zionism attempts to transform the political discourse from one which concerns the control of territory to one which places a greater emphasis on the control of people. But since the organization of political power does not take place in a deterritorialized world, there is only reterritorialization and spatial reconfiguration of power, the territorial focus, to the extent that it is recognized at all, switches from the symbolic to the instrumental, in most cases determined by place of birth. Territory remains central to the definition of sovereignty and citizenship but it is part of a Statist, pragmatic, approach, rather than a symbolic form of socially constructed identity.

But for post-nationalists in general, and post-Zionists in particular, this creates a second problem which remains unresolved. If, for many post-Zionists, Israel also has to rid itself of its colonial past, then the rights of citizenship as determined by place of birth do not automatically apply to second, third and even fourth generation descendants of European colonial settlers. If post-Zionism rejects the colonial nature of the Zionist enterprise, not just in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but throughout Israel/Palestine, then it is logical to argue that all Jewish residents who are no more than second or third generation immigrants should return to the place of origin, much in the same way as descen-

dants of British colonizers in sub-Saharan Africa and India, or French colonizers in North Africa, were forced to do as a result of decolonization. This structural paradox, namely the desire to create a more egalitarian citizenship regime within the 'homeland' territory, despite the fact that it is not recognized as constituting a symbolic or historical 'homeland,' probably explains why the post-Zionist discourse has not dealt with the territorial issue beyond the specific territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip wherein all colonial practices are seen as taking place, but has focused exclusively on notions of democracy and the control of people, rather than space. The argument that the Zionist enterprise was one which constituted the colonialism of homeless refugees seeking a safe haven, as contrasted with the internal settler colonialism practiced by the state in occupied territories after the Six Day war of June 1967, is only a partial justification for maintaining a moral difference between the two contexts. This may provide solace for those who reject neo-Zionist irredentism and the occupation of another people and their territory, while justifying their own right to a homeland and a safe haven. It is also compatible with the perspective of sovereignty, based on international recognition of such claims. But it still does not resolve the essential colonial nature of settlement inasmuch as it has taken place over a period of over one hundred years. At this point, the functional definition of just what settler colonization is confronts the need for moral self-justification on the part of a people whose historic roots brought them to settle in this part of the world.

This probably also explains the inability, or unwillingness, of the post-Zionist discourse to deal with the sensitive issue of religion, from which (however religion is defined along a fundamentalist – liberalist continuum) the territorial notions of Zionism are derived. In much post-Zionist thought, the link between religion and nationalist irredentism is taken as a given. This ignores an adequate discussion of secular nationalism, as it does alternative religious narratives, including Jewish religious narratives, which offer political and social discourses other than nationalist ones. This is a problematic situation that remains to be resolved, and which will feature more prominently in both the academic and public discourse as the era of conflict is, hopefully, left behind.

The civil society debate is, therefore, one which focuses on the control, and rights, of people rather than the control of territory. It is a discourse which draws on universal notions of participatory democracy, equality and civil rights, accepting that these must take place within some form of territorial frame for reasons of organizational convenience rather than national identity which derives from historic or religious roots. At the same time, it does attempt to formulate the notion of 'Israeli' identity, as a modern state identity, in which all (ethnic and religious majorities and minorities) are equal citizens. From this perspective, the

resolution of the Israel–Palestine conflict through a negotiated agreement is critical for post-Zionists because it provides an ipse facto legitimation to reside, and practice forms of control, in a territory which is not necessarily justified as being part of a historic homeland to which they have a right – even a shared right. A formal separation of territory between Israelis and Palestinians is a form of recognition by the 'other' to share the spatial compartment within which citizenship is practiced and through which rights are derived.

Beyond legitimation, Israeli–Palestinian conflict resolution may serve to refocus the territorial debate from irredentism to pragmatism but it, by itself, does not serve to redefine the state as a post-Zionist one. The nature of majority-minority relations within the reconfigured territorial compartment (in terms of formal international law it never changed even after 1967, but in terms of patterns of control it took on the dimensions of a "Greater Israel") subsequently becomes more focused and more critical. It is at this stage where the nature of Israel as a Jewish state, a democratic state, an ethno-state, or as a state of all its citizens becomes relevant, regardless of the fact that any of these political outcomes can take place within the same territorial compartment. Contextually, Yiftachel's notion of ethnocracy (Yiftachel 1999a; 1999b) takes account of this structural dilemma in positing an alternative model of ethnic relations, different in essence to other models of power-sharing, consocionationalism and/or federalism which have been discussed in the past. Notwithstanding, it is the framework of the state – be it bi-national, ethnocratic or two separate states – that remains central to notions of sovereignty and locus of political power, regardless, and even in spite of, the growing global discourse of post-nationalism. It remains a nationalist based ideology, but one that is instrumental and pragmatic, as contrasted with one that is symbolic and exclusive, focusing on power sharing rather than a system of dominance and subordination. It is a framework that will remain relevant for the Israel–Palestine case, even in an era of conflict resolution and conflict management.

Even as a post-Zionist state of all of its citizens, Israel–Palestine retains a clear territorial configuration. This may be as a single bi-national state (unlikely) demarcated by boundaries in the west (Mediterranean Sea) and east (Jordan valley), or as a partitioned territorial entity between separate Israeli and Palestinian states for the purposes of conflict resolution and an inability, or unwillingness, to live within a single political entity on the part of both national groups (Falah and Newman 1995). Post-Zionism could conceivably enfold bi-nationalism within it, just as it can account for the existence of two separate states. From a territorial perspective, it is flexible. It deals with the nature of hegemony, power, control and rights within the territorial confines of the state. It removes the focus of state power from a single

socially constructed national ethos to a focus on civil society and power sharing. The state (or states) will have territorial boundaries, but these are subject to change as the geopolitical conditions dictate.

## Conclusion

Territory remains a central component of national identity, both in the external discourse between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as in the internal discourse between neo- and post- Zionists. The contemporary political discourse relates to the technicalities of conflict management and a move from a shared space within which one national group exercises political hegemony, to separate spaces within which national identities are strengthened through territorial homogeneity. Notions of shared power within a shared space are, on the whole, rejected by both populations, as each artificially constructs the fear of dominance by the other. Polarizing the debate between the neo- and the post- Zionist worlds ignore the fact that most Jewish citizens of Israel retain a strong sense of Zionist national identity. Territory remains the raison d'être for justifying the establishment of the state in the first instance and, as such, it is unclear as to what extent a truly post-nationalist ideology can become part of an Israeli state.

There is no such thing as a deterritorialized form of national identity, such that Jewish residents of a post-conflict Israel will continue to draw strongly on the territorial roots of their own national identity. The territorial configuration of the state would undergo change, would be contracted, and the relative importance of the territorial dimension of national struggle may be diminished. But the very existence of an Israel, created as part of a twentieth-century nationalist movement, termed Zionism, retains territorial dimensions which cannot be ignored altogether. Even for second and third generation citizens, born inside Israel, their rights of residency and citizenship remain tied up with the territorial configurations of the state which, we would assume, will continue to be called Israel, and which will continue to have a national anthem that expresses the aspirations of a single, exclusive, national group. But as part of the process of reterritorialization, issues of configuration will no longer be of importance, and in this sense, post-Zionism reflects the ultimate realization of territorial pragmatism, rather than the disappearance of territory from the nationality-citizenship debate. This can no more be removed from the discourse on post-Zionism as it can from the wider debate on post-nationalism. In terms of the theoretical debate with which this chapter opened, it is part of a process of reterritorialization and spatial reconfiguration of political and national identities, not a process of deterritorialization, if only because there is no such

thing as a post-territorial notion of the organization of political power. The boundaries of national identity become more permeable, more inclusive, but they do not disappear altogether.

## Note

This chapter also appears in *Geojournal*, Vol. 53, 235–46: 1–12.

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# Social Citizenship in the Neo-Liberal Period: The Case of Israel's Health Services

## Dani Filc

Is there any sense in speaking about a neo-liberal citizenship? Are there specific characteristics of neo-liberalism, which allow us to claim that something changed in the conception of citizenship? In this chapter I argue that there are indeed specific characteristics of citizenship under neo-liberal hegemony, and I present the case of health-care in Israel as an example of this change.

Bryan Turner defined citizenship as "that set of practices (juridical, political, economic and cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society, and which, as a consequence, shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups" (Turner 1993: 3). Turner's conception of citizenship is "conflict centered" (Moran 1991). The frontiers of citizenship may contract or expand: "Citizenship can be conceived as a series of expanding circles which are pushed forward by the momentum of conflict and struggle . . ." (Turner1986: xii), and social movements are viewed as the subjects of the struggle for the expansion of citizenship rights.

If citizenship is a set of practices that influence the distribution of social resources, then we may consider citizenship as one of the fields where hegemonic struggles take place. Hegemony – following Gramsci – may be defined as both the process and the state in which a way of life (which includes not only norms and customs but also the economy) and ways of thinking and understanding become dominant in a social formation. A 'hegemonic project' is a system of practices, meanings and values, which include expectations, beliefs and understanding of reality up to the level of 'common sense.' Hegemony – in Gramsci's words – propagates itself "throughout the whole social sphere, causing, in addition to singleness of economic and political purpose, an intellectual and moral unity as well . . . creating in this way the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a number of subordinate groups" (Gramsci 1957: 170).

Citizenship – as defined by Turner – is a central field of hegemonic struggle because of its role in the construction of political subjects, and because of the influence this construction bears over the distribution of resources. Turner's conception of "expanding circles" of citizens' rights draws on T. H. Marshall's classical account of citizenship as a process expanding from legal, through political to social rights (Marshall 1964). Marshall not only provides – as Janoski (Janoski 1998) states – a typology of citizenship rights (legal, political and social), but also presents a narrative of development: "Societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed" (Marshall quoted in Moran 1991: 32).

The 'classical' Welfare state, as it developed in Western countries during the 'golden thirty' (the thirty years after World War II), seemed to confirm Marshall's view. During this period social rights expanded. Economic growth, social struggles and institutional arrangements allowed an expanding range of entitlements. The classical welfare state was one of the central components of the Fordist accumulation regime, or – as I prefer to consider in order to avoid reductionism – the Fordist/Keynesian hegemonic project. The expansion of social rights was both a product of the struggles of different social movements (most prominently the workers movement) and an attempt of the hegemonic groups to stabilize a hegemonic project by taking also into account – at least partially – the interests of subaltern groups.

The central control strategy of the Fordist/Keynesian hegemonic project was that of inclusionism (Jessop 1994). Keynesian economics expanded the aggregate demand by expanding the frontiers of social and economic inclusion (minimum wage, full employment policies, unemployment insurance, etc.). This process of inclusion was rooted in (but also generated) a process of national integration, the kind of 'national-popular will' which Gramsci saw as one of the core elements of hegemony. The recognition of certain services as rights leads to – or goes hand in hand with – a process of decommodification of those sectors providing those services. If a service is recognized as a right to which the citizen is entitled, then the criteria for resource allocation and distribution of that specific good are mainly political, and no longer solely market ones. As Michael Moran states, "rights of social citizenship . . . are universal entitlements, claimable under impersonal eligibility rules by all people called citizens; and the quality of entitlements bear no relation to an individual's income or wealth" (Moran 1991:30).

This process of decommodification expanded rights in a twofold way. First it recognized certain goods as entitlements, and second, because the criteria for allocation were political, it made the allocation

process bound to democratic control by citizens (at least potentially).

The Keynesian/Fordist hegemonic project lasted until the mid-seventies. It has been replaced since by a new hegemonic model that may be called 'post-Fordist/neo-liberal' in order to embrace both its structural and political characteristics.[1] An analysis of the process by which the new hegemonic project replaced the old one, or a thorough description of the 'post-Fordist/neo-liberal' hegemonic model escapes the reach of the present paper. I will only briefly present the principal characteristics of the post-Fordist/neo-liberal hegemonic project.

## The Neo-Liberal Hegemonic Project

The new hegemonic project includes changes at different levels of the social system: capital accumulation (forms of production, social relations of production, finance), culture, and political organization (state, politics and social movements and the conception of citizenship).

The central change at the level of production is what is usually called the 'informatics revolution' (production based on information and microelectronics technology), which allows new forms of production, such as 'flexible specialization' (a flexible production process based on flexible technology) or 'just in time production' (adapting production to current demand, in order to avoid the cost of stocks). While 'high-tech' –capital intensive – industries developed in core countries, traditional industries – work intensive – are transferred to peripheral countries, where work is cheaper.

Maybe the main change in the field of capital accumulation is the deregulation of finance and the abrogation of the Bretton Woods agreements, which gave way to floating exchange-rates and the free flow of capital. The combination of deregulation and technological achievements allowed capital to move from place to place in search of better revenues, while new forms of speculative capital investment appeared (Harvey 1990).

In the field of social labor relations, traditional corporatist agreements gave way to new forms of control of the working force: personal contracts, contracting-out, part-time jobs, and 'flexibilization' (a euphemism meaning worsening) of working conditions. These new forms of organization of labor undermine the power of organized labor. A process of "fragmentation of the work force along the axes of skill, unionization and work style" (Agger 1985) takes place. Such a process is characterized by the "spatial uncoupling of work and machinery, a radical individualization of the work places," and produces "a new type of mass worker . . . individualized to a high degree, flexibilised and segmented" (Hirsch 1991). One of the results of the described processes

is the replacement of collective agreements by factory-wide or individual ones, which further weakens trade unions.

At the level of political organization, modern forms of social agency like the mass party and the trade union lose much of their strength and appeal and are replaced by 'single-issue' parties, 'personalist' leaders and the so-called 'new social movements.'

The classical Welfare state is being replaced by what B. Jessop (1994) calls the "Schumpeterian Workfare State." Jessop defines this new form of state as one whose objectives are "to promote product, process, organizational and market innovation in open economies in order to strengthen as far as possible the structural competitiveness of the national economy by intervening on the supply side; and to subordinate social policy to the needs of the labor market flexibility and/or to the constraints of international competition" (Jessop 1994).

This transition from the Keynesian welfare state to the neo-liberal Workfare state includes a process of recommodification of services and goods. If decommodification implied an enlargement of the frontiers of citizenship, recommodification implies a narrowing of these frontiers, a narrowing which implies a change in the concept of citizenship itself. We are not facing simply a 'dismantling' of the Welfare state, nor necessarily a reduction in the percentage of the domestic gross product spent in welfare. The change is towards a mode that divides, excludes and controls, within a general context of lower material benefits, by means of privatization strategies that favor materially privileged groups (Hirsch 1991). The new welfare regime provokes "a deepening of class, gender and racially based divisions" (Bagguley 1994). Management techniques 'imported' from the sphere of production are applied to welfare services: decentralization, flexibility, market orientation, part-time jobs, contracting out. Welfare services copy the supermarket model, where the aim is customer satisfaction, and not the supply of needs. Market surveys replace participation through institutionalized means of representation as the way to take into account people needs. A stricter discipline of contractual relationships replaces bureaucratic control (Hogget 1994; Williams 1994; Pinch 1994).

We may say that in the post-Fordist/neo-liberal hegemonic model citizenship is reduced to a mix between 'Homo economicus' and 'Homo consummator.' Homo economicus is the 'rational chooser' motivated only by selfish calculations. Homo consummator is the consumer whose identity is defined by the objects and brands s/he buys. In the area of consumption, a process of commodification of everyday life takes place, a process in which products are constructed as 'life-styles,' and the phrase 'you are what you buy' takes on an almost literal meaning. Ironically, in the name of 'freedom of choice,' all human activity is reduced to a common ground: the act of consuming.

The sophisticated consumer is the new hero of the neo-liberal state. The voting citizen, the sick person in search of treatment, the audience at a theater, is all no more than a consumer. Consumers who make their 'rational' choice from a defined set of options, in order to maximize their gains and minimize their losses, always subordinate to the market's 'invisible hand,' the new goddess. Demand becomes more fluid and diversified, while maximization of personal choice through consumption is encouraged, with the consequent emergence of so-called market-niches (Hall 1989). But there is no real choice between different lifestyles or patterns of consumption. The life patterns of the dominant groups become hegemonic and model consumption for society as a whole.

Citizenship as a set of practices is reduced more and more to consumption. Consumption becomes the central urban experience. Instead of being "home," a place for cultural expression, public space or political unity, cities are constituted as "loci" for consumption. As Susan Christopherson argues, "the practice of citizenship, originating in urban experience, is gradually transformed to emulate consumer behavior. Also emulating the consumer's world and its increasing emphasis on market segmentation is the fragmentation of political interests" (Christopherson 1994).

Politics are understood as a form of consumption. Political parties and state institutions appeal to citizens as 'clients' and political decisions are constructed as a form of consumer's choice. For the citizen-consumer politic is reduced to an individual process of choice between existing and pre-defined alternatives, and not as the collective creation of a 'common good,' which – at least sometimes – may be radically different from the existing options. "It is a private, individual process . . . [causing] the obliteration of the idea of the public good" (Christopherson 1994). For this new citizen, politics are expressed only in the act of voting (the choice between pre-existing alternatives), and, even more, by the act of answering to and reading about polls. Political issues are also commodified. When consumer choices replace political praxis, parties and candidates become brands or products. Political parties become big public relations firms and political strategy is reduced to good 'copywriting.' They are no more the expression of collective ways to achieve common goals. This leads to a state of depoliticization, with the hollowing out of the idea of society as a democratic prerogative. Democratically elected bodies have less and less power to regulate and control economy. The national state also is weakened as powers are displaced from elected bodies to non-elected ones (Jessop 1994).

This reduction of politics to consumption is central to the form of hegemony in the post-Fordist/neo-liberal project. While, as we saw

above, in the Fordist/Keynesian hegemonic model, inclusion was the central form of social control – or we should say a double movement of inclusion of citizens and exclusion of non-citizens – in the new hegemonic project, exclusion is the central form of social control (Jessop 1994). The reduction of citizenship into consumption is one of the central ways of exclusion. For neo-liberal hegemony 'lifestyles' are only patterns of consumption. These lifestyles are constituted as a clear hierarchy, where the type and amount of consumption draw the limits between 'belonging' and 'not belonging.' Access to the market is the way by which identities are built. Citizenship as consumption forecloses the possibility of critique and change (because you are always choosing between *given* options) and reduces the limits of the possible.

Using Foucaltian terminology, we may say that we are facing a new form of "governmentality." Governmentality may be defined as the "contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self" (Foucault 1988). "Market power" is the new "technology of domination" (Bagguley 1994) and 'responsibilization' while 'consumerism' are the new techniques of the self.[2] Recommodification of the welfare services is one of the central modes of reducing citizenship to consumption. Social rights are constrained and access is no more a prerogative of citizenship but is conditioned by market criteria. Access to goods and services is less and less a citizen right and more and more a function of one's performance in the market (Esping-Anderssen 1990). If you fail, then you are denied access.

For the hegemonic historical bloc, the process of recommodification has three goals: 1) reducing social costs in order to reduce taxes (freeing resources for the accumulation process [Aggar 1985] and transferring costs from the upper classes to the rest of society); 2) opening new horizons for the accumulation process, by allowing for-profit firms to enter areas which so far had been monopolized by state or non-profit institutions; 3) constituting a new form of governmentality that helps to reproduce the hegemonic project.

## Recommodification of Health Care

Health-care is an especially interesting field to study this process of recommodification and limitation of rights. As Michael Moran claims, the right to health care is central to the ideology of social citizenship, and health-care budgets are among the largest components of welfare spending (Moran 1991). Both these characteristics contribute to render health-care an area where "recommodification pays," but also an area where the recommodification process may meet resistance."

A common "global" ground to this process of recommodification in

health care, one which can be considered as the hegemonic project's 'manifesto,' is the 1993 World Bank's document on health care, "Investing in Health" (World Bank 1993). Even though the document addresses mainly the problems of health-care in low and middle-income countries, the philosophy it deploys also applies (and is indeed being applied) to rich countries.

For the World Bank the central aim is not health but sound economic policies. A 1997 World Bank document on the state defines what "bad" and "sound" economic policies are. Bad policies "channel benefits to politically influential groups." Redistribution or taxation are bad policies, or – as the report puts it – "covert ways of levying unexpected taxes on the private sector or of redistributing economic benefits" (World Bank 1997). Bad policies are also microeconomic policies that impose "restrictions on the operation of markets," including "import restrictions" and "local monopoly privileges" (1997). Sound economic policies give priority to restraining inflation through monetary policies, which demand "central bank independence" and "choosing a conservative central bank governor, one who is more opposed to inflation than society in general" (1997). Recommodification, on the contrary, is sound economic policies, as it rolls back "overextended states" it is committed "to competitive markets" and one of its goals is "to eliminate obstacles to their [the markets] operation" (1997).

Investing in health is justified mainly on economic grounds: "Improved health contributes to economic growth in four ways: it reduces production losses caused by worker illness, it permits the use of natural resources that had been totally or nearly inaccessible because of disease, it increases the enrollment of children in school and it frees for alternative uses resources that would otherwise have to be spent on treating illness" (World Bank 1993). Health is thus transformed into a commodity. Being commodities, health – and health-care –belongs to the sphere of the market, and the less the state will intervene in health-care, the better. Countries should allow the access of private forces to health-care, and define only a limited area of state intervention. Health-care is no more an entitlement of citizenship but a commodity to be purchased and a field for investing and making a profit.

This conception of health-care is not particular to the 1993 document. The 1997 World Bank's document on the state plainly asserts that:

> [the World Bank] takes the view that markets and private spending can meet most needs, except for those of the very poorest minority of the population. Most curative health care is a (nearly) pure private good – if government does not foot the bill, all but the poorest will find ways to take care of themselves. (World Bank Report 1997)

Governments shall not spend money in supplying health care to their citizens, but they should subsidize private profits. The report states that "greater reliance on the private sector to deliver clinical services, both those that are included by a country in its essential package and those that are discretionary, can help raise efficiency," (World Bank 1993) so "governments should foster competition and diversity in the supply of health services and inputs . . . This could include, where feasible, private supply of health care services paid for by government or social insurance . . . Exposing the public sector to competition with private suppliers can help to spur . . . improvements" (1993).

The two goals of the report are "fiscal discipline," and the opening of new investment opportunities. The first entails reducing the costs of social policies by transferring costs to citizens qua consumers in order to reach a "balanced budget" and reduce taxation. Because health care costs represent a great share of social expenditures, cost control in this area plays a central role in a policy of fiscal constraint.

The second, opening new investment opportunities, employs the concept that privatization of health care will allow for-profit firms to enter the field.[3]

The recommodification process divides the population into two groups: consumers (those who are able to purchase health care in the private market) and the poor, those receiving minimal services as a form of public charity. But the frontiers of citizenship are constrained for both groups -consumers and the poor – for they both loose their social rights.

The above model pursued by the World Bank is driving health care systems throughout the world into a three-tiered organization. The health economist U. Reinhardt thinks that health care systems are converging into a three tier system that offers high quality, fee for service care to the very rich; insurance based managed care to the middle classes; and rough and ready care for the poor. He claims that the United States and much of South America already have such a system (Smith 1999).

The USA health-care system – which has always been mainly private – underwent a process of corporatization during the last two decades. Today, the American health care system is a much more concentrated one, and some 50 percent of the insured population is members of a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), the main form of providing "managed care". Managed care, the main form of health-care organization in the USA nowadays, developed as a compromise between the interests of big business fighting to control health insurance costs, and the interests of private insurers and providers. The goal of managed care is to eliminate ineffective procedures and unnecessary treatment, especially if it is very costly. Managed care is succeeding in reducing the rate of growth of health care costs, without seriously diminishing insurers'

revenues. HMOs are a profitable business, and in 1996 Fortune presented them as one of the most profitable areas for investors. As Fortune put it in its inimitable way, health care is not just *a* business but *the* business, with expenditures in health care in the USA surpassing the trillion dollar mark.

The process of recommodification of health care is not limited to the American continent, but includes also countries where the conception of health- care as a social right is much more developed, as is the case with Western European countries or Israel.

In the UK, for example, Thatcherism succeeded in introducing market criteria into the NHS. Thatcherist reforms of the NHS included mainly the constitution of "internal markets" by the split between providers and purchasers of services. Physicians were "upgraded" into managers and cost-containment considerations became part of their clinical decisions. There is no consistent evidence that reforms improved efficiency, but there is proof that they had detrimental effects for equity, because patients belonging to fund-holding practices have better access to services than those belonging to non-fund-holding practices.[4]

Market penetration of health care organization included also, as argued by D. Light (1997), " . . . providing discounts on (private) health insurance at taxpayers' expense; fostering two-tier access to vital services through public law; transferring public property to investors at favorable rates; using public money to pay for private services with generous built-in profits . . .".[5]

## The Recommodification of Health Care in Israel

In Israel the recommodification process of health care services began in the late seventies as part of a broader transition to a post-Fordist/neo-liberal hegemonic model. This process of recommodification of health care included the reduction of state funding, the shifting of funding to the public (as "out of pocket" payments for services at access point) and the development of a private health care sector.

The process of recommodification – i.e. privatization – of the Israeli health care system has five different expressions.

The first one concerns the financing of the health-care system. State financing of health care went down from 45 percent in 1978–9 to 21 percent in 1987/88 (Chernijovsky 1991). Private financing climbed from 20 percent of the national health care expenditure in the late seventies, to 46 percent in 1994, before the legislation of the National Health Insurance law (Government report to the UN 1998).[6] Nowadays, private financing includes only "out-of -pocket" spending – private financing

at the moment of consuming – and different forms of private insurance. Both forms of private spending grew during the last two decades. Out of pocket payment (for medications, services from private physicians, health clinics and dentists) accounted for 20 percent of total health expenditure in 1984, and for 27 percent in 1993 (Government Report for the UN 1998).

Private finance reached its lowest level immediately after the legislation of the NHI law. In 1996, 74.5 percent of the national health expenditure was financed by the government, and the remaining 24.5 percent was financed privately. In 2001, government finance of the national health expenditure went down to 68.2 percent while private financing climbed up to 31.7 percent. Among out-of-pocket payments, private expenditure on drugs, for example, grew 43 percent between 1986/7 and 1992. In 1997, users financed some 30 percent of the four HMO's expenditure in drugs (Sax 1998).

Private expenditure grew faster than total health expenditure. The national health expenditure – in fixed prices- grew 43 percent between 1986 and 1994. During the same years spending in dentistry grew a sizeable 62 percent, and private expenditures (drugs, physicians and equipment) grew 59 percent.

The second component of private expenditure, private insurance, also grew during the last decade. Household payments for different sorts of private insurance (dental care, emergency medicine, acute medicine and nurse care) grew by 233 percent from 86/7 to 92/3 (Shmueli 1996). In 1991 private health insurance represented two percent of the national health expenditure. In only two years, private health expenditure grew 50 percent, and in 1993 it represented 3.4 percent of the national health expenditure.

The second mode of recommodification concerns ownership of health-care resources. The almost wholly public Israeli health-care system witnessed the multiplication of for-profit institutions: private hospitals, private nursing homes, and private complementary insurance. The share of private health care from national health expenditure grew from 18.9 percent in 1984 to 28.2 percent in 2001 (CBS 2002). The number of patients getting treated in private hospitals (mostly surgical procedures) climbed from 5138 in 1981 to 20,611 in 1986 (Steinberg and Bick 1992). The number of private hospitals went up from 57 in 1980 to 141 in 2001 (CBS 2002). Private insurers' revenues from health insurance grew almost 50 percent between 1986 and 1993 (from 213.5 million shekels to 315.2 million shekels in 1993 prices) and another 31 percent from 1993 to 1995 (Gros and Barmeli 1996), while the market was getting more concentrated. In 1991, for instance, ten insurance companies sold health insurance, but in 1996, only six (1996).

As recommended by the World Bank, public funds financed the

development of the private sector. Specifically, the four public HMOs buy almost a third of the services sold by private hospitals.

A third realm of the recommodification process is that of private services within public institutions: the *Sharap* (acronym for "Private Medical Services") and the *Sharan* (acronym for "Additional Medical Services"). The Sharap is a system by which patients may choose their physician in a public hospital for an additional fee. The Sharan is a system by which public hospitals sell services (or accommodations) that are not covered by the National Insurance. Hospitals may sell those services to the sick-funds (if those will be interested in offering services not included in the basic 'health-basket'), to private insurers or to individuals.[7]

A fourth area of the recommodification process is the 'enterprization' of public services. I am referring to the adoption by public institutions of private business ideology and strategies. These include changes in goals, in work relationships, organizational thinking, etc. Public health-care system is adopting organizational forms that belong to the private sector. Accent is put on marketing and balanced budget, and responsibility is passed to front-line institutions (hospitals as trusts, decentralization of Kupat Holim's clinics). Labor relations have changed while post-Fordist forms of organization of labor were adopted by health care organizations. More and more physicians are employed by personal contracts, instead of being employed by collective agreements; new immigrants' physicians are employed through sub-contractors and are paid on an hour-fee basis and services such as laundry are being contracted out.

The view of health-care institutions as enterprises is also reflected in changes in the language used by those institutions. They talk no more about 'patients' or 'members,' surely not about citizens, but only about 'customers' or 'consumers.' The organizational language changed, and organizational ideologies were imported from the production realm (TQM, re-engineering, etc.). One of the consequences of this change in the self-understanding of public health care institutions is the reduction of opposition to the continuous process of recommodification of health-care. If health providers are already seeing themselves as budget-holder and thinking of care in terms of 'consumers choice' and not in terms of members or patient needs, and if users are seeing themselves only as 'consumers,' privatization is only another 'natural' and 'rational' step.

A fifth mode of the recommodification process is the opening of new horizons to private investment (and private expenditure) by 'medicalizing' different aspects of human life. One of the aspects of this medicalization of society is the explosion in OTC drugs (over the counter drugs sold without prescriptions), and the subsequent explo-

sion in drug advertisements. A second aspect is the utilization of drugs or medical procedures not as a cure but as a means of 'improving performance,' as is well expressed by the advertisement of a private clinic for the treatment of impotence.

Still another aspect concerns what could be called 'body design.' The less aggressive expression of this phenomenon is the "diet industry." A more invasive expression of this disciplining of bodies is the development of non-curative plastic surgery whose aim is to mold bodies in order to conform to hegemonic concepts of beauty while allowing the development of for-profit clinics.[8]

As I have argued earlier, the centrality of health care in our societies explains not only the process of recommodification, but also the resistance to this process; the process of recommodification is not a linear one. The legislation of the National Health Insurance law is an example of this resistance.[9] The legislation of the NHI law in 1994 – a law that recognizes health care as a citizen's right, and makes equity a central goal of the system – represents an expansion of citizens' rights and curbs some aspects of the recommodification process. This reform had, at least until January 1998, a positive effect from the point of view of equity of care, and limited some of the privatization tendencies.

As a consequence of the recommodification process, the Israeli health care system has become more and more multi-tiered. This multi-tiered system included in the lowest level the Palestinians of the occupied territories, and the – then fewer than today – foreign workers with no health insurance. The next level included 7–8 percent of the population (among them some 25 percent of Israeli Arabs), without health insurance. The third level consisted of members of Kupat Holim Klalit.[10] In Kupat Holim Klalit the per-capita spending was 2533 NIS for an older, poorer and sicker population (requiring more and not less expenditure per capita) (Rosen Ivnekovsky and Nevo 1998). The last level included members of the two smaller HMOs, where the per capita spending was 2970 NIS for a younger and healthier population.

The aforementioned law installed a single-payer system, with a standardized benefit package that every citizen is entitled to. Four big, non-profit HMOs provide this package. Every HMO must be opened for every one who wants to become a member (so as to avoid 'cream skimming'). The system was financed by a neutral health tax (4.8 percent of income), by an employers 'parallel tax,' and by the state (there was a marginal financing by direct spending: co-payment for medicines and – in some of the HMOs – a marginal co-payment for consultations). The *Bituach Lehumi*, the social security system, is in charge of collecting taxes and distributing them between the four HMO's by a capitation system corrected for age (the law also provided for the taking into account of other variables, such as geographic dispersion, but these was

never implemented). The NHI law transformed the health-care system, which – as mentioned previously – had already characteristics of a multi-tiered system, into a one-tier system, making a reallocation of funds towards the HMO's, which concentrated poorer, sicker and older population. The law guaranteed the right to health-care for some 7 percent of the population (most of them Israeli Arabs) that had no health insurance. The law had also a redistributive effect because the 70 percent of the population with less income paid less than before, and the upper 20 percent paid more than before. Between 1990 and 1994, the household expenditure on health grew steadily from 7.7 percent to 8.9 percent of the whole household expenditures. In 1995 – the year the law was implemented – it went down to 6.3 percent (CBS 2002).

The NHI law contributed to make the system less unequal, by making health insurance a citizen right, and by redistributing funds between the four HMO's, closing the gaps between them. The law made health insurance mandatory, and guaranteed health care even for those who do not pay the health tax. The range of the HMO's per capita spending narrowed, going now from 2658 NIS to 2722 NIS. The law also put an end to open 'cream-skimming' by the smaller sick-funds, since it forbids denying citizens' access to membership.

Interestingly this positive effect on equity was achieved while constraining general spending. Health-care spending – as percentage of GDP – went down from 8.8 percent in 1994 to 8.6 percent in 1995.

Even though the law did not substantially modify the 'out-of pocket' payment, or private insurance fees, it had a redistributive effect concerning health insurance fees. The membership fee paid until 1995 was a regressive one. Since the law legislation, at least until January 1998, lower income sectors and senior citizens paid less than before, and the 30 percent with highest income paid more than before.

The legislation of a law that opposes the general process of recommodification requires explanation, especially if one takes into account that there was no clear organized social subject supporting a more decommodified welfare regime. Both major political parties were partners in the government that implemented the stabilization program in 1985, a program that was central for the neo-liberal project. The *Histadrut* (the General Federation of Labor) was against the law because it threatened the immediate organizational interests of the trade union bureaucracy.[11] There were no social movements or civil society organizations that could lead the process, and though the Israeli Medical Union supported the law, it was a quite passive support. We may go further and say that the two alternative historical blocs in the Israel society – the liberal one and the nationalist/religious one – today, share – with some differences – the support of the post-Fordist/neo-liberal project.

Some scholars explain the legislation of the NHI law as an attempt of

the neo-liberal hegemonic bloc to put an end to the workers organization, the Histadrut. The antagonism against the Histadrut undoubtedly helped to recruit the support of various sectors of the population and of the media for the National Health Law, but it cannot be the sole explanation (Kupat Holim could be separated from the Histadrut as a consequence of its financial crisis, without the legislation of a National Health Insurance law). I think that the explanation may be that a public 'common sense' is still hegemonic, which did not accept enhancing commodification of health-care and prevented a resolution of the health care crises in a manner that would enhance inequality. This 'common sense' was articulated with logics and agents not directly related to the production process, like the old antagonism of the Likud towards the Kupat Holim/ Histadrut link. On this ground, an ad-hoc coalition was born, which included different forces: right-wing social democrats – as Yossi Beilin and Haim Ramon – that accepted the constraints of the post-Fordist/neo-liberal model and saw in the law the possibility of "free choice," Likud members which saw in the law their ultimate victory over the hated Histadrut, and those which supported a more equal health care system.[12]

Soon after the NHI law legislation, media pundits and Treasury officers began to attack the law. In 1997, the employers' contribution to health-care was eliminated and in1998 an 'Arrangement law' more coherent with the needs of the post-Fordist/neo-liberal project was legislated. This modification seriously impairs the achievements of the NHI law. The most important point is that – at least de facto – the new law put an end to state responsibility for providing a common 'health-basket' to every citizen. The new law settled a fixed state expenditure for health care, instead of making the state responsible for the financing of the gap between the health tax and the real cost of the health basket. Under the new law, the HMOs are responsible for closing the gap. They must cut costs, and the most 'rational' strategy for cutting costs is 'cream skimming.' The law formally still forbids 'cream skimming,' but it now allows the HMOs to offer services not included in the basic basket. By developing services directed to the younger and healthier population, HMOs can – de facto – produce negative selection.

Still another point is the introduction of co-payments and higher drug prices as a way of financing health-care. Co-payments and higher drug prices increase household out-of pocket financing of health-care costs, fostering inequalities in access to health care.

Two years after, in 2000, following a prolonged physicians' strike, a new public commission was appointed in order to propose changes in the public health system. While some of the commission proposals were in line with the commodification trend (for example the further development of the Sharap), its spirit was of preserving a mostly

decommodified public health system. However, in 2003, the Treasury obtained the approval of a major reform of the welfare state, limiting its scope and commodifying several services. Among the proposals for the health care system, a severe limit on the development of new services in the public system and a more regressive financing of the health tax figure to play a part. But the current government has more ambitious goals for the commodification of health. The Health minister is preparing a law which will allow the selling of women's ovules, and another law which will allow the selling of pharmaceutics at the supermarkets (Reznik 2003). Moreover, during the discussions of the Treasury program in the Parliament, government officers announced their intention to modify the financing of the national health expenditures in order to limit government financing to 40 percent and increasing private financing to 40 percent.

This contradictory process – a general recommodification trend, a major reform that opposes this tendency and a continuous struggle over the implementation of that law – teaches us that the commodification/decommodification alternative, like the expanding/undermining of the frontiers of citizenship, is part of a hegemonic – hence political – struggle. While neo-liberalism is the common ground of the two projects struggling in Israel for hegemony – the "globalizing" or liberal one and the "neo-Zionist" (Ram 2000) – the health field is still open for alternative policies. The Treasury proposals for the 1998 budget – proposals which expressed the real goals of the neo-liberal project and included the abolition of a common health-care basket and a further opening of the health system to for-profit organizations – was almost totally rejected following popular mobilization. For the Israeli collective common sense – a level that Gramsci (1957) saw as the most basic one of hegemony – health-care is still an area where recommodification must be curbed.

The post-Fordist/neo-liberal hegemonic project constrains the frontiers of citizenship. Social rights are curtailed through recommodification processes. Recommodification processes also limit political rights by transferring certain areas from democratic control to technocratic or market control. As I have attempted to show in this chapter, changes in the health-care system during the last two decades are an example of this process of contraction of the frontiers of citizenship. However, differences among countries imply that hegemonic struggles have no necessary single end-point. Hegemonic struggles are a partially open process, where preceding institutions and political mobilization affect the level of reduction of social entitlements.

## Notes

1   Although in the literature we have grown accustomed to finding the new accumulation regime referred to as 'post-Fordism,' I think that the changes represented by the term 'post-Fordism' may be articulated in several ways, depending on the political balance of forces, and the neo-liberal solution of the transition to post-Fordism is only one of the possible forms of transition and not the necessary one.

2   This was best expressed by Margaret Thatcher when she said that "economics are the method. The object is to change the soul".

3   Laurell and Lopez Arellano show how recommodification in South America offers investors opportunities to make huge profits. Nowadays the investment per capita for health care in South America is $105. The limited basket proposed by the World Bank costs $22 per capita/per year, opening for the private sector a market worth 35 billion dollars (Laurell and Lopez Arellano 1996).

4   The New Labour White Paper on the NHS proposes a retreat from the Tatcherist model, delivering purchasing power to District Health Authorities.

5   The recommodification process is not limited to the Anglo-Saxon world. Countries such as Sweden (with the introduction of internal markets for ambulatory care) or Holland passed reforms that – even though in a much more moderate way – reflect the tendency towards recommodification of health services and the consequent reduction of health care entitlements.

6   With the legislation of the NHI law private spending went down to 23 percent, because health insurance money, which was considered as private expenditure before the NHI law, is paid now as a mandatory tax, and is thus considered public expenditure.

7   By 1995 it represented 500 million NIS (Shiron and Amit 1996).

8   This medicalization of everyday life has not only the function of opening new horizons for capital accumulation, but also has (as noted by authors such as Zola (1972) and Foucault (1988) a legitimating and control function. By setting hegemonic views of beauty, body forms, etc. control is gained over people actions and ways of thinking.

9   This resistance is common to other countries where health care was decommodified. The attack on the NHS was one of the reasons for the conservative defeat in the UK, and the White Paper on the NHS one of the Blair government's first policy changes.

10   Now called *Sherutei Briut Clalit (Clalit Health Services)*.

11   Kupat Holim Klalit was created by the General Federation of Labor, and it was one of the central institutions in order to recruit members. Histadrut members paid a monthly fee which provided them health insurance, trade union and cultural services. Some 70 percent of the fee financed Kupat Holim Klalit, and the other 30 percent financed the Federation of Labor organization.

12   In this sense is interest to note that most of those which supported the Law in the discussions in the Knesset plenary supported it using two types of discourses : the anti-Histadrut discourse (Mijael Eitan supported the law

which would free the state from it's "nationalization into the Histadrut") or the "free-choice" discourse (as a member of meretz stated: as an Israeli citizen, I want to have the right to choose for myself . . . we must oppose the constraint to belong to one Kupat Holim because of the fact that you work in a certain firm . . . later we can discuss what type of health package we will have or if it will be subsidized by the state . . . ") . . . But those two discourses were articulated with a discourse of health care as a right, and of equity of access, against forces, which wanted to articulate them with a discourse of "efficiency" and "free market.

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# De-Arabization of the Bedouin: A Study of an Inevitable Failure

Yossi Yonah, Ismael Abu-Saad and Avi Kaplan

The Palestinian Arab national minority in Israel has posed a momentous challenge to the State of Israel since its inception more than fifty years ago. Constituting a considerable minority (19%), it calls the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state into question, and poses a threat to its political stability. Deeply cognizant of this challenge to its legitimacy and stability, the State of Israel developed and implemented various policies aimed at dispelling it. One of the main policies adopted in this regard was designed to forestall the development of a sense of common national identity among the various sub-groups of Israel's Arab minority. This policy has been vigorously implemented, for instance, in the case of the Bedouin Arabs of the Negev and the Druze. Much effort has been expended over the years with the aim of separating these groups from Israel's Palestinian Arab national minority and transforming them into a de-Arabized group loyal to the interests and institutions of the state.

This chapter offers a partial assessment of the results of these efforts in the case of Bedouin Arab youth of the Negev. We intend to show that despite the extensive efforts to de-Arabize the Bedouin of the Negev, they have become pronouncedly alienated from the state of Israel, and are increasingly perceiving themselves as an integral part of Israel's Palestinian Arab national minority. It is our conjecture that one of the main reasons for this change in attitudes is that the efforts to de-Arabize the Bedouin have not been accompanied by any significant steps allowing them to become full and equal citizens of the state. Rather, these de-Arabizing efforts notwithstanding, Israel continues to maintain discriminatory policies and practices toward the Bedouin.

## Background

The Negev Bedouin are among the Palestinian Arabs who remained in Israel after 1948 and are today a minority group of Israeli citizens. They have inhabited the Negev desert since the 5th century C.E. (Maddrell, 1990), and were traditionally organized into nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes that lived by raising sheep and engaging in seasonal agriculture (Shimoni, 1947).

Prior to 1948, estimates of the Bedouin Arab population in the Negev ranged from 65,000 to 90,000 (Falah, 1989; Maddrell, 1990). During the course and aftermath of the 1948 war, during which an organized campaign of "transfer" (expulsion) of the Palestinian Arab population was carried out, the vast majority of the Negev Bedouin became refugees in the surrounding Arab countries/territories (i.e., the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, etc.) (Falah, 1989, 1996; Masalha, 1997; Morris, 1987). By the early 1950's, only about 11,000 Bedouin remained in the Negev, and overall, the pre-1948 war population of Palestinian Arabs was reduced from 900,000 to 150,000 (Falah, 1989; Lustick, 1980; Marx, 1967). Given the pre-state failure of Zionist ideology to deal with the issue of what the role and status of the Arab population would be in the Jewish state, this mass transfer of Arabs from Israeli-held territory was celebrated by the leadership of the Zionist movement, (Lustick, 1980).

## Theoretical Framework

Ethno-national pluralism has always posed a challenge to the legitimacy and stability of the nation-state (Smith, 1986 Hobsbawm, 1972). The reason for this is clear: it is rarely the case that the territorial boundaries of the nation-state neatly converge with ethnic boundaries. While in a few cases the nation-state may include only a portion of a relatively well-defined ethnic group, in other cases the nation-state includes more than one ethnic group. There are, of course, also cases in which the nation-state includes only a portion of a relatively well-defined ethnic group, while in addition including other ethnic groups. It is in the cases which lack a convergence between their territorial and ethnic boundaries that the nation-state may experience the severest challenges to its legitimacy and stability. Leaving aside the question of whether or not the nation-state must have a common ethnic origin (Smith 1996; Gellner 1996), it seems then that the viability of the nation-state depends on its capacity to instill in its citizens (or at least most of them) a collective identity and common culture. To put it differently, the viability of the nation-state depends on its capacity to cultivate a homogeneous public,

a political community sharing (real or imagined) culture and heritage.

In most cases, however, the assimilation of all groups within one all-encompassing homogeneous public is unlikely. Such assimilation is unlikely, first, because the nation-state is actually composed of two or more national groups; and second, because at least one of these groups wishes to maintain and promote its unique historical heritage and national identity. Borrowing a term from Walzer (1994), we may describe this situation as a "thick" pluralism along ethno-national lines. Under such circumstances, the legitimacy and stability of the state must be based on something other than common ethnic identity. Such nation-states must depend largely on their capacity to ensure that all of their citizens have equal status, irrespective of ethnic and national identity.

Most nation-states do not incorporate this principal into their system of government. Citizenship status is more often determined by the proximity of the various groups to the identity of the nation-state, that is, to the identity of the dominant group from which the nation-state borrows its cultural heritage, history, myths and symbols. This, of course, is not an explicit policy of the nation-state. On the contrary, most such nation-states put great effort into disseminating the impression that they abide by the principles of freedom and equality. Despite these efforts, political instability is likely to arise as individuals who are excluded from the national community and denied equal rights seek other collective frameworks to promote the development of an identity of their own and to stage political campaigns to win their rights.

## The Israeli Case: Exclusionary practices in a self-proclaimed democracy

The State of Israel constitutes a realization of Zionism's main goal: the establishment of a viable modern state for the Jewish people in the land of Zion. Therefore, from the outset, Israel's Jewish national identity has played a central role in the development of its main social, political and economic institutions. According to the head judge of the Israeli Supreme Court, Justice Barak, the Jewish State is based upon Jewish heritage, law, and Zionist values:

> [The] Jewish state is . . . the state of the Jewish people . . . it is a state in which every Jew has the right to return . . . it is a state where its language is Hebrew and most of its holidays represent its national re-birth . . . a Jewish state is a state which developed a Jewish culture, Jewish education and a loving Jewish people . . . . A Jewish state is a state in which the values of Israel, Torah, Jewish heritage, and the values of the Jewish Halachah are the bases of its values . . . (Quoted from *Legal Violations of Arab Minority Rights in Israel*, 1998, p. 20)

At the same time, Israel is generally considered a liberal democracy, and aspires to be judged as such (Yonah, 1999), as is illustrated by Justice Ahron Barak, who writes: "the State of Israel is a democracy since it is governed by the principle of majority rule, and since it affirms human rights . . . Our constitution is manifested in the basic laws. They determine the structure of state's authorities . . . and they secure human rights" (Barak, 1996, p. 446). Barak is not alone among the prominent leaders of Israel's political regime who see no contradiction between Israel's aspiration to be a liberal democracy and its insistence on being a Jewish state. Thus, for instance, the former head judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Shamgar, stated that "the existence of the state of Israel as the state of the Jewish people does not deny its democratic nature . . . " (quoted from Legal Violations of Arab Minority Rights in Israel, 1998, p. 20).

However, given the fact that approximately 17% of Israel's population is a non-Jewish, Arab minority, the exclusive nature of Israel's national identity casts considerable doubt on Israel's aspiration to be regarded as a liberal democracy (Gavison, 1999; Yonah, 1999; Yiftachel 1999).

In light of these contradictions, a number of scholars have tried to more accurately define the nature of Israel's political regime. According to Smooha (1990, 1995), for instance, the state of Israel is a non-liberal ethnic democracy which represents the Jewish nation rather than all of its citizens, and in which there will always be preferential treatment for Jews, whether or not they are citizens or residents of the state. Yiftachel (1999), however, argues that Smooha displays undue generosity in characterizing Israel's political regime as deficient yet belonging to a subset of democracy. He maintains that Israel is an 'ethnocracy,' a relatively open, yet non-democratic, regime in which the affiliation with a certain 'ethnos' (Jewish People), rather than membership in the 'demos' that lives within the boundaries of a sovereign state, determines the distribution of rights, power and resources. Unlike democratic regimes, ethnocracies do not guarantee equal rights to all citizens, let alone protect the collective rights of minorities.

Regardless of which epithet, 'ethnic democracy' or 'ethnocracy,' better describes Israel's political regime, Israel's treatment of its Arab minority thwarts any attempt to place Israel among the commonwealth of liberal democracies. Over the years, the Israeli state has developed an extensive system for controlling the Arab minority based on segmentation, dependence and co-option; a system that is highly incompatible with liberal and democratic principles (Lustick, 1980; McDowall, 1989; Seliktar, 1984). The implementation of these policies, which is described in more detail below, has resulted in the exclusion of the Arab minority, both individually and collectively, from political power, the full bene-

fits of citizenship, and social and economic welfare (Ghanem, 1998; Lustick, 1980; McDowall, 1989; Yiftachel, 1999).

The government policy of segmentation involved keeping the Arabs separate from Jews socially, politically and administratively. In addition, the government attempted to split the Arab minority itself into a number of smaller groups based on religious (Moslem, Christian, Druze) or geographical distinctions (the 'Galilee,' the northern region; the 'Triangle,' the central region; and the 'Negev,' the southern region) (Lustick, 1980; McDowall, 1989; Seliktar, 1984; Zidani, 1997). Efforts were then made to institutionalize these divisions by, for example, including certain groups in the state's compulsory military service, allowing other groups to volunteer, and completely excluding other groups.

Israeli government treatment of Bedouin Arabs in Israel provides a classic example of its segmentation policy. It deliberately intensified the differences (in geographical location and lifestyle) between Bedouin and sedentary Arabs in an effort to make the Bedouin into a distinct ethnic group. They were also 'allowed' to volunteer for military service (while sedentary Muslim Arabs were not), due to which they had a 'special status', and came to be viewed within Jewish Israeli society as a separate, non-Arab minority group loyal to the state. As Landau (1993:175) stated: "This is a group generally loyal to the state and ready to integrate into the Israeli circle of identity, so much so that a number of Bedouin have volunteered for service in the Defense Forces (160 in 1990)."

The second technique employed by the Israeli government to control the Arab minority was to make it as dependent as possible upon the majority Jewish economic infrastructure (Seliktar, 1984). This was accomplished through massive confiscation of Arab lands (Gavison, 1999; Lustick, 1980; McDowell, 1989). The loss of so much agricultural land and the displacement of so many communities made Arabs acutely dependent upon the Jewish sector for employment.

In the Negev, the Bedouin lost both the ability to cultivate their lands and the freedom to move around with their herds (Lustick, 1980; Bailey, 1995). Twelve of the 19 tribes were removed from their lands, and the whole population was confined to a specially-designated Restricted Area (seig) in the northeastern Negev, which represented only 10% of the territory they controlled before 1948 (Falah, 1989; Lustick, 1980; Marx, 1967; Meir, 1990). Furthermore, they were placed under a military administration until 1966, along with all other Arabs in Israel, which meant that they could not return to and cultivate their lands, and needed special permits to leave their designated sections of the Restricted Area to look for jobs, education, markets, etc. (Marx, 1967). According to Bailey (1995) and Falah (1989), the restrictions imposed by

the Israeli government represented a form of forced 'sedentarization', which virtually ended their nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life, and greatly reduced their former economic independence. As one Bedouin sheikh stated:

the land expropriation and the forced expulsions without compensation or the right to return . . . brought the Bedouin to a situation which [was] difficult both psychologically and materially, and to a lack of security unlike anything they had previously known. (Lustick, 1980, p. 13)

The Military Administration over Arabs in Israel was lifted in 1966, at which time the vast majority of the Bedouin sought out employment in the Jewish sector, primarily as unskilled laborers (Abu Saad, 1991). The economic insecurity of the Bedouin was further increased in the late 1960's and early 1970's when the government developed and began implementing plans to resettle the entire Negev Bedouin population into 7 urban-style towns with no economic infrastructure of their own. Bedouin living in the towns had access to modern services (such as running water, electricity, and telephones), the expense of which further increased their dependence upon a regular cash income. The unemployment rate in the government settlements is the highest in Israel. Since these settlements lack internal sources of employment other than municipal and public services, approximately 80% of the employed spend up to five days a week away from home in the center of the country (Ben-David, 1991). Sixty-five percent (65%) of the population in these settlements lives beneath the poverty line (Hayton, 1998; Ghanem, 1998). Due to the socio-cultural inappropriateness of the urbanized settlement plan, and the complete economic dependency it created among the towns' inhabitants, the plan has been criticized by the Bedouin community, about half of which has refused to move into the urban towns. The following statement by Bailey (1995 p. 54) summarizes the major critiques of the government's settlement policy. Bailey states: "Today the state seeks to settle the entire Bedouin population in the seven towns, in which most do not want to live."

Whereas 280,000 Jewish citizens live in 114 communities in Israel's southern district, [120,000] Bedouin citizens, accustomed to space, are to be confined to a few towns, without economic base, and become a pool of cheap labor. Officials assert that they do not want to "waste" land on Bedouin . . . The government argues that only in large settlements can it provide the Bedouin with education, health care and social welfare. The claim is baseless. The towns, where [60,000] of the former nomads already dwell, suffer from the lowest level of such services in the country.

Bedouin living outside of the government planned settlements face a

different set of pressures and increased levels of legal and political vulnerability. As residents of unplanned (i.e. unauthorized and illegal) settlements, they are denied services such as paved roads, electricity (and in many cases running water), rubbish disposal, telephone service, community health facilities, etc. They are also denied licenses for building any sort of permanent housing. All housing forms (except for tents, which can be served evacuation orders) are considered illegal, and are subject to heavy fines and demolition proceedings (Maddrell, 1990). Despite these pressures, Bedouin remain on the lands traditionally owned by them (but considered as state lands by the government) to prevent their *de facto*, as well as their *de jure*, confiscation. Most of these Bedouin depend on the traditional occupations of herding and agriculture to supplement or provide their incomes, but this is also restricted by the government through limitations on herd sizes and grazing areas. Thus, very few of the Bedouin living outside the planned towns can subsist entirely on the traditional sources of livelihood, and must also seek out paid employment in the larger Israeli economy.

The third technique used by the government to control the Arab minority was co-optation through the use of "side payments" to Arab elites, or potential elites, with the aim of extracting resources and maintaining effective surveillance of the community (Lustick, 1980: 77). Furthermore, the police and the internal security forces (Shin Bet) were able to create a network of agents and informers which penetrated virtually every extended family in the country for this purpose (Jiryis, 1976; Lustick, 1980; McDowell, 1989). In the Negev, the range and importance of special favors granted to cooperative Bedouin sheikhs (the traditional tribal leaders) by the government was especially broad and its impact on the community was far-reaching. Sheikhs were permitted to collect fees from tribe members in return for the registration of their names with the Interior Ministry and were also given authority to register births and deaths, validate marriages, sign affidavits, etc, (Marx, 1967; Lustick, 1980). For many years, no teacher or civil servant could hope to be appointed without enjoying the favor of such agents of the state (McDowall, 1989).

Currently co-optation is not as widespread, because there is less need for it. The segmentation and dependency policies have proven to be very effective in keeping the Arab minority in general, and the Bedouin community in particular, busily concerned with the problems of day-to-day living (McDowall, 1989). Those who take more interest in political issues, e.g. university students and graduates, are still very few (Abu-Saad, 1996).

A number of studies have been done on the question of identity among Arabs in Israel, which have tended to confirm the conception that the Bedouin have been effectively separated from the rest of the

Arab minority, and differ significantly from other Arabs in Israel with regard to their views toward the state, the Palestinians and their own identity (Smooha, 1984; 1990; 1995). For example, in Smooha's (1984) survey of Arab opinion in 1976 he asked them to choose from among the following three alternatives as the most desirable future status for Arabs in Israel: a) as a separate but equal group in Israel, b) as part of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, or c) as a part of a secular state in which Arabs and Jews have equal rights. Smooha found that among Arab respondents in general, 57% supported the first option (a separate but equal group in Israel), 26% supported the second option (part of a Palestinian state alongside Israel), and 17% supported the third option (part of a secular state in which Arabs and Jews have equal rights). When he broke the Arabs down into a number of subgroups, he found that the Bedouin responded quite differently, with more than three-quarters (77%) choosing "a separate but equal group in Israel", 21% choosing "part of a Palestinian state alongside Israel," and only 2% choosing "part of a secular state where Arabs and Jews have equal rights" (Smooha, 1984).

However, more recently, predictions from a number of sources suggest that the continued economic and social decline of the Bedouin Arab community will result in a widespread and negative political reaction to their treatment by the state (Trounson, 1998; Abu-Saad, 1997; McDowall, 1989; Landau, 1993). Landau (1993) reported that in response to modernization, discontentment with their treatment by the government (e.g., land expropriation, urbanization, etc.) and the breakdown of governmental segmentation of Arabs, the attitudes and behavior of the Bedouin were more and more coming into line with those of other Arabs in Israel.

The present study revisits these issues by exploring the current attitudes of Negev Bedouin Arab youth toward: a) the question of individual identity (e.g., Israeli, Arab, Palestinian); b) Israel's legitimacy, and their place within the national identity as well as within state institutions such as the IDF; and c) their relationship to the Palestinians or to a future Palestinian state.

## The Study

### Participants

This study, conducted in spring 1998, was based on a sample of 529 Negev Bedouin Arab secondary school students in the southern part of Israel from the 10th (average age 15 years old) and 11th grades (average age 16 years old).

## Instrumentation and Data Analysis

The questionnaire was based on Smooha's (1984, 1995) instrument for surveying the orientation and politicization of the Arab minority in Israel. It was administered to students in the schools during class time, who were advised by the study team that all information would remain confidential and that participation in the study was voluntary. The level of cooperation was very high, and questionnaires were completed by all of the students present during the class period when the research was conducted. The statistical methods for processing the collected data were descriptive statistics and One-Way ANOVA using SPSS 8.0 for Windows.

## Findings

The descriptive statistics revealed that 274 (52%) of the students were male and 255 (48%) were female. Fifty-five percent (55%, 289) were 10th graders, and 45% (240) were 11th graders. The majority of students lived in two-parent homes (86%), and the mean number of siblings was 10. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the sample had 4–10 siblings, 42% had more than 10 siblings, while only 2% had 1–3 siblings. Forty-one percent (41%, n=214) of the respondents considered themselves to be religious, 46% (245) said they followed religious traditions, 5% (27) considered themselves secular.

The next category of results deals with the responses of Bedouin Arab youth to questions regarding their personal and national identity. When asked how well the term 'Israeli' described their identity, 56% of Bedouin Arab youth reported that it was appropriate, while 44% reported that it was inappropriate. When asked how well the term 'Palestinian' described their identity, 61% considered it appropriate and 39% considered it inappropriate. Further, respondents were asked to choose their preferred self-descriptions from among six rival national identities. The most common choice was 'Palestinian Arab' (33%), followed by 'Israeli Arab' (26%), 'Arab' alone (15%), 'Palestinian Israeli' (14%), 'Palestinian' alone (7%), and 'Israeli' alone (6%).

Table 4.1 reports the responses of Bedouin Arab youth to questions regarding Israeli and Palestinian legitimacy. Thirty four percent (34%) supported the right of Israel to exist, 36% had reservations about it, and 31% denied it. Twenty-nine percent (29%) thought that Arabs could be equal citizens in Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state and could identify themselves with the state, while 49% were uncertain, and 23% did not think so. When asked if they thought that Israel should recognize the Palestinians as a nation, 72% responded affirmatively, 18% had reser-

vations and 10% responded negatively. Seventy percent (70%) were in favor of the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, 19% had reservations and 12% were not in favor of it. Twenty-two percent (22%) thought that the preferred status for Arabs in Israel is as a separate but equal group in Israel, 38% thought it is as part of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and 40% thought it is as part of a secular state where Arabs and Jews have equal rights. Twenty-two percent (22%) supported compulsory military service for Arabs in Israel, 27% were not sure, and 52% were against it.

**Table 4.1**  Responses of Bedouin Youth to Questions about Israeli and Palestinian Legitimacy (N=529)

| Item | Percentage |
|---|---|
| *Israel's right to exist* | |
| Yes | 34 (178) |
| Have reservations | 36 (188) |
| No | 31 (163) |
| *Do you think Arabs can be equal citizens in Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state and can identify themselves with the state?* | |
| Yes | 29 (152) |
| Uncertain | 49 (255) |
| No | 23 (122) |
| *Do you think that Israel should recognize the Palestinians as nation?* | |
| Yes | 72 (383) |
| Under certain circumstances | 18 (93) |
| No | 10 (53) |
| *Are you in favor of establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel?* | |
| Yes | 70 (368) |
| Under certain circumstances | 19 (98) |
| No | 12 (63) |
| *What would you choose from the following three alternatives for the Arabs in Israel?* | |
| Separate but equal in Israel | 22 (117) |
| Part of Palestinian state along side Israel | 38 (202) |
| Part of secular state where Arabs and Jews have equal rights | 40 (210) |
| *Do you support compulsory military service for Arabs in Israel?* | |
| Yes | 22 (117) |
| Uncertain | 27 (137) |
| No | 52 (275) |

The question of whether or not respondents thought that they could be equal citizens in Israel as a Jewish, Zionist state was significantly related to their attitudes on a number of identity and socio-political issues. Those who did not think that they could be equal citizens in Jewish, Zionist Israel were less inclined to think that the term 'Israeli' was an appropriate definition of their identity ($F = 14.98$, $p<.00$), and instead to consider the term 'Palestinian' as appropriate for them ($F = 4.22$, $p<.02$). They were more likely to oppose compulsory military service for Arabs in Israel ($F = 11.22$, $p<.00$) and to express reservations about recognition of the state of Israel ($F = 22.96$, $p<.00$). However, they did not differ from those who thought that they could be equal citizens of Israel on their attitudes toward Israel recognizing the Palestinians as a nation and on the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Respondents who thought that the term 'Israeli' was an appropriate definition of their identity differed significantly from those who did not on a number of items. They were less likely to have reservations about recognizing the state of Israel ($F = 110.04$, $p<.00$), and more likely to have reservations about Israel recognizing the Palestinians as a nation ($F = 20.78$, $p<.00$), or about establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel ($F = 14.55$, $p<.00$). In addition, they tended to be uncertain about supporting compulsory military service for Arabs in Israel, while those who did not identify with the term 'Israeli' were against it ($F = 96.45$, $p<.00$).

Respondents who thought that the term 'Palestinian' was an appropriate definition of their identity differed significantly from those who did not on the same items. They were more likely to have reservations about recognizing the state of Israel ($F = 82.77$, $p<.00$), and more likely to support (without reservations) Israel recognizing the Palestinians as a nation ($F = 32.35$, $p<.00$), and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel ($F = 27.99$, $p<.00$). In addition, they were against supporting compulsory military service for Arabs in Israel ($F = 37.91$, $p<.00$).

Respondents who considered themselves religiously observant were more likely than those who considered themselves secular to have reservations about Israel's right to exist ($F = 3.43$, $p<.03$), and to think that the term 'Palestinian' described them appropriately ($F = 3.31$, $p<.04$). Religious respondents were also more strongly in favor of establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel than secular respondents ($F = 3.92$, $p<.02$).

Eleventh graders differed from tenth graders significantly on the following items. They were less likely than 10th graders to think that the term 'Israeli' described them appropriately ($F = 4.41$, $p<.04$), and more likely to think that the term 'Palestinian' described them appropriately ($F = 7.31$, $p<.01$). Eleventh graders also had more reservations about

recognizing the state of Israel than did the tenth graders ($F = 5.67, p<.02$), and were more strongly opposed to compulsory military service for Arabs than the tenth graders ($F = 23.68, p<.00$). Conversely, the tenth graders had more reservations than the eleventh graders about establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel ($F = 7.47, p<.01$).

## Discussion

As the data show, the way Bedouin youth define their collective identity underscores the failure of official attempts to de-Arabize the Bedouin. Moreover, these attempts notwithstanding, it is possible to detect a marked process in their construction of collective self-identity that, on the one hand, pushes them away from Israeli identity and, on the other, moves them closer to Palestinian and Arab identity. Thus, for instance, the data show that only 6% of the Bedouin youth in the study identified themselves as 'Israeli' alone, and the remaining 94% identified themselves with terms that included 'Arab' or 'Palestinian' or both.

To be more specific, however, the results of this study reveal a range of responses from Bedouin Arab youth about their individual and collective identities as Israeli citizens within the larger Israeli/Palestinian context. On several issues (e.g., Israel's right to exist; whether or not it is possible to be an equal citizen in the Jewish-Zionist state of Israel, etc.), the category most frequently chosen by the respondents indicated a great deal of uncertainty. The theme of uncertainty over self-definition and political belonging resonates very well with the following statement of the prominent Israeli Arab scholar, Zidani (1997, 63):

> I am an average Arab Israeli citizen existing in a gray area between being a citizen and a temple slave. I am a half citizen in the state of Israel; from my point of view the state is half mine, and half democratic. The gates of the state and society are half-open to me, and the ear is half listening to what I have to suggest or to say. I have no other state, and the state I have is only half mine. I am still a present-absentee, half-separated and half integrated in various life spheres of the state and the society. Despite my participation in elections I am not a legitimate partner in important decisions which effect me, nor am I a partner in deciding on the standards and norms in the various spheres of public life.

On other issues, a majority opinion emerged, for example with regard to support for the recognition and establishment of a Palestinian state, and lack of support for the extension of compulsory military services to Arabs in Israel. While 56% said that the term 'Israeli' described their identity appropriately, 61% said that the term 'Palestinian' described their identity appropriately. From a population characterized as 'loyal'

to the state of Israel, these responses are surprising, and suggest that there are now many fewer significant differences between the Bedouin and other Arabs than Smooha (1984, 1989, 1990) has found in past surveys. In particular, the contrast between the findings of Smooha's (1984) survey of Arab opinion in 1976 and the findings of the current study are striking. In 1976, Smooha found that 77% of Bedouin Arabs thought that the preferred status for Arabs in Israel was as a separate but equal group in Israel, 21% thought it was as part of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and 2% thought it was as part of a secular state where Arabs and Jews have equal rights. In the current study among Bedouin Arab youth, only 22% thought the preferred status for the Arab minority to be a separate but equal group in Israel, while 38% thought it to be a part of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, and 40% thought it to be a part of a secular state where Arabs and Jews have equal rights.

These findings call to mind the predictions in a number of reports (Abu-Saad, 1997; Landau, 1993; McDowall, 1989; Trounson, 1998) that the government's treatment of the Bedouin community would create a sense of disillusionment about the equality of their citizenship in the Jewish state, and further increase their alienation from the State of Israel. However, the limitation of the study, which surveyed only Bedouin high school students, must be kept in mind when interpreting the findings. Thus, the results cannot be considered representative of the Negev Bedouin population in general. Rather, the study provides insight into the views and perspectives of the emerging generation of Bedouin youth.

The youth who were more certain about their identity (Israeli or Palestinian), tended to be polarized on a number of other issues. Those who considered themselves Israelis had no problem with recognizing Israel's right to exist but had reservations about the establishment of a Palestinian state. They were more likely than other youth to be uncertain about, rather than opposed to, compulsory military service for Arabs in Israel. Conversely, among youth who considered themselves Palestinian, and those who did not think that they could ever be equal citizens in a Jewish-Zionist state, the sense of alienation from Israel was clear. Those who considered themselves Palestinian fully supported the establishment of a Palestinian state but had reservations about Israel's right to exist, and were opposed to compulsory military service for Arabs in Israel. Those youth who did not think that Arabs could be equal citizens in a Jewish-Zionist state were more likely to define themselves as Palestinians, to be opposed to compulsory military service for Arabs and to have reservations about Israel's right to exist.

The differences found between 10th and 11th graders suggest that as Bedouin Arab youth become older, their ability to identify themselves with the state of Israel decreases. This would seem to be logical, since as

they get older they are likely to have more exposure to how the state defines itself. They are also likely to have a better understanding of how the exclusiveness of the national identity limits their ability to fully identity with and participate in the state, or develop socially, politically and economically; as well as to understand that, as Gavison (1997, p. 70) conceded, "the state of Israel and its exclusive Jewish identity is not giving the Arab minority a real option of integration."

The findings of this study tend to affirm the prediction that those unable to identify with the national identity of the state would ultimately seek out other collective identities with which to identify, such as the Islamic movement and Palestinian nationalism. For example, youth who identified themselves as religious (41% of the sample) were significantly more likely than those who considered themselves secular (5% of the sample) to define themselves Palestinian, support the establishment of a Palestinian state, and have reservations about Israel's right to exist.

As we have repeatedly argued, the findings of our research illustrate the futility of the policy to de-Arabize the Bedouin and to instill in them the unfounded belief that they are full and equal citizens of the state of Israel. We would like to argue that the failure of the policy in this regard is inevitable primarily for the following reason: Israel's national identity is constructed in a manner that leaves no room for Arab culture and heritage and this identity provided the legitimization for discriminatory policies against the Bedouin, as well as against other Arab groups. Thus, the shift towards Palestinian national and cultural identity found among Bedouin youth can be partly explained as a result of their growing awareness of this political reality and their decreasing readiness to accept it. But then again, this shift is nothing but another manifestation, albeit a sobering one at that, of the challenge facing Zionist ideology since the pre-state era, more than fifty years ago. To put it succinctly, the challenge is this: if Israel aspires to be judged as a liberal democracy and to ensure its legitimacy and political stability, it must make significant changes in its basic governing principles. It must either incorporate the culture and collective aspirations of its Arab citizens within the national identity, and/or allow them some form of political autonomy.

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# Writing against the State: Transnationalism and the Epistemology of Minority Studies, with Special Reference to Israel

Dan Rabinowitz

The nation state, one of the more durable contributions of modernism to human history, is a compelling concept. Actors often treat it as an inherent component of identity and as an indispensable aspect of human nature. It hinges on a non-problematized division of the global landmass into a series of idealized 'ultimate territorial units.' Each of these idealized constructs ostensibly forms a coherent and homogenous entity, representative of individuals who live in it and of the values which unite them. Ultimate territorial units are fondly believed to display a perfect fit between 'the land' (ostensibly a discrete and well bounded territory circumscribed by stable recognized borders); the people living in it ('society'); their unique history and culture; and the superstructure of a state which serves both as a regulatory mechanism and as a source and focus for loyalty and identification. This string of attributes and interconnected values seeks to consolidate and ratio-nalize a composite concept of the nation state.

Such composite and unproblematized notions are conducive to the formation of 'strong' states, with clear ideologies of territorial and symbolic unity and with the political zeal to enforce them. Naturally, it is also a hotbed for the emergence of a variety of *etatist* ideological clichés. The theoretical and political weakness of such clichés, however, becomes apparent with the (re)surfacing of ethnic, class, gender-related and other types of hybrids and minorities. The etatist paradigm is particularly vicious regarding ethnic and national minorities. Often perceived by regimes as capable and willing to overthrow the state's ideological and coercive supremacy, such minorities are commonly posited as ideological straw-men and become political targets. No, I do not mean strong men. I mean straw men – an idiom often used to describe setting someone as a target whether or not they actually fit the

bill attributed to them. Please leave as is. The strife to marginalize such minorities is often used by etatist regimes as a means to further buttress the regime's position. Campaigns staged by such regimes often set off by isolating a minority as an anomaly, a distracting noise in a system fondly assumed – or idealized – to operate smoothly. Tragically, the chase often goes on to become more vicious.

My first task in this chapter is to identify certain cases of ethnic and national minorities living in 'strong' states as 'trapped minorities.' The label denotes a minority which is a) affiliated with a mother nation that has segments across two states or more and b) living in a relatively recent state dominated by Others. Such a minority is thus 'entrapped' in time and space. Having been overtaken by the recent alien state, the trapped minority often has ties with its mother nation severed. It is, as it were, marginal twice over: once within the (alien) state, a second time within the (largely absent) mother nation. Proper historicization of such predicaments can shed new light on the minority and its history, on the host state and its practices, and on the relationships both with neighboring states and with the mother nation.

The concept of a trapped minority is useful for a better understanding of how minorities within strong states become excluded from political debate and power. Minorities such as the Palestinian citizens of Israel, living on their ancestral land and harboring obvious claims to territorial rights, are consistently excluded from most political processes that determine state power and public goods (Peled 1992). This includes infrastructural aspects such as land ownership, settlement, planning, housing, and development (Shafir 1989, Yiftachel 1992, Rabinowitz 1997) as well as a variety of socio-political rights and privileges.

My second task here is to connect these thoughts on the predicament of trapped minorities to globalization and the discourse of transnationalism, which emphasizes a weakening of some aspects of the nation state.

The evolving reality of globalization is accompanied by a fitting discourse within the social sciences.[1] Writers on transnationalism are less likely than before to over-optimistic predictions of the imminent removal of the nation from people's emotional horizons and political agendas. Much evidence, in fact, indicates that globalization notwithstanding, ethnic and other local aggregations, remain prominent social forces, capable of mobilizing masses (Waters 1995, Castells 1997, Ram 1999). This notwithstanding, the dynamic nature of the discourse and the rapid changes characterizing the globalizing world do call for fresh conceptualizations of minorities and their relations to the states and regions within and with which they co-exist.

The discourse of transnationalism, while perhaps not specifically intended to write against the state, does have the potential to dislodge

debates of ethnicity and nationalism from the analytical straight-jacket of the bounded nation. Furthermore, historicization of minorities that is informed by transnationalism could perhaps enhance new kinds of agency for members of minorities, including trapped minorities.

This chapter sets off with a review of scientific studies of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, which, I argue, display over-reliance on the state as an exclusive unit of analysis. The concept of trapped minority is then elaborated, its relevance to current political trajectories in Israel/Palestine and beyond highlighted. Finally, a brief summary of discourses of transnationalism leads to the suggestion that the re-shaping of global and regional arenas, which weakens states, facilitates new ways to analyze intra-state ethnic divides.

## I. The Etatist Paradigm and the Israeli Iron Cage

Social scientific studies of Israel tend to use the state as a major, often sole unit of analysis. One reason could be the tendency inherent in the social sciences to view structures such as the family, the community and ultimately the states as regulating mechanisms of potentially harmful 'social' forces, as Eric Wolf convincingly argues in *Europe and the Peoples Without History* (Wolf 1982:4–5). Another is the well-known tendency towards 'Israel exceptionalism' – an a-historic view that sees the case of Israel as utterly unique, rendering global and regional contexts of little consequence. A third, related reason involves the very nature of Israeli (Zionist) identity, so heavily premised on complete separation, alienation and disassociation from its immediate environment.

Whatever their precise origins, many popular and social scientific constructions of Israel and Israeli identity are premised on visions of an iron cage inserted into a radically different Arab east. Much of what Israel and Israeli culture and society stand for depends on borders, boundaries, and the maintenance of dichotomous frontiers (cf. Kemp 2000). This is very much in line with the founding meta-narrative of Zionism, and its propensity to construct a 'strong' state in the ideological meaning of the word. It depicts the genesis of modern Israel as the inevitable outcome of a two thousand year long forced diaspora that culminated in the holocaust and led to an eventual 'return' to the ancestral home. The state, continues the meta-narrative, thus personifies the moral right and collective capability of those rescued from burning Europe to fend off the contemporary natives of the land, who refuse to acknowledge the righting of the historical wrong done to the Jews and to accept their own inevitable demise.

The discourse of transnationalism, which could also be labeled post-nationalism, is, in many ways, antithetic. Rather than treat distinctions

as constant, primordial and a given, it tends to highlight their particular historicity, and trace the ways in which they are becoming blurred around their edges, in the border-zones. This remains an emotionally and ideologically taxing exercise for mainstream Israel, and a threat to some of the fundamental constructions of Israeli identity.

The tendency to overlook the trans- and post-national aspects of life in Israel/Palestine, while understandable in a state that has traditionally been ideologically strong, is particularly noteworthy in lieu of two prevalent phenomena. One is the presence in Israel, since the early 1970s, of an immense number of Palestinian laborers from the occupied territories which constitute an army of young male commuters who break the boundary between the first and third worlds on a daily basis.[2] As a world-wide phenomenon, this motion has gained much analytical attention, fueling debates and sophisticated macro analyses of post-Fordist time-space compression, flexible accumulation, the labor and finance realities of late capitalism and the restructuring of global cities that go with it (Sassen 1996, Soja 1991). These concepts have, by and large, remained outside most academic discourse and public debate of the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians – a silence that makes the highly problematic vision of 'a new Middle East' go with little theoretical critique in mainstream Israel.[3]

A second and related phenomenon is the endless stream of media images originating from the real and imagined physical and mental divides between Israel and the Palestinians. The place of media events and images in the collapsing of cultural boundaries and in reshaping identity markers has been central to a transnational vision. In mainstream Israel it seems to have had a different effect, if anything consolidating and enhancing the self image of *'Am Levadad Yishkon'* – a defiant nation fighting a just battle for its existence while cultivating its right to otherness and exclusivity.

One field particularly over-burdened with the tendency to put the state in the center is the study of the Palestinian citizens of Israel – an 850,000 strong community which makes approximately 18% of the entire population of the state and, incidentally, a similar proportion of the entire Palestinian people.

Elia Zureik (1979) takes the marginal status of the Palestinians within Israel as the defining feature of what he typifies as a colonial settler-state. Gershon Shafir (1989), in his analysis of land and labor within Zionism, while stressing the specific circumstances of the Jewish national movement, nevertheless adheres to the colonial paradigm. So do, by and large, Michael Shalev's study of Israel's split economy (Shalev 1992) and Lev Greenberg's analysis of the Labor movement (Greenberg 1991).

Ian Lustick (1980) investigates the structural and institutional fea-

tures designed by the Jewish hegemony to contain the Palestinian citizens, pushing a well-argued case depicting Israel as a system of control.

Yoav Peled (1992) looks at key decisions made by Israel's Supreme Court judges in their occasional capacity over the years as chairmen of the central elections committees. Peled convincingly contrasts the restrictions made on Palestinian candidates and parties with the virtually free access of Jewish Israelis to the republican core of political life and the common good. His conclusion is that Israel, including Israeli liberalism, offers its Palestinian citizens no more than a nominal and weakened form of citizenship. This buttresses his typification of Israel as 'ethnic republic' – a view supported to an extent by works such as Rabinowitz (1997), Ghanem (1998) and Rouhana (1997).

Sami Smooha's characterization of Israel as an ethnic democracy (1990: 391) has gained considerable attention in recent years. Smooha, who acknowledges the political dominance of Jews in Israel, nevertheless prefers to highlight what he believes is the democratic nature of the state, reflected in a willingness on the part of the Jewish majority to grant the Palestinian citizens rights and limited accessibility to power and resources. While the adjective 'ethnic' denotes the dominance of one hegemonic ethnos over another, the basic liberal idea of individual freedoms is sufficient for Smooha to depict the overall structure of Israel as democratic.

Smooha's work attracted considerable criticism and debate. Paramount here is Yiftachel's critique (1997), which, along with Ghanem (1998), identifies the inherent contradiction between Israel's pretence as a western-style, liberal democracy, and its practices towards the Palestinian citizens in terms of their collective rights. Yiftachel, adamant that Israel cannot qualify as a democracy, prefers Donald Horowitz's term, 'ethnocracy' (Horowitz 1985).

A feature common to all these orientations, including Smooha's and his critics, is that they all take the Palestinian citizens of Israel as a case from which to generalize about the nature of the state. The state thus remains the primary unit of analysis. The subjective view of the minorities is secondary – more a tool to think and analyze with than a focus of attention in its own right.

But overviews of states are incomplete, and often breed misrecognition of central elements of meaning and experience. This point becomes particularly relevant in an era of globalization and transnationalism, in which the weight of states in the daily experience of an ever increasing proportion of humans is reduced, while the significance of sub and supra state dynamics is on the increase (Appadurai 1996).

## Minorities in Strong States and the Concept of a Trapped Minority

The notion of the ideologically strong state contributed towards the gradual accumulation of a number of renditions of minority situations, which can be summarized in the following typology.

First is the elementary distinction between indigenous minorities – groups who live in territories that they perceive as their primordial homelands – and immigrant or exiled ones. Immigrant and exiled minorities are of less pertinence in the present context, so I leave them for a separate occasion.

Within indigenous minorities, Manuel and Posluns (1974) have identified the category of Fourth World – groups whose political weakness and economic marginality enable the national societies that surround them to overtake them and usurp their rights. Such groups, examples of which include the Inuit in Canada and Alaska, Native Americans elsewhere in North America, Bedouins in the Middle East and Swami in Scandinavia, are "fated always to be minority populations in their own lands" (1974). But here again, the concept of Fourth World, which deals with groups of limited size and political volume, is not sufficiently applicable for most minority situations.

Next is a distinction implicit in the often used term 'national minority,' which implies an entire ethnic group that lives within a nation state hegemonized by others. Obvious examples include Bretons (and others) in France, Welsh and Scots in Britain, the Ibo of Nigeria, various minorities in the conglomerate of China, and many more. A state can thus have one or more national minorities within its borders. Some states are uneasy with the very recognition of national minorities within their territory; others may be willing to acknowledge such groups, at least nominally; others still are happy to grant minorities collective rights.

Central to the idiom of national minority is the assumption that the entire group is present within the hosting state. Most cases of indigenous minorities, however, are more complicated than this. In many cases, members of minorities are spread across two states or more. This of course has far reaching implications for the group itself, for the relationship with its host state(s) and also, as I shall demonstrate later, on the development and growth of ideology and institutions of the hegemonic group in the host state.

I wish to label minority groups spread across at least two states 'trapped minorities.' I use the case of the Palestinian citizens of Israel as an operational example, but stress that the concept is efficacious in other contexts too.

Entrapment is the result of a dramatic development. A space initially perceived as safe is subject to external interference resulting in confinement. A door is closed, a fence erected, a wall cemented. The space is now enclosed, incarcerating, dangerous. This is the situation that developed around those Palestinians who remained within the confines of the newly established state of Israel immediately after 1948. Their space was transformed, falling under the control of an alien power in an ideologically and administratively strong state. They were soon granted citizenship of the state, and found themselves at the political, economic and administrative mercy of a dominant group they never wanted. Relations with the balance of their people – the vast majority of Palestinians in 1949 were living outside the borders and control of Israel – were almost completely severed.

Members of trapped minorities are marginal twice over. First, their host state tends to see and treat them as unequal citizens. Second, unlike fourth world groups and 'simple' national minorities, a trapped minority has significant segments of its mother nation in neighboring states. One of these territories may be considered the historical and ideological center of gravity for the mother country. Such is the case, for example, with the heartland of the western parts of the Republic of Armenia, which Armenians elsewhere deem as sacred parts of their historic motherland. Another possibility is that the home territory of the trapped minority itself, now under sovereignty of others, is held as the mother nation's cradle of identity and unity. Such is the case, for example, with historic Jebel Druze, inhabited by a Druze minority entrapped within the recent Syrian state. Another alternative is that the mother nation's territorial heartland is intangible,[4] under debate within the nation or in contention with another nation.

Members of a trapped minority are often implicated by their very residence, acculturation and formal citizenship in the host state. As a result, their status in the mother nation abroad might be devalued. The Palestinian citizens of Israel, who are labeled 'Arabs' or 'Palestinians' – thus ultimately alien – by Israelis, are nevertheless kept at arm's length by Palestinians and Arabs abroad for being 'Israelis.' The 1960s and 1970s thus witnessed disregard and contempt on the part of the exiled Palestinian leadership, who portrayed the Palestinian citizens of Israel as a self-seeking, spoiled collective, collaborating with the Zionist occupation of the homeland. Paradoxically, the one contingent of Palestinians that managed to remain in its historic locus found itself physically disconnected and morally suspect by those occupying the center stage of Palestinian national revival.

The result is a double bind. On the one hand, the Palestinian citizens of Israel are marginal *vis-à-vis* mainstream Jewish Israel, where even the liberal echelons within the Jewish majority are acutely conscious of

Palestinian citizens' extreme Otherness. This results in chronic disregard by the Israeli mainstream of their rights as citizens and as the indigenous population of the country, and a persistent misrecognition of the tragedy that befell them when the state of Israel was established. Concomitantly, Palestinians and Arabs across the borders see the Palestinian citizens of Israel as an ambiguous and problematic element whose status in the national arena is yet to be determined, and whose very loyalty to the Palestinian nation might still be suspect. Israel's willingness, where it exists, to integrate its Palestinian citizens into economic, political and social life, might in fact further reduce their chances to clarify their credentials in the eyes of Palestinians generally.

Trapped in this dual marginality and held between these two centers of political gravity, the Palestinian citizens of Israel are painfully aware of two conflicting national narratives, and experience with their lives and property two systems of legitimization.

Let me now go on to a speculative description of some of the features likely to characterize a trapped Minority. These features, I must stress, are by no means inherent, culturally imbedded or otherwise engrained. Rather, they are conjectural and context-related. And they are likely to dissipate as the entrapment eases (see below). First, trapped minorities are likely to cherish collective memories of the traumatic event (or lamentable process) by which the homeland was taken over by a foreign power. This memory is often vivid, leaning on personal experiences, enmeshed in close familial history. In the case of the Palestinians – citizens of Israel as well as others – the key scenario, powerfully remembered as a personal and familial experience and commemorated as a formative and unifying national calamity (Rabinowitz 1994), is the *nakbah* – the disastrous loss of life, limb, property and ancestral rights during the 1948 hostilities.

Second, members of a trapped minority while sensing solidarity with and longing to their mother nation, are bound to feel excluded from the thrust of national revival, even as it engulfs the mother nation abroad. This is precisely what happened to the Palestinian citizens of Israel as the Palestinian national movement began to be shaped abroad during the 1960s.

Third, a trapped minority is likely to remain non-assimilating. This may be due to a subjective choice, may result from a dictum made by the hegemonic group, or could be a combination of the two. Significantly, its non-assimilating nature tends to be perceived as permanent, acculturation notwithstanding. Thus, the Palestinian citizens of Israel, while all the while acquiring more of the values and the symbols of Jewish Israel and gaining further access to and influence upon its political arena, neither want to nor are invited to assimilate This exclusion, which tends to be more finite and impermeable than their

disassociation with their mother nation, makes them eternal candidates for the rediscovery and reassertion of their bond to their mother nation, even at the expense of improving ongoing ties and relations within their state of citizenship.

A fourth likely characteristic, related to the latter, is that being at the cross-fire between at least two nations, the relationship between a trapped minority and their host state is inevitably influenced – sometimes determined – by relations between the two nations. Naturally, the more tense and hostile this relationship, the more likely it is that the host state will regard the trapped minority's quest to maintain a separate national cohesion and identity as dangerously out of line. Smooha (1989) has shown that this is very much the case with Israelis' view of its Palestinian minority, a point reiterated by Benziman and Mansour (1992).

It would be wrong, however, to depict the situation of a trapped minority as a zero sum game. Neither the host state nor the mother nation is in a position to offer members of the trapped minority a viable option of full incorporation. Israel, for one, in spite of its growing commitment to a liberal discourse of egalitarian citizenship, consistently fails to offer its Palestinian citizens full incorporation. Instead it prefers to hide behind a veil of legalistic, formal, declarative assertions that claim indifference to national affiliation and an even-handed, rational treatment of all citizens (cf. Herzfeld 1992). Likewise, the Palestinian mother nation and its emergent institutions outside Israel do not propose a meaningful incorporation of the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Consequently, neither host state nor mother nation are in position to demand their unconditional loyalty, and neither has ever seriously considered to demand that Palestinian citizens of Israel sever whatever ties they have with the other entity. Significantly, this was the case even at times when the other entity was perceived as the ultimate enemy.

Fifth, and following from the previous four characteristics, members of trapped minorities are likely to display chronic ideological and internal divisions, and to experience difficulties in forging a united front both inside the state and outwards. These divisions are related to the tensions and confusion inherent to their structural position *vis-à-vis* the strong state of their citizenship and their mother nation. In my operational example, the internal divisions which have plagued the Palestinian citizens of Israel since the 1950s can no longer be seen solely in terms of the Machiavellian system of control employed by the state and acted out by manipulative political parties, state agencies and locally co-opted leaders (cf. Lustick 1980). Neither, of course, can this disunity be attributed to an inherent cultural failure on the part of the Palestinians themselves, as some Israeli orientalists were prepared to

imply until not long ago. Rather, I argue, it is their dichotomous entrapment that puts an upper limit to their ability to articulate a coherent strategic and historic vision that unites them.

To summarize, a trapped minority exists as a non-hegemonic group in a sovereign state dominated by others, while at the same time remaining territorially, demographically and politically peripheral to its mother nation. Often a non-assimilating borderland community, it is likely to be caught in the political and military cross fire between its state and its nation, none of which is capable or willing to demand – or offer – full commitment.

Instances of trapped minorities – a concept which, like Barth's ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969), is not dependent on a restrictive definition of territory or cultural affiliation – have recently become more numerous and obvious. A non-comprehensive list would include Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Syria (their core group and national heartland being in Iraqi Kurdistan); pockets and enclaves of various elements of former Yugoslavia now trapped in the newly established independent states that have replaced the federation; Muslims in various parts of the Balkans, notably Turks in the north east of Bulgaria and Pomaks across the border between Bulgaria and Greece; Russians in the Baltics, the Caucas and Trans-Caucas who, after the demise of the Soviet Empire have found themselves entrapped between their familial roots in the newly independent non-Russian republics and their ancient national affinity with Russia; Armenians in Azerbeijan, Ukrainians in Siberia or Kazakhs in Uzbekistan. There were Hungarians in post-First World War Slovakia and Rumania; Sudeten Germans between the wars and after 1945; Catholics in British Ulster, and Protestants in a future united Ireland. A variety of groups in Africa and South-East Asia following the establishment of new nation-states such as the Tutsi in Rwanda, the Hutu in Burundi, the Malays of Southern Thailand, and many others.

Significantly, the nature and disposition of trapped minorities in ideologically strong states carries considerable weight in the quest of the majority to find its own identity. Human collectives often define themselves through perceptions of ultimate Others. Thus, the existence of a simple national minority is often used by the majority as a backdrop against which the blueprints of identity become inscribed. The presence of a trapped minority, however, makes the process more complex. A trapped minority is, by definition, not easily contained: it spreads across the borders into other territories, adjacent or abroad, forging pacts with enemies and strangers. Racist discourse repeatedly refers to minorities affiliated abroad as tips of dangerous icebergs, ominous protrusions of external threats. The metaphor of aliens as agents of disease – a foreign entity which invades the body nation, threatening to destroy it from

within – often surfaces in rhetoric that reflect the majority's darkest xenophobic fear and hatred.

Such a dynamic is evident when one looks at negotiations of the place of Palestinian suffering in formal articulations of collective memory in Israel. Should the heavy price paid in 1948 by the families of people who are today Palestinian citizens of Israel be perceived merely as the punishment that members of the losing side in war can expect? Or, alternatively, should the argument be made that Palestinians are the group of citizens of Israel who paid the highest possible price for the establishment of the state?

The point is by no means trivial. Jewish Israeli public discourse habitually uses suffering to engender and calibrate entitlement to rights. Defining the Palestinian tragedy of 1948 as the awful price in blood, dignity and property that paved the way to the eventual triumph of Zionism is a revolutionary concept for the majority of mainstream Israelis. It collapses the dichotomy between the categories 'Us' and 'Them,' and their inherent analogy to 'Good' and 'Bad,' 'Right' and 'Wrong,' 'those who Suffer' and 'those inflicting suffering.'

The fact remains, however, that the Palestinian citizens of Israel have yet to claim their rightful share in the pantheon of Israel's public memory. The debate into the place of the Palestinian *nakbah* in the commemoration of Israel's 50th anniversary was initiated by liberal Israelis, and proceeded to take place primarily amongst them. The voice and vision of the Palestinian community within Israel regarding this highly sensitive issue is yet to crystallize and make its full appearance in Israeli public life.

Finally, being a trapped minority is not merely complicated and confusing, it can be dangerous as well. The presence of an entity that is also part of an external being can push even a powerful majority to adopt a defensive self-image replete with weakness and vulnerability. Recent history provides more than enough examples of the violence that may erupt once a nation such as Israel combines deep seated fear of the constructed Other with military might.

Being a trapped minority within a strong state is a predicament that may imply extended periods of passivity facing a situation which is finite and static. Being a trapped minority is, to be sure, an undesirable situation imposed on a collective against its will, as an alien nation-state becomes the sovereign of its ancestral homeland. Being smaller, poorer and often less organized than the state, the options of a trapped minority to effect structural change is limited. Available avenues are, in fact, often restricted to the somewhat limited spectrum between compliance and various forms of resistance. This does not mean, however, that the predicament is structurally finite. Entrapment may be a powerful idiom, but it is, first and foremost, a historic starting point. Like most situations,

it too can be, and often is, subject to change. Such change can be effected by agency from within the trapped minority as well as by changing circumstances within the hosting state. In today's globalizing world, however, both arenas can no longer be properly analyzed without recourse to theoretical trajectories associated with globalization and transnationalism.

## 3. Globalization, Transnationalism and Israel/Palestine

Globalization theory emerges in the last two decades as a critique of classical hegemonic representations of history (Kearney 1995). In traditional historiography, time tended to be linear, consistently advancing in a positive progression towards modernization, development and growth. The notion of such ´natural´ chronology came in tandem with a dichotomous division of global space into an advanced developed centre in Europe, European North America and Australia versus a yet-to-be-developed periphery. The two world spaces were perceived to be connected in a-symmetric lines of communication and administration. One, as it were, was running the other.

Wallerstein's (1974) *The Modern World System* and Harvey's (1989) *The Condition of Post-Modernity* have since demonstrated that the world's economy and derivatives in the realms of culture and identity have always been more integrated and less fragmented. Eric Wolf's (1982) *Europe and the People Without History* builds on Wallerstein's and Frank's (1967) assertions, paving the way for a series of anthropological studies that demonstrate how the local and the global, the developed and the yet to be developed, constantly invade and impact each other. Space was realized as more fluid, boundaries as less rigid and durable

Decolonialization since the 1950s and the transformations into nation states of groups hitherto perceived of as living fossils – to drive the metaphor of stasis to its absurd extremity – has bred a new awareness of the larger contexts and systems in which individual cultures and communities are embedded. The simple notion of space and culture as bounded, finite and discrete is no longer viable.

Unlike space, time is more difficult to be perceived as non-teleological: progression towards entropy and de-development is harder to envisage. Still, peripheries can collapse and implode into the centre through immigration (Rouse 1991), electronic media (Sreberny-Mohhammadi 1991), tourism (McCannel 1989) and imagination (Appadurai 1991). History can be, and is being, written from the periphery (Wolf 1982), using hitherto concealed categories and classifications. Culture, social structure and identity can no longer be understandable solely in terms of specific places and ethnographic pres-

ences. Rather, much of the human experience is appreciated as taking place in ethnoscapes, between the boundaries and not within their confinement (Appadurai 1991).

Anthropology, with its traditional emphasis on the local and the unique and its special interest in the periphery, was particularly diligent in its attempt to capture these deterritorialized consciousnesses and imaginations, and ended up producing its own variety of transnational discourse. Whereas globalization looks at global processes, transnationalism looks at more limited concrete and local contexts (Kearney 1995). Whereas globalization deals with the impersonal and the universal, transnationalism looks at the political and the ideological. This is significant in the present context as an alternative to the theoretical limitations of the state as an exclusive unit of analysis.

Frederic Barth's (1969) preoccupation with the extent to which cultures can be said to have borders is now replaced by a preoccupation with the extent to which borders can be said to have cultures (Rabinowitz 1998). This new preoccupation produced works such as Anzaldua (1987), Rosaldo (1988), Donnan and Wilson (1998) and others who all identify the border zone as a productive unit of analysis. They show that border areas can no longer be assumed as marginal, and that the universal mainstream of the human experience, while defined by and in the metropolis, does not take place exclusively in them. The new perspective from the margins represents experiences shared by an infinitely larger proportion of humanity than hitherto recognized. The borderland, an interstitial zone where at least two territorial and demographic segments blur into each other, emerges as a viable alternative to rigid definitions of wholesome homes. 'Home' is thus problematized, inevitably identified as a space implying an earlier displacement of others.

These ideas have sparkled interesting reassessments of the nature of the state (Herzfeld 1992), ethnic groups within it and on its margins, (Kapferer 1988), and the relationships between them and the dominant majority (Rabinowitz 1997). This emancipates minorities from the dubious status of ethnic clamor in the otherwise tranquil clockwork operation of the nation-state. Old myths of the state are vigorously problematized, giving way to the realization that the narratives of nationalism, etatism and Western liberal republicanism conceal and silence at least as much as they reveal. Rather than the state, it is the former margins – minorities, border areas, diasporas, the exiled and displaced, the imploding army of migrant laborers – that are centered now. Their histories and subjectivities become the new primary objects of analysis.

This perspective, and the political economy of corporate-led globalization, carry profound consequences for the relations between Israel

and the Palestinians, and are very relevant to the situation of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Economic globalization, in particular the intense de-regulation of trade and customs, finance and immigration, make for weaker states in more than one way. Elements of the economy and of society hitherto controlled in full by states are rapidly becoming domains in which multi-national corporations are the real players, and in which state machineries are gradually becoming arbitrators, losing their ability and will to represent the greater social interest. The world of telecommunications is rapidly globalizing, as people in more and more territories are exposed to transnational broadcasts, information and inter-personal communication over the internet.

States are weakening both in real terms – their influence and even presence diminishes from a variety of arenas – and in terms of their centrality within national debates and discourse. To be sure, the concept of the nation state is still alive and well, as capable of emotional and practical mobilization as it has ever been. But its most important instrument, the iron cage of regulations and the will and means to enforce them, is being rapidly devalued.

These developments were coupled, in the case of Israel, with a considerable incremental territorial shrinkage. First was the Sinai peninsula, three times the size of Israel itself, which was returned to Egypt in 1982. In the 1990s, the Gaza strip and parts of the West Bank were handed to the Palestinians, implying that a final settlement will yield considerably more relinquished territory. A willingness in principal to do away with the entire Golan Heights was made public in the late 1990s, and the old city of Jerusalem transpired as negotiable in July 2000.

The combination of territorial shrinkage and globalization de-regulation exposed the intricate relationships that link Palestinian communities in the West Bank and in Gaza to those in Israel, Jordan and elsewhere. It also highlighted the extent to which Jewish Israel is entangled in a complex web of transnational connections with its neighbors.

The solidarity, interconnectedness and sense of common fate that Palestinians share across state borders throughout the Middle East, including Israel, continuously questions the vision of territorial separation as the only formula for peace and stability. The entrapment of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, both temporally (in history) and geographically (in territory), no longer seems to be as deep. The leadership that was displayed during the Palestinian student demonstrations in Israeli universities in April and in May 2000 was, in my opinion, a significant indicator of change. The candid statements made by the mostly female leaders, to the effect that Israel means nothing to them, and that their aspirations for full identity and nationality were wholly

Palestinian, suggest perhaps that the siege is no longer effective. The popularity amongst the Palestinian citizens of Israel of a binational solution – one state in Israel/Palestine between the sea and the river Jordan – is another salient signal.

## Notes

1   Examples include Harvey 1989, Appadurai 1991, Hannerz 1996, Vertovec 1999, Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999 and many more.
2   This army was preceded in the 1960s by (smaller) numbers of Palestinian citizens of Israel commuting from their towns and villages inside Israel. And, it has been superseded since the early 1990s by hundreds of thousands of migrant laborers from South-East Asia, East Europe, West Africa and South America.
3   A recent exception can be found in Ram (1999).
4   The notion of a state for the Sikh nation that has territory at all is an extreme case of this option.
5   Particularly instructive was an interview with three student leaders published as a cover story of *Ma'ariv*'s (Israel second largest daily) color Weekend supplement, June 23, 2000.

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*Identities*

# Representing National Identity in Conditions of Conflict

## Ahmad Sa'di

Since the early 1970s, the concept of identity has become an icon of the debate on the foundations of multi-ethnic societies, and was marked by the publication of a series of books on national identity and representation that advanced our understanding of these issues to new terrain. The most significant works are those of Anderson, Said, Hobsbawm and their followers (Anderson, 1991; Said, 1987; 1993; 1997; Hobsbawm, 1993; Colley, 1992). The first two followed a long tradition that extends back to the German sociologist Simmel (see also Simmel, 1950; Elias and Scotson, 1965; Bauman, 1991; Stocking, 1995), and dealt with the mechanisms of identity formation. For Anderson, this process entails incorporation, appropriation, interiority, and sameness. This could be achieved on a large scale only, following the emergence of the nation-state and the development of modern means of mass communication. Print capitalism was an indispensable tool for the evolution of feelings of familiarity, closeness and affinity among people who live in the same culture; they read the same books, and by virtue of that, develop similar feelings and a shared world of images and fantasies. The appearance of standard language, written and spoken, was, therefore, central to imagining the nation. Furthermore, Anderson and Hobsbawm argue that identity is fluid and historically constructed. Paradoxically, Anderson's work appeared when the social phenomena described was fading; the presence of racial minorities in European countries and the increase of internationalization have undoubtedly flustered the constructed feelings of intimacy and adherence to a shared world of ideas, beliefs, experiences etc. The loss of a solid, clear and unquestionable identity has been manifested in all fields of life. For example, the policies of integration, acculturation and assimilation, which were pillars of the social policies in most states in the post-war era, have been giving way to policies and ideas that stress heterogeneity and pluralism. The increasing awareness of the existence of the other(s), along with his historical expe-

rience, culture, needs and identity, has been a central issue in this debate.

Said's works (1987; 1993; 1997) reflect, by and large, the voice of the other within, of the non-Europeans who came into European societies and presented their history, their culture and their viewpoint as equally valid to that of Europeans. Contrary to Anderson, Said emphasizes the role of the other in the consolidation of identity. The construction by the European imperial powers of a geopolitical and racial category (ies) – the Orient (or Islam) – led to the erection of clear cut cultural, ethical and psychological boundaries between 'we' and 'them' and the establishment of a hierarchical order on that basis (Said, 1987; 1993; 1997).

Although the works of the authors mentioned above and that of their followers are well known and widely quoted by Israeli academics, the parts of their ideas that have significant bearing on identity formation were rarely incorporated. Another tradition, socio-psychological, has been adopted for the study of identity, primarily with regard to the identity of the Palestinian minority. Israeli social scientists who initiated the study on this issue have preferred mainly to rely on an evolutionary functional model along with a strong empiricist orientation.

The aim of this chapter is twofold: to present a critical survey of existing research conducted by Israeli social scientists on Palestinian identity, and to explore new terrains and experiences which have had considerable impact on the formation of this identity. In the first section, I will critically review the presentation of Palestinian identity in the mainstream research in Israel. In the second, I will discuss alternative frameworks that were applied for the study of Palestinian identity. Meanwhile, in section three, essential variables for the study of this identity, its origin and peculiarity will be clarified. In section four, a cultural framework for analyzing Palestinian identity as a form of resistance is presented. Finally, section five will include a preliminary discussion on forms of 'self-othering' as an alternative frame of identification.

## The Hegemonic Conception of Palestinian Identity

The evolution, changes and development of group identity among the Palestinian citizens of Israel have constituted the main focus of research on this minority since 1967. The seminal research of Peres and Yuval-Davis (1969), which was conducted just before and after the six days war of 1967, have set both the agenda and the methodology of discussion for Israeli and non-Israeli scholars alike. Since the publication of this article, a considerable amount of research has been published that, largely, adopted the same theoretical framework and methodological proce-

dures. At the theoretical level, this research is based upon the postulations of the functionalist theory, which views social development in evolutionary terms. Alongside the progress of social groups from traditionalism to modernity, their members widen their frame of identification, from identification along primordial, religious or local lines to identification with imagined social categories, primarily the nation – an overarching secular entity. This process is comparable with the notion of cognitive development, advanced by the psychologist Piaget, according to which natural maturation of individuals is accompanied by a gradual transition from concrete to abstract thinking. Meanwhile, at the methodological level, the bulk of this research draws its findings from survey results. Typically, Palestinian interviewees are asked to choose the most appropriate social construction that describes their identity from a list of images. In most cases, the labels include a range from Israeli to Palestinian with various religious, local and mixed images falling in between. This conceptual and methodological framework has been presented as scientific, objective and neutral. Yet, the results obtained are usually interpreted in political terms as indicating radicalization *versus* accommodation, or as pointing to a trend of 'Palestinization' *versus* 'Israelization.'

The findings of this research have frequently been brought to the attention of the Israeli public, politicians and civil servants in the context of debates over state's policy towards the Palestinian minority in a whole range of issues such as land confiscation, regional planning, demographic growth etc. This research could be divided into three main categories according to political and methodological criteria, whereas methodological and empirical debates between scholars who adhere to different trends come quite often to mask political positions. The first category includes the research conducted within what came to be known as the radicalization perspective. Proponents of this theory argue that the "Israeli Arabs" have been departing since 1967 from a position of acceptance of their status as a minority in the Jewish state towards a radical alternative of Palestinian identification, which entails a challenge to the fundamental premises of the state. This shift is manifested by a change in a whole set of political attitudes and behaviors, such as a decline in their support of Zionist parties, an increase in the volume and intensity of legal and extra-legal protest, a revival of Palestinian culture, and growing support to the Palestinians in the West-Bank and Gaza and their struggle (Rekhess, 1976; Shokeid, 1980; Layish, 1981; Soffer, 1983; Cohen, 1990; Landau, 1969; 1992, Linn, 1999).

The second category includes the studies conducted by John Hofman and his collaborators. Unlike the previous bulk of research, which was mainly produced by Orientalists, this research falls within the realm of

social psychology. It was conducted at the department of psychology in Haifa University, and embedded methods of attitude testing through questionnaires. The main conclusion that Hoffman repeatedly stressed is that the Arabs are a collection of minorities, with different affinities to the overarching Arab identity (Hofman, 1974; 1978; 1987; Hofman and Debbiny, 1970; Hofman and Rouhana, 1976). In his study with Debbiny, they concluded: "to be an Arab means first of all to be a Moslem. Arab nationalism may well leave Christians at the periphery" (Hofman and Debbiny, 1970: 1014). In another article with Rouhana, they reported that for Christians, "Arab nationalism does not follow quite as readily from their own past and tradition as it does for Moslems" (Hofman and Rouhana, 1976: 78). Following criticism (Peres, 1980), he added the concept of Palestinian to the list of images. Despite of this, his conclusion remained almost unchanged. He only substituted the term Palestinian identity for that of Arab identity, thus inferring that "there is in fact some evidence to show that Muslims and Christians are distinct types of Palestinians" (Hofman, 1987: 22).

The third category includes the research that has been conducted by Sammy Smooha over a period of two decades. He developed his thesis of "politicization" through a debate with and in opposition to the radicalization perspective. Following Zak's (1976) orthogonal conception of identity, Smooha tested two dimensions of Palestinians' collective identity, Israelization and Palestinization. Contrary to the main contention of the radicalization thesis, he reported that the Palestinians are becoming more politicized – and not radicalized – arguing that the two dimensions of their identity are independent and simultaneously evolving. Yet, the Israeli dimension is deeper and more inclusive than the Palestinian's is (Smooha, 1989).

The research on Palestinian identity is not detached from the issues that are of concern for Israeli politicians and the wider public. Questions often originated in the public debate include: Have the Arabs in Israel accepted their status as minority in a Jewish state? Do they recognize Israel's right to exist in its current structure? Can they be trusted? The research on identity gives a general framework for these inquiries, and connects current concerns with the historical debate within Zionism over the 'Arab problem' – *Haba'iah Ha'aravit*.

Since the beginning of Zionism there has been a constant denial by the Zionist movement, and later on by the state of Israel, of the existence of a Palestinian identity. The debate within Zionism on the group identity of the Palestinians dates back to the 1920s and emerged as a significant issue during the 1930s and 1940s. Zionist and Israeli leaders understood that recognition of Palestinian identity would cast doubts on the legitimacy of their claim over the country. This denial has been articulated in various ways, such as through the terms that they

employed to denote the indigenous Arab population: non-Jewish population, Arabs (without any peculiarity), Arabs of the land of Israel etc. These images were reintroduced by the state apparatus after 1948, along with new constructions, including: minorities; Arabs and Druze; Muslim, Christians, Druze and Bedouins etc. While before 1948, the denial of Palestinian identity came to refute the Arabs' political claims, during statehood it came to justify the proclaimed nature of Israel as a mono-national state, i.e. Jewish State. Despite that, the Palestinians have been treated as a national minority, as a minority that should be constantly watched, restrained and put under control. The system of control that the state has imposed over the minority has been described by various researchers (Lustick, 1980; Smooha, 1978; 1980), who, also point to the existence of two trends within the establishment in charge on Arab affairs. The first favors the use of a heavy handed policy of suppression that includes surveillance, the use of punishment against dissidents, and land confiscation. This trend is articulated by right-wing Zionist officials such as Ariel Sharon, Amnon Linn, Uri Lubrani, Moshe Arens, Israel Koeing etc. Meanwhile, the second, favored by some left-wing Zionists (such as Shmouel Toledano, a previous advisor to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs) stresses the role of economic dependency, the incorporation of educated Arabs in the bureaucracy and state's support of "positive" elements. The proponents of this school argue that, through improvement in the economic well being of the minority, its segmentation, and finally, its political manipulation, it is possible to achieve its quiescence and even its passive collaboration.

Existing political, social and ideological realities quite often affect the interpretation that researchers give to social events and phenomenon, particularly when they are engaged not only as observers but also as participants. Personal feelings and collective sentiments prevailing in the society could lead the researcher to pursue a certain line of analysis, and not another. In the discussed issue, it is difficult to overlook the similarities that exist between official political positions and research results. The radicalization thesis, which describes the minority as becoming more militant, subversive and increasingly dangerous, lends support to the activist policy line that views suppression as the appropriate way of governance. Meanwhile, Hofman sticks to the long-standing position, which denies the existence of a national consciousness among the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. Hofman's research is more policy oriented than what could be gleaned from a formalistic reading of his texts. One sensible conclusion that could be drawn from his research is that the state's policy of dividing the minority on religious, geographical and clan basis is justified and supported by evidence gathered from Arab interviewees.

Contrary to Hofman's suggestive remarks on state policy, Smooha

tackled this issue in various works (Smooha, 1978; 1980; 1989). Building upon his conception of Palestinian identity, Smooha (1990) has recently developed his thesis of "Ethnic Democracy." According to this model, the Palestinians are considered a quasi-national group, a position which embodies an uneasy contradiction: they will be awarded some group rights but within the framework of absolute Jewish domination over the state and its use for the advancement of Zionist goals. The asymmetric relations between the majority and the minority are reflective of the incomplete recognition of the minority's identity. Smooha emphasizes that within the existing structure of power relations, members of the minority can struggle to achieve some incremental improvement in their socioeconomic conditions, yet without challenging the system of domination itself. What, then, would distinguish the Palestinians, as a national minority, from other interest groups such as the Kibbutz movement, the elderly, taxi drivers etc.? In such a case, would not identity become a vehicle of aesthetic culture (to use Lloyd's [1996] concept), divorced of any political significance?

This ambivalence towards Palestinian identity explains why the Palestinians in Israel have not developed a hybrid identity, as this form of identity requires a prior recognition of the various currents which compose the person's identity and his right to freely create an identity cluster that encompasses various elements from different traditions. In current realities, where the boundaries between the groups are clear and drawn according to legal and organizational arrangements, any person whether a Jew or a Palestinian, would find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to cross the lines and to create a genuinely new or different identity.

The differences and controversies between the three trends of social science research on Palestinian identity, analyzed above, should not be exaggerated or over-emphasized because they are anchored in the same framework, the hegemonic Zionist discourse. This is manifested in various crucial decisions made on the strategies of research. The first decision consists of the 'de-historization' of Palestinian identity. Through de-historization these researchers not only challenge, but also, in fact, deny, the historical validity of a Palestinian identity. Their point of departure is explorative rather than interpretive; they question the very existence of a Palestinian identity and its prevalence. However, if identity is an a-historical category, why is it so significant for the understanding of ethnic relations?

The second crucial decision is the separation of identity from the cultural setting within which it evolves. Whereas the works of Anderson and Said, for example, explain how individuals are being incorporated into a certain culture, in most of the discussed research cultural affiliation seems to be devoid of any contribution to the development of

identity. Palestinian culture is either ignored or condemned as a source of alienation and traditionalism (cf. Rekhess, 1981).

Thirdly, identity is analyzed as a subjective phenomenon. Individuals supposedly choose their identity from a list of ready images. Can individuals, in reality, decide on their identity free of the historical, cultural, religious, linguistic, territorial and legal determinants? And, if this is so, what is the glue that holds social groups together?

The contributions of Anderson, Said and Hobsbawm ensue, among other places, from their location of identity in the realm of inter-subjectivity. Identity is presented neither as objective and timeless nor as a psychological or a personal matter. They maintain that it is constructed and historically constituted. Contrary to that, the researchers who adhere to the Israeli hegemonic conception developed an extremely 'subjectivized' notion of identity. This abstraction of Palestinian identity aims at detaching Palestinian identity from existing power relations, Palestinian history and culture, as well as from affiliation to the Palestinian people as a whole. In this way, identity is de-politicized and re-politicized according to different considerations. It is de-politicized through its presentation as relating to the private, rather than the collective (national), domain. Yet, at the same time, Palestinian identification is re-politicized through a whole set of assumptions that are associated with it, such as subversion, radicalism etc. In other words, the presumed attitudes and behaviors, which are allied with Palestinian identification, are measured according to the yardstick of the ruling ideology. This is blatant, for example, in Smooha's (1989) typology of Palestinians' orientations that were defined as: accommodationists, reservationists, oppositionists and rejectionists.

## Criticism

The hegemonic discourse on Palestinian identity has been challenged directly through detailed criticism, and indirectly through the presentation of alternative analyses. In the following, I will present three modes of criticism. The first includes the works of three anthropologists – Oppenhiemer, Rosenfeld and Nakhleh – who offer different interpretations of identity. The second encompasses the works of two Palestinian researchers – Mi'ari and Rouhana – who present ambivalent attitudes toward the hegemonic discourse. Meanwhile, the third includes two articles – by Sa'di and Rabinowtiz – that provide detailed conceptual and methodological criticisms.

The anthropological works of Oppenhiemer (1979), Rosenfeld (1979) and Nakhleh (1975) ensued from a direct encounter with Palestinians in their daily life and an endeavor to subsume aspects of their experience

within certain conceptual frameworks. Oppenhiemer studied the emergence and evolvement of a "Druze identity," which is a quite recent phenomenom. Only in 1962 did the term Druze substitute that of Arab as the official categorization of this group, six years after the beginning of the Druze's conscription to the Israeli army. Oppenhiemer describes the evolvement of Druze identity in a way that resembles the main theme in Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1996) *The Invention of Tradition* (see in particular the articles of Cohen and Ranger). He views the emergence of Druze identity and (invented) tradition as a result of common interests between the state, which acts through divide and rule to subdue the minority, and the local elite (the traditional elite and various segments of the educated one) (Oppenhiemer 1979: 45). Oppenhiemer agrees that the Druze have some particular cultural elements that distinguish them from the Muslims, yet the manipulation of these peculiarities and the selective use of their historiography, in the particular setting of power relations, is what gave rise to the "Druze identity." The conscription of Druze to the army became a main component around which their identity has evolved. For example, the five religious principles were instrumentalized and became the motif of the five stripe flag of their army unit. Furthermore, the religious feast of Nabi Shuaeb is regularly attended by state representatives and community leaders who give speeches on the "special relations" between Jews and Druze. However, these developments did not lead to the emergence of a new category, which is essentially different from the two existing national groups of Jews and Palestinians. The Druze identity became a 'half identity,' as they are treated as Arabs in some aspects (e.g. land confiscation, see Yiftachel and Segal 1998), and as non-Arabs, i.e. Druze, in others.

Contrary to Oppenhiemer, who tackled the issue of identity, Rosenfeld (1979) dealt in many of his studies with the class position of the Palestinians. He viewed the Palestinians in Israel as a national minority with distinct class characteristics. The World System theorist Wallerstein, in his discussion on the use of different categories (race, nation and ethnic minority), analyzed the interweaving of class and ethnicity, as a theoretical problem. Wallerstein (1987) attempted to show how these categorizations reflect the division of labor that exists within different political settings. When a hierarchy of exploitation exists between groups separated by political borders, the term "nation" is used to denote these collectives. However, when such a hierarchy persists within the same political unit, the concept of ethnicity is employed. Rosenfeld was critical of the research on "ethnic relations" in Israel, which corresponds to the official ideology. His call to treat the Palestinians as a national minority, which is situated in a disadvantageous position in the hierarchy of the cultural division of labor, doubtlessly represents a serious challenge to the hegemonic discourse.

Regardless of whether one accepts this Marxist interpretation or not, the question concerning the role of the struggle around resources in the evolvement of group identity remains valid and important. Oppenhiemer, for example, stressed the role of the security services as a major source of employment for Druze men in the development of "Druze identity" (1979: 52–3).

Nakhleh offered a general framework for analyzing the identity of the Palestinian minority. He viewed identity as a "product of interaction between the individual members of the group and selected traits from their particular experience" (1975: 39). The history of the Palestinian people, particularly their encounter with Zionism and the subsequent unfolding of events, resulted in the gradual development of a Palestinian identity; an identity, which is distinguished from, but not contradictory to, the general Arab culture. Explicit in Nakhleh's model is the premise that identity is constantly constructed and changing. Furthermore, he incorporated the role of the encounter with the other as a main mechanism of identity formation. Unfortunately, this model was not developed further, so as to present a more detailed description of the evolvement of Palestinian identity.

The three anthropological works mentioned above offer different angels through which Palestinian identity could be grasped and analyzed. However, these models have been largely disregarded by the hegemonic discourse.

The second line of criticism is presented in the works of two Palestinian scholars, Mi'ari (1987) and Rouhana (1997), who work within the modernization paradigm, but reject the conclusions reached by the proponents of the hegemonic discourse. The cum-cultural postulate of the modernization model comprises their point of departure. Rouhana, for example, devotes one chapter of his book (chapter 10) for the analysis of what he calls the social-cultural layer of identity (1997: 181–98). He locates the Palestinian citizens of Israel in an intermediary position between two groups: the Palestinians in the occupied territories – the traditional collective – and Israeli Jews – the modern one. For Rouhana (and for Mi'ari), modernity is associated with Occident's cultural superiority, and it is measured by attitudes towards "traditional values," "new Western values" and female emancipation (Rouhana, 1997:188–95). The consideration of European values as a yardstick for ranking other societies' cultures and level of modernity – a method which is associated with names such as Almond and Coleman (1960), Inkeles and Smith (1974), Lerner (1958) and McClelland (1961) – has been discredited long ago for being Eurocentic and embedded in colonialist ideology (See e.g. Taylor 1989: 33–40; Larrain 1989: 87–102; Joseph-Gheverhese et. al. 1990; Hoogvelt 1982; Gendzier 1978). In the context of the Palestinian minority Rouhana and Mi'ari are not alone;

this mode of thought has been embraced by various Palestinian academics in Israel.

Moreover, Rouhana (1997) argues, similar to the proponents of the hegemonic discourse, Palestinian identity is associated with specific political positions, such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the future of the West-Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, the characterization of hostile activities carried out by the Israeli Army and Palestinian guerrillas, and the nature of the Israeli state. Typically, those who identified themselves as Palestinians (Palestinian, Palestinian Arab and Israeli Palestinian) supported the official PLO position regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories occupied in the six days war, the partition of Jerusalem, etc. Meanwhile, those who defined themselves as Israeli Arabs were ready to compromise. For example, they tended to accept border modifications to Israel's advantage. Yet, the overall picture that Rouhana depicts is of identity accentuation where Palestinian identification has become pronounced and overshadows the other dimensions of identity.

The assumption of both Rouhana and those champions of the hegemonic discourse is flimsy with respect to an inherent correlation between certain political attitudes and self-national identification. My reservation is twofold. Firstly, identity is much more stable than political attitudes. Most people change their political positions several times during their life without altering their identity. The far-reaching changes in the political attitudes of leaders and ordinary people in the region, during the last decade, give a glaring example of that. Moreover, there are wide non-Palestinian public and political leaders who support the PLO position and many Palestinians, with a strong national identification, who disagree with the PLO politics. Therefore, the argument that political attitudes compose a layer of identity seems baseless. Secondly, the attitudes that most people hold are not necessarily in harmony; in fact, most people have contradictory positions, ideas and practices.

The third line of criticism was advanced by Sa'di (1992) and Rabinowitz (1993). Sa'di (1992) developed his criticism by exploring the interface of social research and the hegemonic ideology. He argues that the use of social science methods, such as attitude testing and statistical analysis, does not necessarily attest to a separation between the two. Rather, the employment of scientific methods could be used as a veneer for ideological argumentation. The uneasy relationships between social sciences and ideology could be partially clarified through historical analysis and vigorous exploration of the "modes of thought," namely assumptions, political ends, conceptual frameworks, the constructed world of images, and the subtexts of codes and emotions. Sa'di (1992) maintains that both the official ideology and the hegemonic discourse

in social sciences aim at questioning the validity of a distinguished Palestinian identity on the one hand, while on the other, create the feeling that Jews have been the only national group in Palestine, and in Israel, since 1948.

Rabinowitz (1993) built on the observation made by Sa'di that, except in the case of the Palestinians, in the attribution of identity, local identification takes precedence over the broad Arab identity. Thus, there are Syrians, Lebanese, Egyptians, and Saudis, but no Palestinians (Rabinowitz 1993: 145–6). In an illuminating ethnographic discussion, Rabinowitz illustrates how ordinary Israelis avoid referring to the label "Palestinian," and instead use the terms Arabs, Israeli-Arabs etc. On this point, he argues that "[t]he labels 'Israel's Arabs' and 'Israeli Arabs' are an Israeli invention that shifts attention from locus (Palestine) to culture (Arab). This emanates from deep Israeli anxieties regarding the authentic bond between Palestinians and the land" (1993: 179). Furthermore, he adds that "[t]he fact that the expression 'Israeli Arabs' has become an integral part of spoken Hebrew does not make it neutral" (1993: 179).

These studies point to the various theoretical frameworks through which Palestinian identity has been conceptualized. Unfortunately, this pluralism has not lead to a constructive debate regarding Palestinian identity and the role of such research in supporting or exposing the power relations that govern majority-minority relations. The mainstream research continues to propagate the official conception without taking into account the new developments in this realm of research or the criticism elaborated by the local scholars whose writings analyzed above.

## Palestinian Identity: Towards an Understanding

Under colonialism, national identity evolved in the context of cultural encounter with, and resistance to, the imperial power, along with a desire by local elites to change the power relations between themselves and the metropolitan. Fanon (1970: Ch.3), criticizing the role of nationalist elites, argued that in some cases what these groups aspired for is far from liberation and genuine independence. According to him, their main aim often was to take over the state apparatus and become the new masters by copying practices and manners of the colonial officials. In the case of Palestine, the situation was totally different; the encounter with the other was more threatening, comprehensive and traumatic. The Jews who came to Palestine were not Europeans whose aim was to rule over existing society and to advance economic interests, rather they came with claims over the country, which the Palestinians have consid-

ered for generation to be their patrimony. Zionism was considered an imminent danger to all classes and the fabric of society. Historical research reveals that since the inception of Zionism, the Palestinians were well aware of the Zionist intentions (Mandel, 1976; Khalidi, 1997). For example, in an editorial of the newspaper *Filastin* in May of 1914, following an order of closure by the Ottoman Government for criticizing the Government's handling of Zionist activities, the editors wrote:

> Let the central government learn that Zionism is not a mere 'ghost' or a 'bogey-man' as its supporters claim. Today it is a palpable danger. If it succeeds in silencing us . . . it cannot prevent the eye from seeing, or the hand from touching
>
> . . . Even if they (the representative of the government) defeat *Filastin* in court, patriots will arise to found tens of newspapers like it to serve the same principles, and to mount the same defense of the body of this poor nation which is threatened in its very being by expulsion from its homeland. (Khalidi, 1997:155–6)

The Jewish immigrants were not the only other; the British who ruled Palestine at a critical historical period (1918–1948) represented more strikingly the hierarchy of power and the difference of culture. Unlike in other cases of colonialism, where liberation struggles centered around de-colonization and self rule, the struggle of the Palestinians was in two fronts: struggle for self government – like the adjacent Arab countries – and an effort to stop the de-Arabization of the country. This encounter with the British and Zionism, which ended in the transformation of Palestine, embodied many events, set-backs, hopes, struggles, and above all, catastrophe (*Nakbah*) and dispossession (*Iqtila'*). These processes have had a strong imprint on the evolution of Palestinian identity and the imagined Palestinian nation. They also strengthened what Durkheim termed collective consciousness and hastened the secularization of society. Only recently have a few scholarly works been published on the role of *Al-Nakbah* in shaping Palestinian identity (e.g. Sa'di, 2002).

When discussing Palestinian identity, dwelling on the differences between various generations is unavoidable. Unfortunately, however, the research on identity has not yet tackled the issue of generations. The general claim that identity is historically constructed does not, in my opinion, go deep into the specificity of each generation's experiences, prevailing ideologies and fears. My argument is that each generation reshapes its collective identity according to various factors such as relationships with others, prevailing modes of thoughts and ideologies. Moreover, identity is pluralistic. Not only do different generations construct their identity by drawing on different components from their history and culture, but within the same generation various groups

stress and articulate different aspect of identity. In the case of the Palestinians in Israel, one might expect those who experienced the 1948 war to view their identity in a different light from the youth of the early 21st century. Moreover, for village dwellers whose lands were confiscated, the territorial aspect of identity is more concrete than for the urban population, which grasps it in the national context. This pluralistic conception of identity, where different groups with their peculiarities are able to see themselves as part of an imagined community, seems more credible than the view of the hegemonic discourse that allies identity with specific political attitudes. Yet, for all Palestinians, identity has been associated with resistance. In the following, I will discuss some aspects of identity among the Palestinians in Israel as articulating resistance to Zionist argumentations and practices.

## Identity of Resistance

Since 1948, there has been a denial of the national identity of the Palestinians in Israel. This denial has territorial, historical, demographic and moral aspects. In the following, I will briefly discuss these aspects. The 'de-territoriality' of Palestinian identity through practical policies and argumentation took the shape of Palestinians' presentation as a collective that has not developed a deep and ever lasting affinity to the country. The twisting together of ideology and practical action is well illustrated in the following statement on the dispute around the boundaries of Arab villages, made by Ariel Sharon (the current prime minister), in 1977, in his capacity as a Minister of Agriculture:

> National land is actually robbed by foreigners . . . Although there is talk of the Judaization of Galilee, the region is regressing into a Gentile district . . . I initiated a strong action to prevent aliens from taking the state lands. (Quoted in Smooha 1980: 26)

Another form of the de-territoriality of Palestinian identity is found in Amos Kenan's fiction: *The Road to Ein-Harod* (London: Al-Saqi books, 1986). The novel is about the odyssey of a young, leftist Jewish man who fled Tel Aviv in the aftermath of a rightist military take-over of the Israeli State. The hero, Rafi, meets on his way to *Ein-Harod* – the last position of resistance – Mahmoud, a young Palestinian man. On their journey they discuss, among other things, the question: to whom does the country belong? Understandably, each of them accredits his nation. Mahmoud points to superficial and even negative signs to validate his claim: cactus trees, which remained on the sites of Palestinian villages that were destroyed during the 1948 war, and a swamp! Meanwhile,

Rafi supports his claim by antique Jewish religious instruments made before thousands of years that they found deep in an ancient cave. If the territorial aspect of identity resonates authenticity, then Palestinian identity according to both Sharon and Kenan is superficial and lacks historical depth.

The conjunction of territory, history and "authentic identity" has found its strongest expression in archaeology. In Israel, archaeology more than any other science, has been employed for the construction of historiography and the invention of tradition. Commenting on that, the archaeologist Bowersock (1988) stated:

> The politics of archeology are everywhere. The late Yigael Yadin was both an eminent archaeologist and a political figure. The intermingling of his two careers is nicely exemplified by the care with which he brought to public attention his discovery of authentic letters of the Jewish rebel Bar Kokhba. These letters survive from the time of the Jewish revolt against Roman rule in the reign of Hadrian. To dispassionate eye they scarcely show that famous figure as an inspiring leader, but nonetheless Yadin was pleased to introduce him to the Israeli public as nothing less than the first president of Israel. (1988: 185)

Contrary to that:

> A few years ago another remarkable discovery was made in the Negev desert. A stone turned up with writing in the script of the Nabatean Arabs. The text, although in a single script, appears to have been written in two distinct languages, one Nabatean and the other Arabic. The finder of this inscription is inclined to date it to the middle of the second century AD, and it would therefore consti- tute by far the earliest example of the Arabic language. It is obviously significant that the inscription was lying in the Negev desert. The stone is weathered and brittle. Its significance for pre-Islamic scholarship could be enormous. In any other country with a serious interest in archaeology this object would have been removed to a protected place for safekeeping. More than that, one might have expected some publicity for so important a discovery. But there has been no publication of the inscription, and it still lies today under the desert sun. (1988: 190–1)

While the archaeological discoveries have been presented as a witness to the country's ancient past, the authenticity of the Jewish Israeli iden- tity, and the absence of an authentic Palestinian identity, the names of the places and sites connect that past with the lived present. Since the establishment of Israel, an endeavour has been made to de-Arabize the names of streets, neighbourhoods, villages, cities and sites of the country. Biblical names, names with Zionist connotations, and European names, were substituted for the Arabic names. This is, for example, illustrated in a lecture given by Moshe Dayan before the Israel Technological Institute in 1969:

Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these villages, and I don't blame you, since these geography books no longer exist. Not only the books do not exist – the Arab villages are not there either. (*Ha'aretz*, April 4, 1969)

Even the names of places still inhabited by Palestinians were changed. *Wadi Arah* in the little triangle (an area inhabited by an overwhelming majority of Palestinians) is now officially named *Eron*. *Yaffa* is named *Yaffo*, and *Ras Al-'Amod* is becoming *Har-Hazeteem*, and so on. The new names are given by an official committee which has been until recently composed of Jewish members. Only recently a Palestinian geographer was included in it. This process of renaming conveys the message that throughout the history of this country, only two periods are significant: the ancient Jewish past and that which begins with Zionism. What happened in between is treated as an aberration from the 'natural' flow of the country's history.

For Palestinians, this means a negation of their history and their affinity to the country; their past becomes totally alien to the present. However, as realities cannot be imposed by outside forces, consciousness plays a vital role in connecting the recent past with the present. Sa'di (1996), basing his arguments on the conception of cultural resistance, contends that the Palestinians in Israel have developed such a culture that is continually reproduced at the local level and passes from one generation to the other through informal education, historiography and various forms of linguistic articulations such as nicknaming, labelling and proverbs. Dominated by their historical experience, this culture is articulated, among other things, in the use of the Arabic names that preceded the establishment of the state. Contrary to Dayan's above-mentioned statements, the Palestinians in Israel still remember and use in their daily conversations the names of the Arab villages which no longer exist. For example, the inhabitants of a village in the Galilee, where I worked for almost three years, call *Achiahood Junction* on the Acre-Saffad road *The Junction of Alberweh*, after the Palestinian village located there and destroyed in the 1948 war. Thus, by using the name *Alberweh* in daily conversations it has survived in the collective memory. Moreover, Palestinians in Israel, similar to Palestinian communities in exile, continue to identify themselves according to their villages/towns of origin, even in cases where these localities cease to exist. In this respect, the case of the villages of *Iqrit* and *Ber'im* is illustrative (Jiryis 1976:81–96).

Mahmoud Darwish, the national Palestinian poet, articulated the national identity of the Palestinian minority in Israel in terms of a resisting identity. His poem *Identity Card*, published in 1964, while he was an Israeli citizen, expresses that notion vividly:

> My roots
> Were entrenched before the birth of time
> And before the opening of the eras
> Before the pines, and the olive trees
> And before the grass grew

The emphasis on the territorial aspect of identity by Palestinians is not unique to Darwish; research by Qanaze' (1985) shows that the inter-weaving of identity and territory represents a main theme in Palestinian literature in Israel. The issue of land as a physical object and as symbol has been dominating Palestinian politics in Israel as well. The first nationalist group which emerged inside the "Green line" had chosen the name of "*Usrat Al-Ard* (the Family of the land)," both to stress its ideo-logical platform and as an act of symbolic defiance. Similarly, the nationalist social movement, which inherited *Usrat Al-Ard*, adopted the name *Abna Al-Balad* (the indigenous population), pointing to their conception of the identity of the country and the authenticity of its Arab residents. Those who collaborated with Zionist organizations in the transfer of lands from Palestinian to Jewish ownership are the most despised in their communities. They are labelled *Samaserah* (evil middlemen), a term attributed to greedy middlemen who are ready to act against morality and social norms for the sake of profits (Sa'di, 1996: 402–5). Moreover, the struggle against the state's policy of expropria-tion of Palestinian lands was the direct cause for the first popular Palestinian strike in 1976, which escalated into confrontations with the security forces and resulted in the death of six Palestinians and the injury of tens. These events have been celebrated ever since by the Palestinian public.

Emile Habibi in *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-fated Passoptimist* (London: Readers International, 1989) depicts Palestinian identity in a multifaceted and complex way. The main character Saeed – the passop-timist – tries to maintain a 'normal life' within especially complicated and troubling circumstances. However, the unbearable contradictions between Saeed's rich memories and commitments from the pre-1948 period and the immediate conditions, imposed on him by the Israeli regime, keep bothering and implicating him in endless troubles. Even when he tries to achieve a peace of mind through collaboration, he repeatedly fails. His identity always brings him into a conflict with the system and the ruling ideology. This state of uneasy co-existence between one's identity and the needs of every day life brought some Palestinians to look for alternative forms of identification.

## Alternatives: A Leap into the Future
## Or a Return to an Imagined Past

Within each cultural formation, alternatives to the dominant mode of self-identification exist. The construction of an identity that does not stem from the potentials and points of reference of prevailing culture and historiography is a phenomenon that has emerged in all modern cultures. For example, During (1996) analyzes the phenomenon of "self-othering", which is "occasions and techniques for constructing an identity by appropriating elements of another's identity" (1996: 60), such as the Bohemian artists and those who are 'going native.'

While During describes an alteration in the identity of individuals, I will analyze in the following two alternatives that had found considerable followers. These are the communists on the one hand and the Islamists on the other. During the 1970s and the early 1980s, the Communist Party was very active among the Palestinians. Through the support that it received from the Soviet Union, the Party published and distributed a huge amount of literary, philosophical and propaganda material. Moreover, the Party was able to send thousands of Palestinians in short trips or for long periods for studies in Eastern European countries. For many, these encounters constituted their sole direct venue to the outside world. This experience did not bring many of them to the adoption of an internationalist stand. Instead, it led a group of these *Comrades* to glorify Russian culture, way of life, scientific achievements and political maneuverings. They began to judge and evaluate their culture, identity and Palestinian history through the Soviet viewpoint. In their every day life, they also emulated the Russian style of living, which is quite strange to the Palestinian gaze. Some aspects of this self-othering found expression, for example, in the conflicts and rivalries between the Communists and the nationalist group, the Sons of the Village (*Abna' al-Balad*) during the 1970s. In their leaflets and newspaper, the Communists charged the Sons of the Village of being "loopy" nationalists (*Qawmagi*) (cf. Zureik, 1979: 171–80).

In contrast to the Communists, who embraced a socialist form of modernity, the Islamists present an ambivalent position towards modernity and Palestinian identity. Since this trend includes various groups and opinions, I will discuss its basic attitudes. The ambivalence of the Islamists towards modernity and Palestinian identity has been generated from two interrelated factors. Firstly, deep frustration from the results of modernity and the deceit and double standards of its representatives – the West. The principles of universalism, rationality, efficiency etc., which lie at the heart of the enlightenment, have been employed by the West for the exploitation of weaker nations, including

the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Muslims. Moreover, the Western Powers have collaborated, in one way or another, in the destruction of Palestinian society and the prolonged suffering of Palestinians. They have also refused to acknowledge their role in this tragedy. In this respect, the Islamists share the anti-imperialist stand of many leftist and nationalist groups in the Third World. Secondly, the Islamists do not believe in the ability of Palestinian identity, or any other secular identity, to generate social processes that would bring about significant transformation in the position of the Palestinians in Israel. They believe in the futility of human endeavor in the face of God's will. The community of believers is asked to worship God and to act according to his instructions as descended in the *Koran*. Only through this way is there hope for a fundamental change, not only in the position of the Palestinians, but also in the World order. Such thinking does not mean, however, that an Islamic identity would only find expression in the practice of religious duties.

Like the above-mentioned group of communists, some Islamists have adopted a style of dressing, artifacts and behaviors that are strange to the Arab and Palestinian culture. For example, the clothes that such Islamist men wear are traditional Indian costume (that both Pakistani Muslims and non-Muslim Indians wear), which are fundamentally different from the traditional Palestinian dress. Moreover, their claim that redemption and revival could only be achieved by a return to the 'true Islam' is not supported by historical evidence. The Arabic-Islamic civilization reached its peak not in periods where one 'true' opinion was imposed, rather in an era where different ideas, philosophic traditions and rational debates took place (regarding the major philosophical debates see Hourani, 1992: 172–205).

Despite the differences in the manifestations of these two forms of self-othering, their source is shared: an inability to deal with the difficulties and complications that the Palestinian identity entails. Furthermore, in both cases, it is clear that some Palestinians sought refuge in wider frameworks of identification.

## Concluding Remarks

Throughout this article, two frameworks of discussing Palestinian identity have emerged. The first centers on self-categorization, while the second views identity as a fundamental constituting factor of the lived reality of ordinary men and women. The method of categorization and labeling helps in the creation of short cuts for characterizing the political attitudes and beliefs of Palestinians. The assumption of such research concerning the existence of a straightforward relationship

between identity and political attitudes is questionable to say the least. Moreover, the logic that lies behind it is quite disturbing. Through associating identities with political attitudes, such research points to the degree of legitimacy of certain groups, not on the basis of their attitudes and behaviors, but by their identity. This supposition also points to the role of this research in the politics of identity in Israel: instead of interpreting the politics of identity, it has become part of it.

The second type of research locates identity in the realm of 'intersubjectivity,' where despite the peculiarities of the various groups in society, they all view themselves as part of an imagined community. In addition, it views identity as historically constructed and changing. I have suggested that Palestinian identity and the imagined Palestinian nation are intimately connected with historical events, as well as questions of authenticity and territoriality. In the Israeli context, where the politics of identity is everywhere, Palestinian identity has been largely de-legitimized, and consequently it has appeared as a form of resistance to the hegemonic ideology.

Unfortunately, however, this line of research has not been fully applied for a detailed study of Palestinian identity in Israel. Other than the hegemonic conception, we are left with fragments of ideas and insights. What is needed is a detailed study of Palestinian identity in Israel, which would apply conceptions and methodologies that have been widely employed in other cultures. Such research would demystify the issue of Palestinian identity and separate it from existing forms of stereotyping and political constrains. Moreover, it would go beyond the mere process of categorization and explore the intersubjective realm of each generation, where certain ideas become common knowledge, some aspects of the historiography are highlighted and others are ignored, assignment of the generation are identified, certain objects are turned into symbols and become an identifying feature of the time, and artistic and literary articulation give expression to widely shared feelings and sentiments. During the last year a new trend of research that explores some of these issues (Sa'di, 2002; Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker, 2002) has appeared. Yet, it is still premature to assess its impact on the Palestinian identity field of research.

## Note

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# Palestinian Dynamics of Self-Representation: Identity and Difference in Palestinian Nationalism

Amal Jamal

Theoretically, this chapter is an attempt to illustrate the relationship between identity-formation and location. Location is not taken to be only a mere fixed physical place, but also a 'positionality' that is always in flux rather than stable. It is about 'difference' as an emerging characteristic in a society that lost its physical anchor and became scattered throughout the region. On the practical level, this chapter is about the Palestinians' national experience and the frustration of the national leadership to maintain Palestinian national identity in a unitary and coherent framework. In the period after 1948, when initial stages of nation-building emerged, Palestinians tended to represent themselves in monolithic, essentialist and coherent terms. The national images used at this period were based on the memories of the common experience in Palestine. The most dominant image at this stage was the figure of the militant Palestinian *fida'i* who was willing to sacrifice his life for the sake of liberation and the redemption of his homeland. This image introduced a concrete, solid identity based on two elements: territory and paternity. From a political point of view, Palestinian identity was contingent on the rejoining of the people and the land through liberation, return and statehood. As a result, Palestinian nationhood became dependent on the Palestinians' political ability to reconstruct the political circumstances in their lost homeland by reuniting the people with its land.

Differing existential conditions, as well as the difficulties the Palestinians faced in penetrating the regional political system, confined the coherent self-image and led to a process of differentiation. The rising experiential gaps among the different Palestinian communities led to a growing discrepancy in the manner in which Palestinians represent themselves. Different experiences in different localities gave rise to multiple and diversified self-images. This process was intensified by the

internal differences regarding the future political vision that Palestinians foresaw for themselves. Although it would not be thoughtful to indicate a clear demarcating line between the different stages of self-conceptualization, towards the end of the 1970s, new images of the self began to surface. Self- presentation reflected the existential conditions of the different Palestinian communities. Nevertheless, there were attempts to disconnect Palestinian self-definition from specific political solutions, especially the one emphasizing the congruency between the people and their land. These attempts exacerbated the gaps between the different Palestinian communities, exposing alienation or even antagonism in their relationships. Such antagonistic relationships surfaced following the signing of the Oslo agreement and the silencing of voices representing refugee interests.

This chapter attempts to follow the dynamics of Palestinian self-presentation as it was presented in some Palestinian political and literary writings, in order to expose its positionality. It examines how socio-political settings of different Palestinians have influenced the way they present themselves. Although the texts chosen are not limited to the official Palestinian discourse, they are taken to reflect changes in the manner Palestinians are viewed. The examination of different texts will enable the reader to follow the processes of internal differentiation.

The texts will be examined as fields in which a process of identity formation was, and is, presently negotiated. Nevertheless, this study is not conclusive, but rather illustrative. It will not go beyond analyzing several documents and literary contributions in order to illuminate the assumptions presented above. This task will draw upon R. Hodge's definition of discourses which are "seen as social constructs, sustained at particular times by particular groups to serve particular interests: an ideological machine concerned with legitimization and control, working through a system that excludes or privileges certain kinds of text . . . and specific readings and modes of readings" (Hodge 1990: viii). Texts, whether political or literary, are taken as events that are part of the "social world, human life, and . . . historical moments in which they are located and interpreted" (Said 1991: 4). Cultural images and aesthetic forms contained in texts derive from historical experience, bridging the gap between the individual and his collective affiliations.

The texts analyzed in this article were chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, the people who wrote them were not disconnected literary figures, but activists who were engaged in shaping Palestinian politics and in promoting the world's understanding of the Palestinian struggle for nationhood and self-determination. Secondly, these people are well-read in Palestinian circles and have contributed to the constitution and crystallization of national awareness. Parts of the texts analyzed were written with the intention of reflecting upon the national consciousness

of the Palestinians and to draw attention to the ongoing negotiating process regarding the national image. Thirdly, texts were chosen in order to reflect the intersection between exilic Palestinians, who live in the diaspora and had internalized global visions of the self, and Palestinians who live on their land and are tied to the geography surrounding them.

## National Identity and Self-Representation

Two aspects of identity are commonly accepted; its relational and constructionist characters (Arkin 1992: 6). These two aspects challenge "the idea that identity is given naturally and that it is produced purely by acts of individual will" (Calhoun 1994: 13). They challenge also 'essentialist' notions that "individual persons can have singular, integral, altogether harmonious and unproblematic identities" (Calhoun 1994: 13). Identity develops within a *relationship* between an individual and his context, whether familial, social, cultural, occupational or all these taken together. Henri Tajfel defined social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his membership of a social group (or groups)" (Tajfel 1981: 225). When we define ourselves, we speak not only of personal characteristics but of attributes potentially shared with a large number of other people.

These collective identities are also constructed through experience. G. H. Mead led social scientists to appreciate the interplay between self and society. He argued that meaning emerges from social interaction, thereby creating collective visions of identity (Deaux 1991). This *constructionist* approach emphasizes that identities are negotiated, defined, and produced through social interaction (Holstein and Miller 1993). Stuart Hall argued for a dynamic and positional conception of identity, speaking in terms of process, movement, change and conflict. In his words:

> [Identity] is not something which already exists transcending place, time, history, and culture. [Identities are far] from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past. T]hey are subject to the continuous play of history, culture, and power . . . Identities are the names we give to different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past. (Hall 1990: 223)

Based on this understanding, identities are fragmented, full of contradictions and ambiguities. The process of identity construction takes place within 'narrativity,' where stories of inclusion and exclusion take place (Sarup 1996). In this context, story-telling and the usage of language play a major role. This process is certainly apparent in nation-

building. As Benedict Anderson has pointed out, nations are imagined communities because "the members of even the smallest nation never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1989: 15). Since national identity does not exist independently of the narratives that speak of it, common stories make the feeling of communion possible. The writings of members of the nation, which blend as well as clash, draw upon innumerable centers of culture, ideological state apparatus and practices. This multiple character of the sources, as well as the mere usage of different language styles, makes space for interpretive freedom possible. Edward Said makes this point even more concrete when he draws our attention to the historical aspects of fiction. Advancing the thesis developed by Georg Lukacs and illustrating his point through the novel, Said states clearly that the "novel is . . . a concretely historical narrative shaped by the real history of real nations" (Said 1994: 92). The historical element in fiction blurs the gap between the 'I' and the 'we', which to a certain extent become identical.

Identity construction does not occur only within the group to which one belongs. Identity is also formed through the interaction with alien others who may intend to form a counter-group. Therefore, it is about boundaries. The other becomes "the medium by which we all but consciously define ourselves" (Hentsch 1992: 192). In the words of Kenneth Boulding "[t]he symbolic image of one's own nation is tinged with ideas of security or insecurity depending on one's image of other nations" (Boulding 1961: 112). Self-representation is a contingent category depending on the interaction between self and others in a certain context. It is a continuous process of constitution and reconstitution. An examination of the issue of self-presentation may promote our understanding of the dynamics of identity formation and the debates taking place in such a process.

## The Self as a Monolithic Revolutionary Hero

It is a very accepted notion that the Palestinian national movement in Mandate Palestine was organized along traditional lines, which was one of the crucial sources of its weaknesses. Patrimonialism characterized the Palestinian national organizations, where the leader determined everything. In the wake of the reorganization of the movement after the 1948 war, the Fatah movement, which began dominating the PLO after the 1967 war, sought to adopt a more modern and democratic form of organization. In the view of one of its leaders the movement needed to pay a great deal of attention to forming "a popular organization which could carry on no matter what happens to one leader or another." Fatah

endeavored to construct an image of a "new Palestinian," in order to motivate Palestinians to join the movement (Turki 1972: 99).

The new Palestinians were to emerge from those growing up in discontent with their oppressive surroundings. The contrast with the backward elders became a central theme in Palestinian national discourse. One Palestinian commented that the youngsters living in the refugee camps "were looking around for an outlet for their suppressed fury ." Their goal was "to transform the distorted structure of the reality they saw around them in the Arab world" (Turki 1972: 99). The discourse on the new Palestinian was revolutionary in nature. It involved change, breaking down the whole system in order to establish an experienced new one. In the view of Hisham Sharabi:

> The first days of resistance showed not only what human will could generate, but also affirmed revolutionary action as the only way to self-transformation. It became clear that nothing could free society from the shackles that bound it except the force stored in its oppressed and exploited masses. We saw the New Arab Man emerging in the shape of the Palestinian fida'iyeen. We envisaged the Arab revolution being born out of the Palestinians' resistance movement. (Sharabi 1972: 38)

The transformation of the image of the Palestinian from a poor refugee to a revolutionary hero was directly connected to the rise of the resistance organizations. Palestinians in the refugee camps spoke about their rebirth as normal human beings after the rise of the resistance in Lebanon. "The Palestinian felt after the revolution that he was living as a normal person again after a life of humiliation" commented one Palestinian (Sayegh 1979: 202). People were again proud of their identity and felt as if they "had regained [their] identity, not just as Palestinians, but as human beings" (Sayegh 1979: 204). Exile was identified with loss and lack of identity. It was also a lack of dignity, where the Palestinian had no control over his life. Identity was connected and bound to the territory of Palestine. As a result, regaining identity had to be coupled with resistance and struggle.

The image of the fida'i was crystallized in the newspaper that appeared secretly in the refugee camps in Lebanon at the end of the 1950s and beginning of 1960s. This newspaper was the voice of the new Palestinian who was supposed to replace the refugee. The paper declared that the life of the refugee is that of degradation and dishonor. Therefore, "the children of the disaster [the 1948 war] shall return to the battle more powerful, more dedicated and more sophisticated, learning from their experience. [They] shall reject this miserable and dirty life. This life that destroyed [their] literary, spiritual and political existence" (*Filastinuna* 1959: 10). The new Palestinian rises from the ashes of the past more aware of himself and his surroundings. He is willing to sacri-

fice himself. He and she are "not sacrificing their lives for the sake of living in tents. They do it because they want to die as martyrs for the sake of liberating Palestine" (*Filastinuna* 1960: 7). Sacrifice becomes an important symbol of the new Palestinian hero.

The heroic figure that ascended in the Palestinian political discourse of the 1960s was not individualistic. The myth of the hero included all those living under miserable conditions as a result of the dispersal. Heroism became a collective character and not a feature embodied in one person or another. It was elevated above any other social or moral duty and located in the realm of the eternal. Time lost its relevance as a measuring factor in the life of the potential heroes. Life was divided into past and future only. The present time collapsed between memories and the aspiration to recreate the past in the future. The present was coupled with dishonor and shame at the loss.

The image of the fighter as a hero was glorified in the Palestinian literature of that period, as well (Abu Al-Shabab 1977). In the words of the Palestinian writer Yihya Yachlif, the fida'i was the 'candle that lights its surroundings'. In his book *The Apple of Madness*, the fida'i is drawn like a sun that sends its light to illuminate the moon in the night. The fida'i is depicted in a miserable life where people have hardly anything to eat. The background is the refugee camp where people still carry their memories of the past. However, when the fida'i arrives, the table is filled with all kinds of typical Palestinian food. His appearance is as mysterious as the source of the food. The fida'i is the only one who can regain what was lost in the past. Yachlif repeats this image in *The Song of Life*. All the figures of the story suffer their own personal tragedy. But the worst aspect is the common tragedy manifested in their daily life where hunger and cold gnaw at their bodies. They are attacked from all sides. They suffer the attacks of the Israeli jets, the merciless weather, repeated storms, which destroy their calm and poor daily order. In this environment, the fida'i Hamza stands out. He is unique in many aspects. Hamza does not speak excessively, he acts. He is a young, energetic man, who does not sleep at night. Hamza must watch the beach in order to warn others if there is any invasion from the sea. But Hamza is not a stranger. He is no different than the rest of the residents of the camp. He "carries his rifle on his shoulders, and carries the smell of lemon and space. He carries his rifle on his shoulder the way the *falahun* [farmers] carry their clapper." The fida'i embodies Palestine in himself, where the orchards of lemon and orange fill the air with their sharp smell. Hamza "walks full of caution, attention and alarm" because he has the situation in hand. He is responsible for the security of the poor people around him. He is their hope and last resort.

Symbolism and the image of the fighter were a social need among the dispersed Palestinians. After 1948, many Palestinians from different

villages and areas found themselves living together in refugee camps. This situation was described by Lutf Gantus: "Palestinian society ceased to be a society. It lost its social bonds and the social connections that gave it its characteristics of belonging to the land, the village, the city, and the family for generations" (Gantus 1965: 33). The image of the revolutionary fighter who is willing to sacrifice himself in order to liberate Palestine and regain the homeland was a source of identification for all. It played a very strong psychological role in transforming the state of despair of many Palestinians into a feeling of responsibility and engagement. As one refugee said "the people of the camps were waiting for the revolution in the way the thirsty land awaits water" (Sayegh 1979: 188).

Heroism as the best way out of confusion and life in the refugee camp was portrayed most clearly in Gassan Kanafani's story *Returning to Haifa*. Kanafani, who lost his home in Akka and joined the resistance organizations in Lebanon, tried to picture the internal world of the Palestinian. As the first Palestinian to be able to portray the dilemmas of the Palestinian person in novels, Kanafani's works are a good tool for illustrating how the Palestinians viewed themselves at that period and how they wanted to present themselves to the world. The story is about Palestinians who try to go back to their past home. It is a journey of the frightened soul into its long past being. Memories are the means of entry into that past. But there is fear and hesitation. The journey into the past is not taken for granted and Kanafani wants to free the Palestinians from their fears. The protagonists of the story are a Palestinian couple who left Haifa in 1948, leaving behind them their five months old child. After the second dispersal in 1967, the couple decides to come back to Haifa in order to find out what happened to their child. Their son reappears as an adult Israeli soldier who is reluctant to recognize his biological parents.

The past as reflected in this story is not romanticized as it was in other Palestinian stories or in the way it was described by refugees. Kanafani's past is tragic and full of agony. The yearning for Palestine is not essentially material. It is rather "a deep spiritual aspiration in the soul of every Palestinian Arab in exile" (Tibawi 1963: 507). The only way that leads to return is the transformation of the self. Kanafani elevates the spiritual connection with Palestine above the material one. The following passage may clarify this relationship and the solution Kanafani proposes to the Palestinians. This passage is taken from the last part of the story after the couple have visited Haifa and met the child who they left behind in 1948:

> I look for the real Palestine. Palestine that is more than a memory, more than a feather of . . . more than a child, more than scrapes of a pencil on the stair case. I was telling myself: What is Palestine for Khalid (their son who was born in exile

and joined the fida'iyeen, A. J.)? He does not know the vase, and not the picture, not the stairs, and not al-Halisa and Khaldun. Despite that, it is worth for him to carry the gun and to die for it. And for us, me and you, it is a mere looking for something under the dust of memory. Look what we found under the dust . . . more dust. We were mistaken when we considered the homeland as past only. For Khalid the homeland is the future, that is how the departure was, and that is how Khalid wanted to carry the gun. Tens of thousands are like Khalid. They are not stopped by the running tears of men looking in the valleys of their defeat for their shattered shields and dispersed flowers. They look for the future and thereby correct our mistakes and the mistakes of the whole world. Dov [their child who was left behind, grew up as Jew and joined the Israeli army A.J.] is our disgrace but Khalid is our remaining honor . . . Did not I tell you from the beginning that we should not have come . . . and that this needs war?

The hero in Kanafani's story posits a dialectical relationship between self-awareness, action and self-transformation. The Palestinian self, as pictured by Kanafani, seeks to recount its return to, and reconciliation with an original identity. The voyage of return represents the past 'as it was' in a voice that insists on the need to go out of history in order to invert it. There is an attempt to create a bridge between the past and the future not through the 'now' but rather through a process of awakening mingled with action. A united self is the key and the magic solution for the current situation of despair and degradation. Since the self is complete when it is combined with the land, the only course of action is to fight to recover the land. The same motif is made clear in the Palestinian national Covenant of the PLO from 1968 which declared in resolution number 4: "The Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential and inherent characteristic: it is transmitted from parents to children." Here, identity was viewed in organic-biological terms which could not be transformed. Thus, Palestinian identity was viewed in territorial, as well as parental, terms.

## Between Images and *Realpolitik*

The transformation of the Palestinian from a refugee to fida'i transformed Palestine into the 'revolution'. The latter received the characteristics of the former. The revolution was romanticized in the same way as Palestine. It became sacred, and any disagreement with it was considered discredit and a betrayal of Palestine. The two terms 'revolution' and 'Palestine' became interchangeable. In order to save the revolution an organization became necessary. Therefore, Palestine was transformed into the revolution that was transformed into the PLO. This process of political mutation culminated in a substantial success with the decision of the 1974 Arab Summit in Algiers, which recognized the

PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. However, at this moment, the fida'i lost to the bureaucrat. The spirit of the fighter was turned into static symbols incorporated in the rifle. The spirit of the revolution was assimilated into the organization. Its motivation was amalgamated with the leadership that became indispensable for the revolution. In other words, the tool was transformed into a goal. The revolutionary organization that intended to consolidate the people and lead their struggle became a goal in itself. It was mystified and made holy. Its holiness found fertile ground in the traditional Palestinian society that had experienced at least two tragic events of dispossession. In this society new 'gods' were needed. Therefore, sacredness became a good mechanism for blocking criticism. After a short charismatic episode, the 'new Palestinian' became imprisoned within his own creation. The image of the revolutionary was exploited for internal political purposes. The different resistance organizations attributed the image to themselves as a tool for political hegemony.

Living in an unstable and suspicious political environment, the Palestinian image of a fida'i was confronted with three different but basic obstacles. The Palestinians had to fight Israel, to carve their place within the Arab political system and reconcile the revolutionary image with the traditional structure of Palestinian society. The identification of the Palestinian with the whole land of Palestine made it impossible to initiate any dialogue with Israel. Israel used the cliché, 'there is nobody to talk to on the other side,' for its political purposes. Palestinians were presented as terrorists and deliberately reduced to blood-thirsty and subhuman beings (Harkabi 1977).

For the Arabs, the image of the fida'i had a more complex impact. On the public level, many Arabs were influenced by the rise of the Palestinian fida'i. The success in the Al-Karameh battle, in which the fida'i organization inflicted heavy losses on an Israeli battalion, brought many Arabs to join the resistance (Chaliand 1972). The Arab regimes, on the other hand, were not enthusiastic about the popularity of the Palestinian resistance. All Arab regimes paid tribute to the fida'iyon either by opposing political solutions with Israel or by providing substantial financial aid. However, this support encouraged the Arab regimes to seek influence in these organizations (Quandt, Jabber and Lesch 1973). Although the policies of the different Arab regimes toward the Palestinians were not identical, the Palestinian communities in the Arab countries were punished when the resistance organizations were reluctant to go along with the policies of the ruling regime.

On the Palestinian level, the resistance organizations were very popular in refugee camps. The refugees were those who suffered most after the 1948 war, and were those who suffered the repressive policies of the host Arab countries. The rise of the resistance movement was a

source of hope for them, and therefore, were the first to embrace these organizations. However, since they constituted the weakest community of the Palestinian people, they formed the human resource of the organizations but were not part of their leadership. There was a visible gap between refugee representation at the base level and their representation in the high echelons of the resistance organizations (Sayegh 1979: 208). The revolution did not penetrate society and produced a deep change in its structure. Therefore, the image of the fida'i was rendered impotent in the social realm. The revolutionary political consciousness did not touch upon social issues but was limited to mere rhetoric. The fida'i was kept out of society and not only in the physical sense.

The reality of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip looked different. They had to face the Israeli occupation authorities after experiencing nineteen years of Jordanian rule. This experience had a moderating impact on the population (Jamal 1996). Being in daily contact with the Israeli authorities, and experiencing the conflict from a different perspective, led them to urge the PLO to moderate its positions. People in the occupied territories tended toward a certain form of a two-state solution to the conflict. The longer the Palestinians in these areas experienced Israeli occupation, the more militant they became but also the more they believed in a historical compromise between the two sides (Dakkak 1983).

## Debating the Boundaries of the Self

Following the rifts that began to surface in the "organic" congruence between the Palestinian personality and the land of Palestine, indifference began to appear toward the unitary and monolithic image of the Palestinian fida'i. Reality was overwhelming and it seemed impossible to ignore the different internal and external pressures that raised questions with regard to the self-concept as fighter. This self-concept was faced with the real capability of the Palestinians to liberate Palestine by force. As a result, changes in self-understanding began to emerge. These changes did not take place smoothly, and are still to be resolved. However, they constitute a clear process that will certainly have its implications in the future. The following pages will illustrate this change.

In his speech on November 13, 1974 in the United Nation General Assembly, Yassir Arafat presented the Palestinian as carrying an olive branch of peace in one hand, and the rifle of a rebel in the other. The unitary image of the Palestinian fighter was blended with other dimensions of personality that made it more complex. The Palestinian was no longer only the fighter, but also the diplomat who understands the

human language of politics. The language of the Palestinian assumed not only the rifle, but also the word. The debate among Palestinians, no matter where they lived, developed into two different traditions in Palestinian nationalism. The first concerned those who insisted on the unitary image of the fighter and were not willing to compromise on the issue. For them, the only way to articulate the Palestinian national will was resistance by force. Liberation was their aim and the rifle was the means. This tradition was not constituted from one political organization or movement but was rather an aggregate of different forces that viewed themselves as representatives of the authentic Palestinian.[1] In their view, the diplomatic success of the PLO and the recognition accorded the organization was a direct result of the armed struggle. Therefore, they accused others of "separating the diplomatic gains from the armed struggle and from the popular war," done despite the fact that the facts clearly show that success was achieved because of the Palestinian rifle.[2]

The second tradition viewed armed struggle in pragmatic terms. The image of the fida'i became a mobilizing trigger rather than a real entity. Representatives of this tradition spoke of intelligent struggle in which international circumstances should be taken into consideration. Therefore, diplomatic negotiations were considered as a legitimate way to achieve the goals of the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the Palestinians would have to learn from history and avoid rejection in their struggle.[3] This view positioned the fida'i behind the diplomat and transformed the armed struggle into a tactic of extremists.[4]

These two traditions found articulation in the relationship between the Palestinian people and the land of Palestine. Whereas the first tradition saw no possible compromise but sought to liberate all the land of Palestine and to establish an Arab state in it, the other tradition viewed the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, alongside Israel, a possible solution to the Palestinian problem. Whereas the first tradition articulated the views of those Palestinians living in refugee camps, the other tradition allied itself with the Palestinian bourgeois. The refugees were occupied with their past and their national consciousness was determined by the aspiration of return. A Palestinian woman living in a refugee camp in Lebanon articulated this yearning saying: "We absolutely refuse a state on the West Bank and Gaza . . . We want to go back to the territories occupied in 1948. Even if we all die, we will accept nothing less than to go back to our country."[5] Many of those living in exile would have agreed with the women refugee who said: "Even if we were given land [in the West Bank or Gaza] we would not feel it was our motherland. I will not leave the camp until I can move directly to Palestine." For this woman, being a Palestinian was based on her memories of a specific and tangible part of Palestine. For her, the

aspiration to an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip does not correspond with her understanding of being Palestinian.

On the other hand, other Palestinians, especially those on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, developed another understanding of their future. After the experience of occupation and the inability of the PLO leadership to generate a real process of liberation, Palestinian elites began grasping the difficulty of 'rearabizing Palestine'. The operative consensus among many Palestinians, those of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the dominant bureaucratic, intellectual and political leadership of the PLO, became the establishment of a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Such a state was seen as "a tool for solving the Palestinian problem, for those who will inhabit it and those who will live elsewhere."[6]

These different experiences planted themselves in the consciousness of the Palestinians. Being Palestinian was no longer unitarian. Palestinians in different places began reflecting on the complexity of Palestinian identity and experience and their impact on their aspirations. These reflections demonstrate the inherent 'relationality' of the self. It is possible to follow a process in which Palestinians began integrating their different experiences into their conscious awareness, which led to a more complex self-understanding.

## The Multiple Self and the Seeds of Dissension

Building on their own experience, Palestinians reflected on their state of being. These reflections exposed the sufferings of the Palestinian people in exile as well as under occupation. However, they also uncovered the growing gaps between the different Palestinian communities and the resulting fragmentation in Palestinian 'society'. The confessional writings of several Palestinians who returned "home" after living a long time in exile exposed a deep sense of estrangement. The attempt made by many Palestinians to enter history contained a counter-effect, which exposed, beside the human dimension of the Palestinian problem, the growing rift between self-understanding and self-representation in the different Palestinian experiences. The different experience of the different Palestinian communities gave rise to an open debate about the self-concept, which differed from the debate that dominated the national discourse in the 1960s and 1970s. The works of Edward Said, who lives in the US, Fawaz Turki, who grew up in Beirut, experienced the life of a refugee camp and constantly moved from one place to another and of Raja Shehadeh, who lives in Ramallah, are representative of the new leap of Palestinian political discourse. Although, one

may claim that the three do not represent all the Palestinian people, there is no doubt that they grew up with a very strong national consciousness. Their experience as Palestinians who are capable of self-reflexivity and critical self-portrayal make them illustrative of the dissemination of the counter-image of the coherent and monolithic self-concept produced in previous period of the Palestinian national endeavor.

In an article published in *The New Statesman* on May 11, 1979, Edward Said wrote:

> Zionism's genuine successes on behalf of Jews are reflected inversely in the absence of a major history of Arab Palestine and its people. It is as if the Zionist web of details and its drama choked off the Palestinians, screening them not only from the world but from themselves as well.

These words of Said reflected a growing awareness among Palestinians who began grasping the importance of 'narrativity' in the struggle against Israel.

A clear example of such reflections about Palestinian identity, exposing its increasing complication is Said's book *After the Last Sky*. This book was written when Said was most involved in the diplomatic efforts of the PLO to become an integral part of the peace efforts in the Middle East. His images of the Palestinians as well as the descriptions of their everyday life are clear reflections of his personal involvement in the search for clarity and place on the political, social and psychological levels. In photos and words, Said tried to escape the stereotyped image of the Palestinian with the Kalashnikov. He drew a realistic picture of the Palestinians as normal human beings who live miserable lives. He showed the real person behind the external form. The Palestinian becomes that person who is aware of his reality. He escapes the past and concentrates on the present. The image of the 'horrible terrorist' is left out and a new image of the man of reality emerges. Said complains that to most people, Palestinians are visible principally as fighters, terrorists, and lawless pariahs" (1986: 4). The Palestinians were politically invisible. They were ignored and existed only as individual terrorists who speak the language of the rifle and the bomb.

This image was exploited in the Israeli media and used to advance Israel's position in the world. Said was aware of the damage incurred by the monolithic image of the Palestinian as a fighter. Therefore, he subtly asserted that "The multifaceted vision is essential to any representation of us" (1996: 6). In his view, the Palestinians are dogged by their past, but they have "created new realities and relationships that neither fit simple categories nor conform to previously encountered forms" (1996: 5). Aware of the impact of his work, Said announces from

the beginning that his book is intended to represent the real Palestinian. When one strips away this Palestinian's "occasional assertiveness and stridency . . . [one] may catch sight of a much more fugitive but ultimately quite beautifully representative and subtle, sense of identity" (1996: 36). It is Said's task to perform this act of stripping away in order to expose the human dimension. Palestinian people are pictured in different situations, settings and timings in order to mirror their real situation. His approach was to reflect the double vision inherent in the way Palestinians in exile view themselves. Examining the text, one notices that Said switches pronouns, from 'we' to 'you' to 'they', to designate Palestinians. This broken manner reproduces the rupture in the way Palestinians experience themselves. In his view, the Palestinians do not have a "dominant theory of Palestinian culture, history, society; . . . [they] cannot rely on one central image (exodus, holocaust, long march); there is no completely coherent discourse adequate to . . . [them], and [he] doubt[s] whether at this point, if someone could fashion such a discourse, [they] could be adequate for it" (1996: 129). With these assertions, Said challenges the official Palestinian political discourse and tries to expose its weakness. He questions their authority to project a unitary identity by addressing a central problem in Palestinian political experience. Palestinians experience their identity in different ways based on their suffering and struggle. In Said's view "no single Palestinian can be said to feel what most other Palestinians feel: ours has been too various and scattered a fate for that sort of correspondence" (1996: 5). When speaking about the experience of those Palestinians who live in exile and not within a Palestinian community, Said says: "where no straight line leads from home to birthplace to school to maturity, all events are accidents, all progress is a digression, all residence is exile. [Palestinians] linger in nondescript places, neither here nor there; [they] peer through windows without glass, ride conveyances without movement or power" (1996: 20). The world of Said is that of those who live nowhere and everywhere. They live in relative isolation because they do not live among fellow Palestinians. As a result they have a different view of the world and of themselves. Their identity is based on blurred memories and indirect connection with fellow Palestinians. Based on his experience and the experience of exiled Palestinians like himself, Said asserts that he "found out much more about Palestine and met many more Palestinians than [he] ever did, or perhaps could have, in pre-1948 Palestine" (1996: 23).

Said's attempt was followed by several Palestinian works which deal with Palestinian identity and the relationship between Palestinians and the land of Palestine. In his physical as well as psychological journey back home Fawaz Turki manages to picture the fragmented encounter

between himself and the local Palestinians of the occupied territories. Throughout walking around the streets of Ramallah and experiencing the life of the Palestinian residents Turki reconstructs the hybrid nature of Palestinian reality. He expands "the particulars of his own life to enfold the universality of the Palestinian condition in general" (Turki, 1996).

Walking around the streets of Ramallah, Turki was enthusiastic about the idea that everyone around him was Palestinian. He articulated his feelings clearly saying: "I can't believe all these people are Palestinians. Save for the few years that I had spent in Haifa, before Palestine became Israel, I had never before been in a city, town, or village where everybody was Palestinian and where, in the overlapping energies, every Palestinian had somehow contributed to the ethos of the place" (Turki 1994: 17). Turki was so excited that he wanted "to walk up to people and say, Hey brother, I'm Palestinian too. I too grew up crying on the shoulders of a dispassionate world, screaming helpless jokes about our condition, building my naked fear into a sigh of self-destruction ." But, Turki recognizes what the impact of such behavior would be and hints at the difference between him and "these Palestinians" who "would only look askance at [him]." But, in his worst dreams, he did not imagine that the gap between him and his fellow Palestinians would be that big. In one of his first encounters with a group of Palestinians at a friend's house, he sensed strangeness and alienation. The way he was received back home was not encouraging. He reacted with apologetic associations and self-reflection saying to himself:

> I don't look Palestinian. I don't talk or walk or carry myself like a Palestinian. Maybe I'm not Palestinian anymore. There is a way you have when you're a Palestinian, even one who grew up in Western exile, that gives testimony to what you have thought in the dark, that other Palestinians can sense. I don't have that way about me anymore. They all look at me as if to ask: What is your truth?

Turki articulates his disappointment, not so much in these people he had just met, as in his own hidden hope and expectation that he would be received as a 'regular' Palestinian. He answered himself by querying: "How do you tell these people what your truth is"? Turki did not hesitate to answer immediately, and with a certain grief and suffering in his thoughts:

> In my exile, I have suffered as much grief as you have. Unlike you, I address the world's emptiness with no homeground to support me. You can't imagine the barrenness of our dreamless life in exile, like a fire with no ash and no sparks. That's why I'm different from you. That is why I look and talk and walk and live differently. And that's why I'm back here, in this land, to confront you with my presence, to show you and myself that my reality is also real.

Turki perceives his identity critically and is repulsed by many of the cultural norms of Palestinian society. He rejoices in his ability to be critical and resents whatever he does not like in his culture. While walking through the streets of Jerusalem, he reflects on his experience, saying:

> I feel my past is spilling out in my encounters with ancient stones. Yet I offer this past no meek apology for the rupture I had made with it. I am a Palestinian, but also one who has come to believe that the spirit of Palestinian society will not become hot to the touch until Palestinians escape the prison of their moribund cultural norms. (1994: 31)

Being Palestinian is neither monolithic nor unitary in Turki's terms. He accentuates the differences between him and his friends in the West Bank in order to illustrate the complexity of Palestinian identity. The direction he wants this identity to adopt is also clear. For him, "[t]he Palestinians are a human community, and like any other, it has the potential to break its traditional bonds and find its bearings in the modern world" (1994: 31). Turki admits the difference between people like him and those who experience occupation daily. He delineates the different dimensions of being Palestinian when he asserts: "I am a Palestinian exile by upbringing and an American leftist by choice. I am here to be one, if only for a moment, with the Palestinians who have never left Palestine. But I have to admit that to be Palestinian, like them, is not like a glove that an exile can slip on at will. Nor can these people slip into my glove . . . Palestinians in the homeground are shaped by the irremediable suffering in their daily lives. I can no more pretend to feel the way they do about that suffering than they can afford a welcome to my way of being Palestinian. Our life experiences are simply too remote from one another" (1994: 33).

Self-representation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip took a different form and involved different images. People share the pain of suffering and are aware that no matter where you live or what your profession is, you are facing the same policy of oppression and dispossession. This accepted proposition leads to the delineation of the lines between 'us' and 'them'. Raja Shehadeh's book *The Third Way*, written at the beginning of the 1980's, draws on the experience of different Palestinians who come from various socio-economic backgrounds. Shehadeh, who is a West Bank lawyer, exposes the common experience of women, peasants, lawyers and notables in facing occupation. He seeks what is common to these different people and elevates their experience to a shared awareness of the cruelty of occupation. He is motivated by his feeling that "anger has gradually, through the years of occupation, given way to despair" among the population (Shehadeh 1982: 67). Shehadeh is aware that people in the occupied territories are giving up

on a very resourceful defense mechanism in their struggle against the occupation authorities; that of 'discursivity'. In his view, "anger fuels memory, keeps it alive. Without this fuel, you give up even the right to assert the truth. You let others write your history for you, and this is the ultimate capitulation" (1982: 67). Aware of his capabilities, Shehadeh, like Said, declares clearly: "We *samidin* cannot fight the Israelis' brute physical force but we must keep the anger burning – steel our wills to fight the lies. It is up to us to remember and record" (1982: 68). Palestinians write in order to fight the Israeli attempt to silence Palestinian suffering and to omit their oppression from discourse. Writing becomes a method possible for struggle. It enables the Palestinian to engrave a good place in the world's public opinion that might be better than that which the rifle can make.

Unlike Said and Turki, Shehadeh escapes any crystallized image of the self and does not return to the past except for short glimpses. He leaves the boundaries of identity open because for him there are no closed and predetermined preconditions for being a Palestinian. The antagonism with the Israeli occupation is what draws the borders of Palestinian identity. He tries to recreate the conflicting construction of identities in the area, thereby focusing on the interstices in and between occupier and occupied. He is aware of what Homi Bhabha later points out, which is the strategic importance of the intervening spaces of cultures and the ambivalence of the borderlines of identities (Bhabha 1990). The identity of the samid is a situation of ambivalence. It is left for future formations and reformations depending on how the struggle develops. However, it is not easy to be a samid, despite the fact that some people do it from their own free will even when they have an alternative. Returning from a journey to Europe, where he could have stayed, he admits: "It is strange coming back like this, of your own free will, to the chains of sumud" (Shehadeh 1982: 56).

It is not the memories of Said or the revolutionary urge of Turki that make the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza identify themselves as such. It is the contact with the homeground, the ability to enjoy the hells of the homeland and to breathe its air. It is the bulldozers of occupation which plant the love for the land beside the anger at the aggression of the settlers. "[T]he beauty of the hills and the olives . . . become symbols of [the Palestinian] people" and the fear of their loss extends the horizons and awareness of Palestinians based on their connection to the land. This connection is transformed into symbols of being and existence in the world. Antagonism to occupation becomes a basic source of national symbolism, which is used as corner stone of an imagined community. Shehadeh admits to himself that "somehow, something important about the way we samidin live our land is not brought out in the war of words waged between Jews and Palestinians"

(1982: 85). The fear of robbery awakens the connection between the people and the land. The connection takes new symbolic forms because "before the occupation there was no national symbolism and cohesion specifically connected with the West Bank ." The rise of such symbolism delineates boundaries between Jews and Palestinians. It also gives shape to the differences between those Palestinians who are drawn by symbolism of the land of the West Bank and those who build their national images on the dream of returning to the coastal cities in Israel. These differences become determinants of how being Palestinian is perceived. The different experiences of the various Palestinian communities, as they were portrayed by the three works just presented, gave rise to different images of the homeland and, therefore, of the self. The question that should be asked at this stage is to what extent can different self-images coexist and be mutually accepted as integral parts of the same identity. One possibility was given by Shehadeh in a dialogue with a Palestinian friend of his who came to visit him on his birthday and started complaining about the situation in the West Bank. Shehadeh wrote: "And what the hell did I come here for anyway? . . . Why did you drag me to this drab place, what is there here for anyone? Why don't you come to Amman-I'd give you the time of your life. We have cinemas, foreign restaurants, night-clubs. Again and again he'd asked me why I never visit him, and I would answer: I don't go to Amman. He did not, and would not, understand why. How could I tell him that seeing Palestinians in the Jordanian capital, men who have grown rich and now pay only widely patriotic lip-service to our struggle, was more than my sumud in my poor and beloved land could stomach?" (1982: 8). People like Shehadeh, who come from the notable middle-class families of the West Bank, are criticized for their ambivalent position towards the occupiers' culture. This strata of Palestinians, which benefited most from the policies of financial support of the PLO in the beginning of the 1980s, was accused of promoting the status quo through the policy of sumud. Despite that, Shehadeh is proud of his sumud and allows himself to blame other Palestinians for not paying tribute to Palestine. The link to the land itself is seen as being integral part of being authentic Palestinian and defending the national interest.

## Concluding Remarks

Following the discursive analysis outlined above, one can draw several conclusions. It became evident that there is a clear connection between place and identity. One presents him/herself according to the concrete interaction between the self and others in certain circumstances. Identity is a relational category that is transformed according to context and is

constructed through experience. The different experience of refugees from that of the middle-class Palestinians has attracted different images of the self. The struggle in the eyes of the refugees was based on the development of a revolutionary consciousness and monolithic identity. In the eyes of middle-class educated Palestinians there was a clear need for the normalization of Palestinian identity in order to make the achievement of the national aspirations possible.

After their dispersal, the Palestinians were denied the opportunity of taking responsibility for their problem. However, the existential circumstances have led them to develop images of themselves based on their wishful aspiration to reestablish themselves in their homeland. Palestinian identity was identified with dispersal and loss. The refugee became the archetype of the Palestinian whether he/she lives in a refugee camp, in a rented apartment in Beirut or in a villa in Kuwait. This image was exploited for political mobilization. As a result, the refugee became a fighter who was willing to sacrifice his life to return home. Despite the fact that most Palestinians did not take part in the real transformation, the image of the fida'i became hegemonic in the Palestinian political discourse. However, this did not last long. Local experiences imposed themselves on the political discourse which began to reflect a differentiation process among the different Palestinian communities.

In other words the construction of self – images began to be more influenced by the existential reality of the different communities than by the shared past in Palestine. This development led to the diversification of Palestinian self-image which became multiple, sometimes even antagonistic. The shared experience in Palestine before 1948, which formed a positive definition of the Palestinians as a whole, vanished with time. The context-dependent reaction to the Oslo agreement constitutes a good example that the attempts to construct an identity based on the sense of loss and the aspiration to return did not achieve their goals. Although the split between supporters and rejecters does not correspond to geographical lines, there are clear and categorical difference between the reaction of those Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the vast majority of the Palestinian communities living outside borders of historic Palestine. Turki's frustrated reaction might be illustrative in this context. In his view, Palestinian society "is a society whose values and leaders, whose tradition and norms, are collaboratively engaged in mounting an assault directed at those processes by which Palestinians seek to affirm their self-definitions as individuals, to hear the echo of their true national self, to escape the brutalities and monotonies of patriarchy, and to find, finally, the clearing where they could gather their splintered social being into some kind of inviolate order" (Turki 1996: 76).

## Notes

1   The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) articulated these
    ideas in the 1970s and 1980s. The PFLP went along with Fatah inside the
    PLO but always objected to the pragmatic line advanced by the later.
    Hamas adopted a position close to those of the PFLP after its establishment
    in 1988 despite the fact that the movement viewed the conflict with Israel
    in Islamic terms. On the position of the PFLP see Matti Steinberg, "The
    Worldview of Habash's Popular Front", *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, 47,
    Summer (1988), pp. 3–26. On the Position of Hamas see Fathi Yakun, *Al-
    Kadiya Al-Filistiniya min Manthur Islami* (The Palestinian Problem from an
    Islamic Perspective), (Beirut: Al-Risalah, 1992).
2   *Filastin Al-Thawra*, June 29, 1975, pp. 28–32.
3   On this position review the words of Salah Khalaf, "Clear Views in Vague
    Circumstances", *Arab-Israel*, 2 (1974) (in Hebrew). See also Faysal Hourani,
    *Guthur al-Rafd al-Filastini.* (The Roots of Palestinian Rejectionism), (Beirut:
    Institute for Palestine Studies, 1978).
4   These views were articulated by two representatives of the PLO. See Said
    Hamami, "From a Strategy of Armed Struggle to a Strategy of Peaceful
    Coexistence", *Imda* (Position). 10–11, September (1975) (in Hebrew). See
    also a similar view articulated by Issam Sartawi in *Yediot Aharonot*, April
    12, 1982.
5   Quoted from an interview in *New Outlook*, March–April, (1975), p. 50.
6   Sabri Jiryis, *New Outlook*, September, (1975).

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# Being an Oleh in a Global World: From Local Ethnic Community to Transnational Community

Lisa Anteby-Yemini

This chapter examines two very different population groups that have arrived in Israel in the last decade, immigrants from Ethiopia, numbering today over 85,000, and from the former Soviet Union, close to 722,000 of whom came between 1989 and 1997. They both represent the last major immigration waves to Israel at the end of the twentieth century. I will endeavor to show in which ways these immigrants, who are granted immediate citizenship, participate in Israeli civil society yet at the same time develop diverging patterns of ethnicity linked to post-national models. Some of these global identities challenge the basic foundations of Zionism, suggesting a new type of *aliyah* (i.e. "ascent" or Jewish immigration to Israel).

The first part of this chapter compares integration processes and segregation strategies at work among the Ethiopian and Russian immigrants[1] in Israel by looking at features such as native language, communal organization and political participation. These two groups, considered to be 'identical' to the host population because of a common Jewish heritage, nonetheless develop ways of being 'different' by constructing themselves as distinct neo-ethnic communities while simultaneously becoming Israelis.

The second section focuses on the various ways of reworking ethnicity or race in Israel for immigrants who preserve close ties with their country of origin, who maintain strong links with other co-ethnics worldwide and who participate in global culture. In this sense, this article suggests a new framework for studying migration in Israel that challenges the assumption that *olim* ("those who ascend" i.e. immigrate to Israel) are Jewish immigrants returning to their homeland, and would rather see them as transmigrants who, like in other countries of immigration, "develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic,

social, organizational, religious and political – that span borders" (Glick Schiller et al. 1992).

In effect, the recent waves of immigrants from the former Soviet Union and from Ethiopia radically differ from the previous mass immigrations to Israel in the 1950s and 60s. In the first place, not all these *olim* are Jewish, as in the past, since a high percentage of Russian Christians and Ethiopian Jewish converts form a significant bulk of these two immigrant groups. In addition, these newcomers keep in touch with their country of origin and even return frequently for trips to the former Soviet Union and to Ethiopia, whereas prior immigrants from Islamic countries or from Eastern Europe had hardly any contact with their countries of birth. Furthermore, these recent immigrants become part of wider transnational communities, imagined or real, that offer alternative identifications unavailable in Israel's first years of nation-building. Lastly, in an era of ethnic revival, today's *olim* reformulate 'new ethnicities' and acquire multiple identities that could not have been developed under the hegemonic model of a unique national culture currently being challenged by various agents in Israeli society.

These observations require us to take a new look at integration processes in Israel by re-situating the study of *olim* in a wider framework of recent studies that takes into account transnational practices and multiple identity constructs. Indeed, until recently, immigration was often thought of as a linear and permanent movement from country of origin to host country where assimilation into the new society and emergence of ethnicity was explained in terms of multicultural theories (Glazer and Moynihan 1975). However, in the last decade, both in the fields of anthropology and migration studies, researchers have focused on questions such as location and power (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), experiences of deterritorialization (Appadurai 1996), transnationalism and the nation-state (Basch et al. 1994), creolization (Hannerz 1996) and hybridity (Friedman 1994). Yet the theoretical frameworks of this 'new literature' have rarely been applied to the study of *olim* in Israel because until now Israel was seen as a special case in migration studies, mainly due to its 'mythology of uniqueness'; this seems less and less appropriate today, as new immigrants increasingly display the same attributes as migrants to other Western countries, calling for a new approach to immigration in Israel (Shuval and Leshem 1998).

Moreover, the characteristics of the present immigration waves also require us to rethink the very concepts of Zionism, *aliyah* and citizenship in Israel. Indeed, the Zionist 'narrative' (which views *aliyah* and the melting pot ideology as a unique Zionist project) still dominates most research on immigrants to Israel, even though studies show that heightened ethnicity and cultural assimilation are compatible (Weingrod 1985) and that inter-group conflicts, inequality and emergent ethnicity

reflect cultural pluralism (Ben-Rafael 1982; Smooha 1986). New modes of incorporation in Israeli society that undermine the dominant absorption model of the "fusion of the exiles" are only beginning to be addressed (Kaplan and Rosen 1993; Leshem and Lissak 1999). But, as opposed to post-Zionist debates in Israeli historiography or sociology, migration studies in Israel have not critically rethought the idea of the homecoming of 'returning' diasporas. Finally, the challenge these new immigrants represent for citizenship and national identity need yet to be considered in the broader framework of studies on post-national citizenship (Soysal 1994), counter-hegemonic constructions of identity (Basch et al. 1994) and multicultural immigrant societies (Kymlicka 1995).

## 1  Participating in Israeli Society – Between Integration and Segregation

At first glance, Ethiopian and Russian immigrants in Israel appear to represent two extremes: the former is a rural, mostly illiterate population from the northern Ethiopian highlands who maintained a strong religious and ethnic identity over the centuries; the latter is a mainly urban, highly educated population, who could not always preserve religious practices under the Russian communist regime. Because of these characteristics, diverging integration policies were applied to each group by the Israeli authorities.

Following what was termed "indirect absorption," Ethiopian immigrants remained for at least one year (but often more) in an absorption center (*merkaz klita*), a facility that provided lodging as well as Hebrew language classes and various administrative offices on the premises. This framework offered most of the health, educational and bureaucratic services that the newcomers needed in the first stages of adaptation to life in Israel. Such a 'total institution' with its underlying paternalism, was designed to help these immigrants for a transitional period that sometimes extended beyond the intended time-span, turning temporary dwellings into permanent ones and support into dependence. To encourage Ethiopians to live on their own, the Israeli government launched in 1993 a special mortgage program enabling families to purchase apartments (subsidies averaging $80,000 – or the equivalent of 90% of the price of an apartment – were offered, as well as interest-free loans for the remaining amount). Most immigrants live today in permanent housing, scattered around the country but voluntarily clustered in ethnic enclaves.

"Direct absorption," on the other hand was implemented for the Russian immigrants, which meant that upon arrival they received an

"absorption basket" (*sa'al klita*) including an allowance for living costs, rental and mortgage subsidies, and educational expenses averaging $10,000 for the year. They used this financial aid to find housing, purchase goods and survive on their own, instead of the government managing their needs. This policy, which allowed the newcomers to be more or less in charge of their own integration, made it also more diffi-cult to provide government services to this delocalized and decentralized population.[2] Furthermore, the Russians deeply resented the benefits granted to the Ethiopians, particularly in the area of housing, which they viewed as 'positive discrimination' playing in their disfavor.

In addition, the presence of a community of *vatikim* (veteran immi-grants) from the USSR and from Ethiopia, who had already set up communal structures, helped the newcomers upon arrival and eased their integration process. They also shaped the way the newcomers would participate in Israeli polity and society.

## New Speech Communities

One aspect that characterizes both groups is the maintenance of the native languages, in which the indigenous media (television, radio and press) that have emerged in the last decade play a major role. In fact, both Russian and Amharic, the two vernaculars most widely used among Russians and Ethiopians respectively, show signs of ethnolin-guistic vitality in Israel. The development of daily Russian and Amharic broadcasts on Israeli radio as well as programs on public television draw large audiences among the new immigrants. In particular, the establishment of a Russian-language press, numbering some 50 news-papers and magazines, constitutes one of the most important phenomena characterizing this immigrant group (Zilberg and Leshem 1996). At its peak, in 1991–2, circulation of Russian immigrant press reached close to one million copies per week. Local publishers also issue books of prose and poetry as well as literary almanacs for Russian readers, and prominent Russian writers living in Israel continue to publish in their mother-tongue (Remennick 1999). This wide-spread use of native-language media provides a major source of information and entertainment for the older generation who does not understand Hebrew and leads to the construction of an 'imagined community' of audiences speaking the same language inside of Israel.

Furthermore, circulation of videotapes and music cassettes from Ethiopia and an increase in the audience of Russian cable television channels reinforce the ethnic identity of the newcomers and links to their country of origin. These new communication practices also bear

heavily on the reconstruction of images of the home country, as is witnessed, for example, through the cultural appropriation and idealization conveyed through video movies from Ethiopia (Anteby 1999). In addition, certain educational frameworks (e.g. Russian extra-curricular classes, an Amharic language test for the matriculation exam at the end of high school) give an opportunity to the second generation to continue being fluent in their mother-tongue even though a separate education system in Russian or Amharic is not available. If bilingualism is on the rise among the younger generation from the former Soviet Union, who often prefer to use Russian despite successfully acquiring Hebrew (Ben-Rafael et al. 1998), Amharic seems to be weakening among the second generation as most Ethiopian youngsters speak mainly Hebrew amongst themselves.

In sum, native-language is still being preserved even when Hebrew is mastered, creating segregated speech communities that challenge the linguistic hegemony of a Hebrew-speaking state. Indeed the creation of linguistic boundaries and the multilingual situation that results from this (as was clear in the last electoral campaign with television ads and posters both in Russian and Amharic) points towards a resistance to dominant Israeli culture and a refusal of social integration. Yet at the same time, these new immigrants construct themselves as a Russian and Amharic speaking community specifically situated in Israel, using a Hebraized Russian (Markowitz 1993) and Amharic (Anteby 1997). To this extent, they form Russian-Israeli or Ethiopian-Israeli local communities that differ from Russian or Amharic linguistic groups in Europe or the USA. These double processes of separatism and integration will also become clear in the communal organization of Ethiopians and Russians in Israel.

## Towards Communalization

One of the first questions the immigrants confront upon arriving in Israel concerns their membership in the Jewish ethno-national identity. If belonging to the Jewish nation (or the Jewish people) allowed Ethiopians and Russians to acquire citizenship in virtue of the Law of Return, their first encounter with Israeli Judaism is nothing more than foreign for both groups, albeit for different reasons.

In the case of the Ethiopians, their Jewish practices often differed from those of normative Judaism, their language of prayer used to be Ge'ez, an ancient Ethiopic language, and their religious leaders, the *kessotch*, have still not been recognized as such by the Israeli authorities. Furthermore, their personal status as Jews has also been questioned, even though as a community they were recognized in 1975 by the Israeli

Rabbinate as descendants of the lost tribe of Dan, and thus considered 'full-fledged Jews' to whom the Law of Return could apply. However, because the code of Jewish Law (the *Halakhah*) was unknown in Ethiopia, marriage, divorce and conversions were not performed according to Rabbinic Judaism and some individuals still undergo ritual immersion before marrying in Israel.[3] Paradoxically, Ethiopian children were sent to state religious schools (*mamlakhti-dati*) during their first year in Israel, and the majority continue in this framework, where they are taught normative Jewish practices often estranging them from their parents. Therefore Ethiopians, confronted with a new language of prayer, a new corpus of texts and new religious rites, as a whole choose not to adopt them and form separate religious communities, while the younger generation is either distancing itself from religion or identifying with Israeli religious-nationalist models. The recent immigration of the Falashmoras, a group of Ethiopian Jews converted to Christianity entering Israel under a family reunification policy, also complicates the status of the Ethiopian community in Israel.

The Russians, on the other hand, are often unfamiliar with basic Judaism because of assimilation, intermarriage and the lack of religious freedom under the Soviet regime. The Russian immigrants as a whole are considered to be a 'Jewish community' by the Israeli government, but since 1989 an increasing number of non-Jews are also entering Israel according to the Law of Return as family members of Jews. Given the high number of mixed marriages in the former Soviet Union, the personal status of the newcomers is put into question since an estimated 27 percent of Russian immigrants to Israel today are not considered Jews according to *Halakha* (i.e. they were not born to a Jewish mother) (DellaPergola quoted in Shuval and Leshem 1998 : 35). Because Jews in the Soviet Union could not perform certain religious prescriptions (relating to marriage, divorce, circumcisions), the Israeli Rabbinate has ruled that some of the immigrants or their children must undergo a conversion in order to marry under the auspices of the religious authorities in Israel. However, the vast majority of Russians are secular and prefer to marry in a civil framework; some are also being buried in non-Jewish cemeteries. Finally, on the whole, they send their children to secular schools (*hiloni*), thus not integrating in religious communities either.

The failure of religious incorporation and the doubts on the immigrants' personal status as Jews, besides challenging the very equation between religion and nationality in the Israeli state, encourages both groups to think of themselves as 'Other' and not fully identify with the religious-ethnic national identity of their new homeland. This is also true to some extent concerning social integration. Even though serving in the army, going to school or to university and entering the workplace

are the traditional socialization frameworks for achieving 'absorption' in the host society, Russians and Ethiopians still remain marginalized from the wider Israeli population. As a result, the rate of endogamy still remains high for both groups and social networks and ties tend to develop mostly among other co-ethnics across Israel. Taking, for example, the case of the Ethiopians, these immigrants recreate on the neighborhood level some of their traditional social and economic structures such as credit associations, collective meat buying groups, burial associations and counsels of elders (Anteby 1997), thus reinforcing ethnic identity by recreating a new sense of locality that is simultaneously an 'Ethiopian space' and an 'Israeli place.' The Russians operate similar processes of territorialization, leading to the emergence of spatial enclaves; for example, the majority of emigrants from Derbent (Daghestan) moved to Hadera, the ones from Gomel (Belarus) to Nahariah, and the ones from Central Asia to southern areas of Tel Aviv (Berthomière 1996). The concentrations of both immigrant groups also function as a thriving place for entrepreneurial niches and for a flourishing "ethnic business", whether it is Russian non-kosher groceries or Ethiopian spice stores, reconstituting a new geography of identity in the Israeli environment that enables cultural practices to be maintained and specific services to be offered in the native-language.

More significantly, Russians and Ethiopians have established a tight network of associations and organizations both on a local and a national scale that help its members with housing or employment problems, that defend their rights or that are directed at specific populations (e.g. youth at risk, Falashmoras, victims of domestic violence). If we turn to the Ethiopian immigrants, the number of associations skyrocketed to nearly 100 according to Weil (1997), set up by young leaders who skillfully stage strikes and demonstrations (such as the one directed towards the Rabbinate in 1985 or in response to the blood scandal in 1996). Among the immigrants from the former Soviet Union, numerous associations exist, ranging from cultural clubs, *Landmanschaften*, a Russian library, self-help institutions and interest groups (Leshem and Lissak 1999). Concurrently, a class of new leaders has emerged, challenging a certain balance of power inside the community but also raising issues of representativity and legitimacy, as is apparent in the contested leadership of the umbrella organizations (be it the *Zionist Forum of Soviet Jewry* or the *United Ethiopian Jewish Organization*) officially representing these two communities *vis-à-vis* the Israeli authorities. Be that as it may, this communal organization points to specific modes of incorporation into Israeli society by which cultural claims as an ethnic group are asserted through the channels of Israeli civil society. In this sense, Russian and Ethiopian Jews, who lacked communal structures and leaders in their countries of origin, are now organized as a 'community' that can bring about group

mobilization in times of crisis. But they are also constructing themselves as a "local community" of Russians and Ethiopians on the national Israeli level, thus at the same time adopting a collective identity as Russian-Israelis or Ethiopian-Israelis. This will become even more clear through the political mobilization of these new citizens.

## Creating an Ethnic Space in the Israeli Polity

Both immigrant groups participate widely in national elections, with a voting rate close to that of veteran Israelis, demonstrating that they are keen on using their first right as new citizens. By their sheer numbers, the Russian electorate weighs heavily on the results of the elections whereas the voting power of the Ethiopians remains very limited. Both groups, however, had little experience of civil society in their countries of origin, yet they seem to have rapidly adapted to the new political culture in Israel, learning to make use of their political rights and their mobilizing power in the civic sphere. This active performance of citizenship outlines their feeling of belonging to their new homeland and their involvement in its politics, yet each group chose a different path to enact it.

The Russians established prior to the 1996 elections a political party (*Israel b'Aliyah*) and before the 1999 elections, a second ethnic party was created (*Israel Beitenu*), reflecting the divergences and power struggles inside the Russian community. The first party, headed by Nathan Sharansky, obtained six parliamentary seats in the Knesset and the second party, headed by Avigdor Libermann, gained four seats. As a result, Nathan Sharansky was appointed Minister of Interior (a key-position in determining matters of personal status and citizenship, among other things), and a second vice-ministerial post in the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption was given to a candidate of *Israel b'Aliyah*. Thus, most immigrants voted for the ethnic parties and not the Israeli ones, entering the political arena through ethnicizing their representation. In the last elections (2003), *Israel b'Aliyah* gained only two seats and the second party merged with a right-wing party, shedding its ethnic character. As for electing a Prime Minister, the voting patterns of the Russian electorate seem to depend more on their satisfaction with the government's policies concerning immigrant absorption than on a definite political orientation.

The Ethiopians, for their part, preferred to cast their votes in electing members of the Knesset mainly towards the *Likud* candidates, and, to a lesser extent, towards national and religious parties at the right of the political spectrum. However, Addisu Messale became the first Ethiopian Jew to become a Member of the Knesset in 1996 on behalf of

the Labor Party, supported by Bedouins and left-wing Israelis. In 1999, two Ethiopian candidates were on the list of *Israel b'Aliyah* (albeit in remote positions), revealing an interesting alliance here with the Russian immigrants whom they otherwise do not align with. In 2003, Addisu Messale ran on the list of the left-wing Workers' party while other Ethiopians were candidates for the lists of Likud and Shas, a Sephardic religious party, as well as a woman for the left-wing Meretz. None of them were elected and the Ethiopians have not succeeded in forming their own ethnic party. In 1999, they also lost their only representative in the Parliament. As for electing the Prime Minister, they overwhelmingly support the Likud candidate, expressing a deep nationalist commitment to their new country. In the last municipal elections, some independent Ethiopian parties formed but the candidates were not elected because of divisions inside the community, whose members sometimes preferred to vote for Israeli candidates rather than for their own.

These patterns are relevant as to ethnicity in politics. On the basis of Ben-Rafael's (1982) classification of former immigrant waves, one could predict that Russians will make up a "for-itself" group, developing a community of interests and a political consciousness, in other words institutionalizing ethnicity in the polity. In opposition, the Ethiopians can be seen as an "in-itself" group, unwilling to articulate an ethnic political ticket, leading to their marginalization in the political sphere. However, both groups, in particular the Russians, demonstrate that through communalization they are integrated in the political system of their new country and have the power to change the outcome of local and national elections and to influence decision-making and political agendas at the state level. Furthermore, the Israeli-Arab conflict results in national solidarity that plays a major role in the political and social integration of the newcomers; by activating their citizen rights as participants in civil society, they acquire a strong national identity as Israelis, as they reconstruct a new sense of membership in the nation state and give a new meaning to citizenship.

Despite their dissimilarities, Ethiopians and Russians use the same modes of incorporation in Israeli society to simultaneously maintain segregation and pursue assimilation. In other words, from the point of view of native language, communal organization and political participation, the two groups view themselves as ethnic communities, which was never the case in their countries of origin, and are perceived as such by the Israelis as well; yet these are also the very strategies allowing them to fully enter Israeli society. In sum, by reconstructing new communities and behaving as 'ethnics,' they are becoming Israelis. However, if these patterns of participating ethnically in Israeli society demonstrate that Russians and Ethiopians form separate local commu-

nities rooted in a strong national identity as Israeli citizens, this does not exclude that they also identify with 'new ethnicities' beyond the borders of their new homeland.

## II  Participating in Global Culture –
## Building Transnational Communities

At the dawn of the 21st century, there exist various ways of negotiating and reconstructing ethnicities in Israel. Over the last several decades, the Israeli melting-pot model of immigrant 'absorption' has been challenged, mainly due to two factors. First, the Zionist ideal of the fusion of exiles (*mizug galuyot*) into a homogeneous society with a unified national and cultural identity (i.e. that of the " Jewish people ") has failed, as cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity have become legitimized (Cohen 1983); simultaneously, assimilation proved to be class-dependent, as the gap between the 'two Israels', the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi, widens and inequalities persist (Smooha 1986). Secondly, the *olim* of today, as opposed to those of the 50s and 60s, are no longer willing to give up their ethnic specificities, particularly when faced with Others (i.e. Israelis) who are supposed to be the Same (i.e. Jews), but in fact turn out to be very 'different' from the newcomers. Therefore, Russian and Ethiopian immigrants are presently fully participating in Israeli life without the desocialization and resocialization processes required in the earlier years of nation-building, as new patterns of ethnic legitimation and new modes of incorporation insure membership in Israeli society. In the past, most immigrant groups aspired to assimilate as quickly as they could and become 'Israelis;' today, it rather seems that the newcomers strive to remain 'ethnics' as long as they can. In this case, though, what become the markers of otherness? And how are the boundaries of the group redefined?

### A Transnational Russian Jewish Community

The immigrants from the former Soviet Union continue to transmit and re-create a Russian culture and language in Israel, especially since it is the only means for the intellectual elite, the *intelligentsia*, to maintain any kind of identity. Russians established an institutional system to foster various aspects of Russian culture and form a Russian-Israeli cultural enclave 'wavering between integration and ghettoization,' as Lissak and Leshem put it (1995: 24). One witnesses the formation of a new community of Russian-speaking Jews in Israel who wish to maintain an image of elitists and cosmopolitans.[4] Indeed, they think of themselves as belonging to a Russian "high culture," seen as superior to both

Western culture and even more so to Israeli culture, which is dismissed as 'Oriental' (Kimmerling 1998 : 271). Russian-language media plays in this respect a major role in maintaining among the newcomers this strong identification with the language and the culture of their home country. This emergence of a 'Russian subculture' is interpreted by Israelis as resistance to integration and as cultural separatism (Lissak and Leshem 1995), yet this new 'Russian ethnicity' developing among the immigrants rather suggests that incorporation in Israeli society can combine processes both of ethnicization and Israelization.

Furthermore, Russian immigrants maintain close ties with their country of origin as well as with other Russians in America and Europe, thus developing transnational social, economical and cultural networks around the world. Many have also kept their passports from the former Soviet Union. For instance, over 20 percent of working age immigrants own small businesses in their home country, or work for a Russian company in Israel, or are otherwise involved in joint ventures (Remennick 1999).

Travel patterns also account for the rise in exchanges between countries where Russian Jewish immigrants reside, since, according to Remennick (1999), about 20 percent of Russian Israelis make annual trips to their home cities in the former Soviet Union and over 40 percent visit there every two to four years. Some still own apartments in their country of origin and return there for several months every year. Remennick (1999) also estimates that about three-quarters have received in their homes relatives and other co-ethnic guests from various countries at least once during their life in Israel. When they do not travel, Russians in Israel keep in contact with relatives in Moscow, New York or Berlin by phone, fax or e-mail. In addition, visiting artists from the former Soviet Union also promote cultural consumption of Russian-language events (Leshem and Lissak 1999). Finally, Russian cable television also exposes the immigrants to information flows from their home country, thus playing a special role in the formation of a transnational consciousness (Remennick 1999).

These exchanges between the former Soviet Union, Israel, the United States and European countries which became 'centers' for this new diaspora lead to the emergence of a transnational Russian Jewish community. As Markowitz defines it, "this community, unimagined (cf. Anderson), unintended, and obviously without a bounded territory, rests on a social base of kinship and friendship ties across the continents; on the emotional bases of a common understanding of what it was like to have lived as Jews in the USSR; on a positive valuation of Russian high culture and the Russian language; on an orientation toward intellectualism and professionalism; and on the necessity of adjusting these values, beliefs, and life patterns to a different, non-Soviet reality" (1995:

207–8). The development of a transnational identity together with a growing national Israeli identity among Russians also appears in a different form among the Ethiopian immigrants.

## A New Black Diaspora?

In conjunction with secularization and modernity, Ethiopian Jews are growing more aware of their 'black' identity among the 'white' host population, in a way re-discovering their blackness or *négritude* (Anteby 1997). To these new racial categories encountered in Israel, one must also add the constructions of race that the immigrants are exposed to through modern media, which often conveys the American model of black/white interactions as well as global representations of Black diasporas. Thus, one observes in the claims of Ethiopian immigrants, particularly in the political arena, new uses of blackness and references to the discourse of race relations, usually to condemn Israeli policies as "discrimination" and "racism."[5] The disclosure of the Israeli Blood Bank's disposal of donations from Ethiopian Jews because of a high incidence of AIDS among this group resulted in violent reactions on the part of the Ethiopian community and brought to the fore these racial rhetorics, turning inter-ethnic relations into inter-racial relations (Anteby 1997). This reformulation of ethnicity in terms of color consciousness is also manifest among a minority of the youth who adopt Afro-American models and international black symbols (in their music, hairstyle, clothing etc.). Kimmerling (1998: 306) even mentions the threat of a "Black counter-culture" at the margins of Israeli society. However, this identification with a Black diaspora remains in the realm of the symbolic since there is no contact nor affiliation with Blacks living in Israel, such as the Black Hebrews of Dimona, or the foreign workers from Ghana, except perhaps in some African-music Tel Aviv night clubs (Anteby-Yemini 2003).

In addition, many Ethiopian immigrants travel back and forth to Ethiopia. Some take trips to visit relatives, others to cure health problems and a growing number of young people are importing goods to Israel (clothes, food, music and video tapes). These close links with Ethiopia compel a population who had rarely left their native villages before emigrating to Israel to completely rethink geographical space and integrate the model of a globalized world in their spatial constructions. Furthermore, these frequent trips to Addis Ababa and the encounter with its urban African culture, whom the rural immigrant population in Israel hardly knew, allow for cultural exchanges and circulation of new identity models which offer to these new Israeli citizens different self-images. Indeed, traveling back to their home country

enables them to participate in several different racial systems simulta-
neously, affecting their concepts of race, as is the case for other migrant
groups (Glick Schiller et al. 1992). This leads to new ways of thinking
about group boundaries that differ from the models of the elders, who
are still based on religion and especially on purity and impurity (Anteby
1997). These frameworks of ethnic reconstruction of blackness,
Jewishness, Ethiopianess and Israeliness account for the forging of a
new collective identity that could be coined 'Black-Ethiopian-Jewish-
Israeli ethnicity.' A process of 'ethnicization' of color makes it a strategic
'new ethnicity' socially and politically constructed, representing for
these immigrants a way of negotiating their racial identity in a 'white'
Jewish Israeli society.

## Global Olim

These two examples suggest that a first set of identity references stem
from the country of origin with which the immigrants still maintain
strong bonds through modern media, travel and business, enabling
them to continue to actively participate in their former society. These
transnational networks and cultural flows allow for a circulation of com-
modities and people, books and images, music and food between Israel
and Ethiopia and between various Russian Jewish diasporas in the for-
mer Soviet Union, the United States and Europe. This involvement in
both the home and host societies, as well as other centers where co-eth-
nics reside, is a central element of transnationalism, a social process in
which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural and
political borders (Glick Schiller et al. 1992). A second set of identity con-
structs derives from wider global models, brought by modern media
such as cable TV and music culture. In this respect, a certain number of
Ethiopian immigrants feel that they belong to a new 'imagined commu-
nity' of Blacks around the world whereas Russian immigrants develop
a transnational identity as a new worldwide diaspora. This reflects the
situation of a growing number of migrants today, for which, as
Appadurai points out, "the landscapes of group identity – the
ethnoscapes – around the world are no longer familiar anthropological
objects, insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially
bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous"
(1996: 191).

These observations demonstrate that one can live in Israel today and
still remain 'Russian' or 'Ethiopian' in addition to several other identi-
ties one chooses from. New ethnic options, such as identifying as
'Blacks' or associating oneself with 'Russian high culture' may perhaps
become the most important features of the immigrants' 'visibility' and

their main strategies of differentiation from the host population. These two opposing trends -becoming Israeli by forging new sub-cultures – may seem mutually exclusive and have a cost, such as generating tension and hostility in the host population, social and spatial marginalization, and cultural separatism. Nonetheless, this interplay between the local Israeli context, the former society of origin, and the global dimension of world culture should not be viewed as a sign of the failure of their absorption. On the contrary, I suggest that these trends may well represent a new form of participating in Israeli society that combines national, transnational and global identities. In other words, belonging to an imagined Black transnational community and re-appropriating African-American symbols in terms of Israeli ethnicity, or using the Russian language for daily life in Israel and belonging to a 'real' diasporic community around the world, makes the newcomers at the same time Israeli and transnational, local and global.

## Conclusion

Both the crumbling Zionist ideology in Israel itself (such as Cohen 1983 and others have noted) as well as the characteristics of the Russian and Ethiopian immigrants (i.e. their social and political incorporation in Israeli society, the ethnic options they choose in relation to global identities) account for new patterns of membership in Israeli society. These 'new Israelis' are developing ethnic subcultures and identities that constitute quasi-autonomous entities close to what Uri Ram terms 'local neo-ethnic communities' (see his chapter in this volume). The newcomers construct material and symbolic separations (low rate of intermarriage, segregated housing, distinct speech communities, opposite lifestyles, political parties, pressure groups, labor niches) that some see as challenging the very definition of 'Israeli culture' and 'Israeli identity' (Kimmerling 1998: 264–5). At the same time, the immigrants have constructed new ethnicities and new forms of identification that are not connected to Israel nor to the Zionist model, but rather to transnational communities and global identities. They are in fact combining different cultural references and reworking multiple identities, in a sense becoming 'emergent diasporas' and questioning the very definition of olim as 'Jewish returnees' coming back to their 'homeland.'

Is this two-way dynamic of ethnicization and globalization a threat to national Israeli identity? In fact, one should see it more in terms of the limits of Zionism since the ideal of a homogeneous society with a unique cultural identity is no longer operational and new ethnic options are becoming more and more prevalent as ways through which olim can rebuild a new identity and form of belonging to Israeli society.

Furthermore, this trend does not go against the concept of citizenship but should be seen as attesting to the 'normalization' of Israeli society in which allegiance to the nation-state does not exclude other ethnic affiliations, just as other countries are striving towards post-national citizenship while simultaneously experiencing the hardening of ethnic identities. Indeed, as in Europe, where one observes a reconfiguration of membership in the nation-state that complicates and contests the national order of citizenship (Soysal 1994), Israel is also confronted to shifts in the model of citizenship and to modes of belonging beyond the confines of national boundaries. In this context, one must also rethink the specific category of the *oleh* for Israel since, on the one hand, a growing number of immigrants are non-Jews (Russian Christians and Ethiopian Falashmoras), and, on the other hand, more and more *olim* are becoming transmigrants, resembling deterritorialized populations in other countries of the world.

Finally, what some may see, following the work of Uri Ram, as the "post-Zionization" of these *olim,* may in fact simply be a form of 'Israelization' that allows immigrants to participate in the public sphere and integrate in the local civil society while undermining the cultural and hegemonic domination of the Zionist state, thus suggesting an alternative way of constructing Israeli nationhood. The combined processes of neo-ethnicization, transnationalization and nationalization allow Ethiopians and Russians to recreate local identities as ethnic communities in Israel, national identities as Israeli citizens and global identities as members of transnational networks, opening a new dimension of Israeli citizenship that could be coined 'post-Zionist citizenship.' In this sense, post-Zionist citizenship would mean that the newcomers manage to redefine themselves simultaneously as neo-ethnics and post-nationals without being paradoxical. In fact, they seem to have reworked the mechanisms of Israeli citizenship in such a way that inside the nation-state they are subject to nationalizing forces that differentiate them from the 'real' Other of Israeli identity (i.e. the Arabs), thus making them neo-nationalist, but in terms of outside boundaries, they are subject to transnationalizing forces, making them post-nationalist. In this way, then, ultra-nationalism and post-nationalism do not exclude one another. However, I would claim that the new immigrants are also post-Zionist to the extent that they represent a form of counter-hegemony that challenges the dominant model of a single Jewish Israeli national identity as well as the traditional idea of nation-bounded identity constructs.

## Notes

W. Berthomière, A. Kemp, D. Newman, U. Ram and O. Yiftachel for their comments on an earlier draft.

1 The term "Ethiopians" and "Russians" follow the Hebrew usage *etiopim* and *russim*, even though I am aware of their limitations as well as the generalization they imply, given that we are dealing with such heterogenous groups. Ethiopian Jews originate from Tigray and Gondar provinces, for example, while Russians are composed of immigrants from the Caucasus, Central Asia and Ukraine.
2 This article only refers to the recent wave of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, who began arriving in 1989 and not to the prior immigration of the 1970s, whose socio-demographic characteristics and motivations were vastly different. On the absorption policies concerning these two groups cf. S. Adler (1997).
3 Until 1985, a longer form of symbolic conversion (*giyur le-humra*), including re-circumcision (*hatafat dam brit*), ritual immersion and acceptance of the commandments, was required to remove any doubt concerning the personal status of Ethiopian immigrants.
4 B. Kimmerling call this group "Russian-speaking immigrants" and considers them above all as a linguistic-cultural group rather than an ethnic group *per se* (1998: 270).
5 This is of course reminiscent of the Israeli Black Panthers, a movement of young Moroccan Jews who in the 1970s contested the discriminatory policies of the Ashkenazi establishment towards the immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East. Recently, the then Ethiopian-Israeli member of Knesset, Addisu Messale, also made use of such accusations against the Labor Party which he left before the 1999 elections.
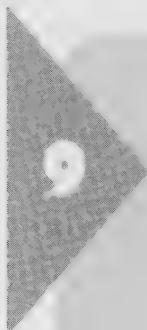
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# Negotiating Difference in Israeli Scholarship: Towards a New Feminist Discourse

Pnina Motzafi-Haller

This chapter describes the early years of an emergent new radical Israeli feminist discourse – the Mizrahi feminist discourse. Mizrahi feminism, both as a grassroots feminist activist movement and as a significant theoretical and political challenge to mainstream liberal feminism, has grown dramatically since the early years depicted in this chapter. From a core group of a handful of marginalized women who published brief essays in radical, little circulated journals, the Mizrahi feminist movement grew to a thriving new organization known as Ahoti ("my sister") with a distribution list of (at the time of this writing) about 90 members. The web offers several immediate venues for direct communication among listed members of Ahoti as well as an uncensored space for voicing ideas and debates.[1]

While some of these more recent debates and developments will be discussed in the following pages, the main thrust of this essay is centered on the critical formative phase of the Mizrahi feminist discourse, between 1990 and 1997 or 1998. Mizrahi feminism, I wish to show in this chapter, is not only a liberatory feminist movement, one that has emerged to articulate Mizrahi women's interests and struggles. It also presents an important analytical and theoretical breakthrough that challenges not only feminist conventional scholarship, but also Israeli social analysis in general.

Throughout this essay I make extensive use of the first-person pronoun because I feel that much of what I argue revolves around problems of positioning and representation. Extensive use of "I" and "we" is still frowned on in most academic circles (but not in some feminist contexts), and I am aware that it stands out as an exception within this book. Making explicit my position as a Mizrahi feminist is a conscious act that fragments the very powerful silencing claim that there is no place from which a Mizrahi woman can actually speak out or speak at

all. Who speaks for whom and on what basis is a central question throughout this work.

## Women as Subjects, Women as Objects

*"It is axiomatic that we tend to write mainly about ourselves."*
Swirski and Safir, *Calling the Equality Bluff* (1993: 2)

The nascent Mizrahi feminist discourse I wish to outline in this essay is critical and path-breaking, not only due to its possible political effects (drawing attention to the marginalized position of Mizrahi women and their experiences) but also, and most significantly, because it enables for the first time an alternative epistemic perspective that does not fall into the analytical traps at the center of mainstream Israeli feminism. An important caveat should be made before I turn to discuss the Mizrahi intellectual discourse and portray its critical potential for reshaping Israeli scholarship.

I wish to emphasize that my reference to "mainstream Israeli feminism" does not imply that there is a monolithic, homogeneous body of academic and political discourse, a discourse unified by the ethnic and gender affiliation of its producers – Ashkenazi women. Differences in goals, interests and analytical scope exist both among Ashkenazi feminist academics and, as I shall argue, within the Mizrahi-centered discourse. Positing a singular Ashkenazi discourse will be as reductive as casting Mizrahi women as a stigmatized, ahistorical category. However, in the context of the overwhelming silence about Mizrahi women's experiences, it is possible to point to what postcolonial feminist theorist Chandra Mohanty has called a "coherence of effects" (Mohanty 1995:259) within "mainstream Israeli feminism" despite internal differences. Orientalist scholarship of the 1950s and 1960s as well as liberal feminist or "women-studies" scholars of the 1970s and 1980s had abstained from challenging the modernist Zionist model that led them to codify Mizrahi and Palestinian women as the "Oriental Others" and, hence, fashion themselves as "Western" and thus "true feminists."

The uncritical use of this binary model with its inherent ethnocentric and nationalist contradictions has had inescapable analytical and political effects. It is to these effects that I wish to draw attention here. By postulating its own brand of "Western" feminism as the only legitimate feminism, such feminist discourse has sought to establish its own activist agenda as "universal," presenting other women as passive or as non-feminist. Mizrahi working-class women who came to a feminist conference, as we shall see below, were told by Ashkenazi feminists to

drop their efforts to examine their position within power relations embedded in Israeli ethnic and class structures, and focus, instead, on "how they are oppressed by Mizrahi men." These suppressive practices were based on the assumption of "sisterhood": disregarding class, ethnic or national divisions among Israeli women, and thus has rejected any alternative feminist agenda. Presenting such homogenized "sisterhood" as the only model for political action in the struggle against patriarchy has had oppressive, rather than liberating, effects on Mizrahi and Palestinian women, and has reinforced the dominance of male-centered scholarship.

Indeed, despite obsessive recording, with never tiring statistical data, of what is commonly known in the (male-centered) Israeli mainstream sociological literature as "the ethnic gap" – the patterns of inequality that links class position to ethnic affiliations – most Israeli research has failed to develop a theoretical framework that linked these intersecting division categories to gender. No serious effort was made to more fully describe, much less explain, the reality emerging from multiple, simultaneous oppressions. The effort to re-conceptualize critical dimensions of this dominant model and to expose its seemingly simple "scientific" representation of reality as being ideologically and culturally constructed, especially as it pertains to Mizrahi women, has only begun – and it has begun, I wish to claim here, within the nascent Mizrahi feminist intellectual discourse.[2]

This essay is written as an act of reclaiming Mizrahi feminist voice and knowledge "Reclaiming," writes Patricia Hill-Collins, the African American feminist theorist, is an act of "discovering, reinterpreting, analyzing in new ways despite the silencing mechanism of mainstream discourse" (1991: 13). The intellectual Mizrahi discourse, I now turn to, works against what Spivak (1990) has called "social and disciplinary epistemic violence," which is extremely effective in current Israeli academic discourse. Epistemic violence is the conspicuous aggression of those who define their systematic knowledge as the only "true" and "objective" knowledge – against any other claims to knowledge. The small community of scholars and activists who are engaged in Mizrahi intellectual feminist discourse has struggled against a very powerful hegemonic discourse. Our initial subversive act has been to define ourselves as feminists *and* Mizrahi. The question of who defines whom, and the power relations involved in this process, is crucial. To elucidate this point it may be helpful to examine briefly what I call the "political economy" of the small, emerging group of women intellectuals, of Mizrahi and Ashkenazi origin, who make up the core of the contemporary Mizrahi feminist discourse.

## The Political Economy of an Evolving Discourse

The first observation regarding this core group is that its members do not hold central positions in the mainstream Israeli academic world.[3] The few who were able to establish their academic careers had been able to do so in the US, not in Israel. One Mizrahi film maker and activist lives in Paris. Those of us holding academic positions within Israel are marginalized: we are all non-tenured and our political and social activism is frowned upon. A few of us found their place outside academe. Two Mizrahi women run an NGO that works to empower parents in peripheral towns and neighborhoods.[4] One is an editor of an independent left-leaning magazine, and another established and now manages an independent research institute that documents patterns of inequality in Israel.[5]

The nascent Mizrahi feminist discourse this small group of intellectual women is engaged in has very few avenues of publication and it thus has limited exposure to wider audiences. Most Mizrahi feminist writings appear in radical, little-circulated journals in the form of short essays and interviews (e.g., in the Israeli feminist journal *Noga*; in the radical Mizrahi-centered publication *Iton Acher*, and in two left-leaning publications of the Alternative Information Center – *News from Within* (English) and *MiTzad Sheni* (Hebrew).

Questions of representation and the practice of positioning the knower within the representational act are central to the evolving Mizrahi feminist discourse. One of the more interesting outcomes of such practice is the blurring of the lines that separates the "academic" from the "activist" sphere. The same women who organize and shape feminist conferences and workshops are those who link theory to practice. Academic analysis and popular writing that strive to understand Israeli realities have been intimately interconnected with explicit and passionate efforts to change these realities.

Almost ten years after the initial phase depicted above, the position of Mizrahi women in Israeli academe has not changed much. Despite the growing visibility of Mizrahi feminists in the new organization of Ahoti, Mizrahi women academics are still underrepresented and the few who made it to the exclusive ranks of university lectureship are still untenured or unemployed. In 2003, Ahoti noted the absence of Mizrahi and Palestinian women speakers in academic conferences on these panels.

## Mizrahi Intellectual Feminist Discourse of the 1990s

*Any attempt to tell us there is one homogenic feminism is an effort to silence us.*
Ella Shohat (1996)

One of the earliest and most articulate voices to examine feminist theory in its Israeli context was that of Dr. Vicki Shiran. A legal scholar with many years of activism in Mizrahi and feminist circles, Shiran is not only an articulate, original thinker and writer, but also a central figure in the process of reshaping Israeli feminism and Mizrahi consciousness. In 1991, in a three-part essay published in the Mizrahi-centered publication *Iton Acher*, entitled "Feminist = Rebel," Shiran laid out her thesis of what it means to be a feminist in Israel in the 1990s. Shiran begins her analysis by portraying the sad predicament of Israeli feminism: in spite of some successes and changes, very few women in Israel define themselves as feminists. Moreover, substantive ideas about women's liberation have not taken root and have not created a fertile ground for thinking and action among Israeli women. In Israeli public discourse, feminism is ridiculed and its political and social importance belittled.

From her position as a Mizrahi feminist, Shiran espouses a radical, not a reformist/conservative brand of feminism. Most of those who define themselves as feminists in Israel, she observes, focus their struggle on getting more of the cake (e.g., more women in the Knesset) and therefore, in Shiran's view, "play into the hands of the oppressor and contribute to the reproduction of the status quo." Her radical stand stems from her position as a Mizrahi Jew in Israel. She sees Mizrahi oppression as inseparable from gender oppressions. Yet Shiran refuses to play the role of the "token Mizrahi woman" in the mostly middle-class and Ashkenazi feminist circles in Israel. She insists that any public forum must include not only equal representation of men and women but also a critical effort to include equal number of Mizrahi and Palestinian men and women.

Shiran is not alone in her observation[6] that the core of the Israeli feminist movement is made up of middle-class, Ashkenazi Jewish women. Thus, Katya Azoulay (1991) writes that Israeli women organizations are managed by an "exclusive forum of women who believe that their academic and professional degrees grant them insights which are better than any insight gained by women whose life and work experience had prepared them, perhaps to no lesser degree, to represent and highlight issues relevant to a wider section of the population."[7] Barbara Swirski traces the grave outcome of this state of affairs. She argues that "one cause for the failure of the feminist movement in Israel to reach the wider public of women stems from its neglect of inequality in other

spheres of Israeli society . . . the kind that exists between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, between Jews and Palestinians." "Palestinian and Mizrahi women who were active within their own communities," Swirski observes, "had a hard time seeing these feminists as partners in their struggles, they felt the [organized, mostly Ashkenazi] feminists do not acknowledge the worth of their struggles." Dahan-Kalev (1997) points to the double standard of middle-class Ashkenazi feminists who focus on politically-correct issues (such as demonstrations for peace, or for advancing the cause of lesbians or Palestinian women), but never struggle for the needs of low-income Mizrahi women (who most likely are baby-sitting for the demonstrating women, she adds sarcastically).

Shiran extends this criticism of the narrow focus of mainstream Israeli feminism by insisting that the question of Mizrahi and Palestinian women and their oppression must alter the very nature of feminist analysis in Israel. Shohat, Shiran, Motzafi-Haller, and Dahan-Kalev[8] insist that any concrete understanding of the position of women in Israel must take into account the intersection of ethnic, national, religious and class background. The oppression of women in Israel occurs within their respective class, religious and national circles. "A Jewish Mizrahi woman," Shiran writes (1993), "who is oppressed by Mizrahi and Ashkenazi men is not in the same boat with Ashkenazi women because the Mizrahi women are discriminated against in comparison to these women and are often oppressed by them." When a serious analysis of the intersecting lines of gender, ethnicity and class is attempted, the simple call for "Israeli sisterhood" is called into question. Shohat (1996) is most explicit: "An attempt to tell us there is one homogenic feminism is an effort to silence us," she asserts.

A probing examination of the implications of such Mizrahi feminist challenge, and a focused analysis that interrogates the meaning of considering the intersection of gender, ethnicity and class, is offered by Shiran with regard to an affirmative action legal proposition presented in the Knesset (Israeli parliament) in the early 1990s. As a member of the committee for advancement of women in government services, Shiran found herself in a contradictory position. The legal proposal called for the promotion of women over men with equal qualifications in top government positions. In the Israeli reality of intersecting ethnic and gender hierarchies, however, while the first-level ranks are occupied largely by Jewish Ashkenazi men, the second-level ranks are filled by Mizrahi men and Ashkenazi women. These Mizrahi men, Shiran reminds us, are part of the household of many Mizrahi women. If she supported her "Ashkenazi sisters'" struggle for advancement, was she not undermining her, and other Mizrahi women's economic interests? In advancing such an ethnic-blind, feminist principle, was she not contributing to the increasing gap between Mizrahim and

Ashkenazim, and therefore worsening the situation of Mizrahi women?

Shiran's insights about this set of contradictions are illuminating. She points out that the very definition of the question (the advancement in the five highest rank government positions) is a reflection of the limited, intra-class and intra-ethnic group nature of contemporary Israeli feminist political agenda. In Shiran's view, a committed agenda for social equality would have redefined such struggle and extended it to all governmental posts, or placed its priority on middle-range posts where most women, Mizrahi as well as Ashkenazi, find themselves. Another direction for developing a wider political agenda for equality, she argues, could have been to redefine the very criteria for job advancement in ways that would be more inclusive for Mizrahim. For example, if one takes into consideration the gap in formal education between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, a call for a more flexible requirement for advancement to top managerial positions – one based on a track record that demonstrates leadership and creativity, rather than a requirement for certificates and formal education – might open the way for advancement for less academically-qualified Mizrahi men and women.

In December 2002, Shiran published an important essay about Mizrahi feminism in the Journal of the Teachers' Association *Panim.* The essay speaks about the radical, rather than liberal basis of the Mizrahi feminist agenda and laments the stubborn inability of the Ashkenazi feminists to understand, much less accept and support the Mizrahi women's struggle.

## Addressing Difference

*Of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action*
*is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger.*
Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (1984: 42)

In 1993, Shiran led a group of Mizrahi feminists who demanded that the feminist movement adopt affirmative action principles in its own ranks and institute a policy of symmetric representation of Mizrahi and Palestinian women. A year later, the system of equal self-representation was extended to lesbians. The entry of non-Ashkenazi women in significant numbers and visibility into the organized feminist movement ushered in a new era in the hitherto dormant, elitist feminist discourse.[9] In 1994, Mizrahi women took an active part in the planning of the ninth Israeli feminist conference. The difference was immediately felt. For the first time, workshops focusing on Mizrahi women and their needs were convened. Mizrahi feminists invited the Ashkenazi women to discuss

their own ethnic position and to explore their own unacknowledged racist views.[10]

The heated discussion about the nature of Israeli feminism reached a new, explosive level at the tenth Israeli feminist conference when 200 Mizrahi, lower-class women flooded the conference, invited in by a grassroots organization, Hila. Israeli feminists were thus directly confronted with the question of class and ethnic divisions in ways they could no longer ignore. The question exploded right in their "front yard" during their own yearly convention. *Mitzad Sheni* published the reflections of several women – Mizrahi and Ashkenazi – about the stormy event in the conference and its significance.[11] Several women who were instrumental in organizing the lower-class Mizrahi women's controversial presence in the conference maintained that the Mizrahi women were humiliated by the Ashkenazi organizers. The lower-class Mizrahi women, who had never before appeared at such conferences, faced blunt paternalism that went as far as instructing them what they could and what they must not discuss in the conference. Tikva Levi, manager of Hila said: "I personally witnessed paternalistic statements such as: 'Don't speak about your oppression by the Ashkenazi establishment. Focus on your oppression by Mizrahi men.'"

Vered Krako, another Mizrahi activist, depicted the open hostility between the two groups of women in the following way:

> In the conference these (lower-class Mizrahi) women met the very women who in their daily lives humiliate and oppress them – the teachers of their children, social workers, psychologists, counselors. These were the women who send their children to special education and vocational schools out of the distorted, racist perception of the Mizrahi population. It is obvious to everyone that [once channeled into such vocational schools] these kids could never reach higher education or key positions in Israeli society. It is clear that the final product of such early educational channeling is a barely literate child, a drug addict, a prostitute, and a juvenile delinquent.

This volatile encounter between middle-class feminists and the unwelcomed lower-class Mizrahi women questioned and deeply challenged the very claim for a shared feminist agenda. As one Mizrahi activist put it, as long as Ashkenazi feminism continues to focus on protesting cliterodectomy in Africa, it will remain irrelevant to Mizrahi women and their more pressing problems. A forum of about ten women, led by Hila activists, decided to organize a separate Mizrahi feminist conference in 1996. Says Levi (1995): "After the 10th feminist conference, a forum of Mizrahi women who were interested in exploring their own particular issues among themselves was formed. We are interested in a feminist conference with a Mizrahi agenda, one that will explore our history, our daily struggles."

I participated in that first Mizrahi feminist conference only a few months after my return to Israel after 17 years of academic exile in the US and was carried away with the euphoria. This first feminist Mizrahi conference adopted the motto: "We Are Here and This Is Ours."[12] Tikva Levi expressed the feeling encapsulated in the motto when she described how in the past she was ashamed to bring her Iraqi-born mother to feminist conferences. "She is a real Arab" she explained, alluding to the unbecoming, "shameful" connotation the Arab appearance of her Jewish Iraqi mother entails in the dominant Israeli scene. Now (at the Mizrahi-feminist conference), she beamed, she felt comfortable not only to invite her mother, but she was certain that her mother would actively participate in workshops. Henriette Dahan-Kalev put the same idea forward in her opening remarks: "This conference will enable Mizrahi women to come here without leaving at home part of their identity. There are no stereotypes here and you don't need to explain anything or apologize to anyone. For me, this is a dream come true."

Indeed, the conference that convened on the second weekend of May 1996, at the Green Beach Hotel in Natanya, was the first open, public exploration of Mizrahi feminist voices. A total of 400 women participated, including Mizrahi, Ethiopian, Arab and even some Ashkenazi women who were invited to join the Mizrahi agenda. There were workshops on "educating our children, "the role of Mizrahi women in initiating social change," "Mizrahi medicine," and "the inerasable past." There was a session conducted in Amharic, a workshop on Mizrahi music, and one on "how to look eyelevel at teachers/clerks/bosses" and more. The conference was hailed as a turning point in Israeli feminism. Several elated participants and observers declared that it identified and presented a wider agenda for the struggle for equality and thus redefined the very nature of Israeli feminism.[13]

But the conference also exposed and demanded critical rethinking of several key questions that remained painfully unresolved. In the aftermath of the conference, a deeply self-aware and introspective evaluation of the goals and limitations of the emerging Mizrahi feminist agenda was articulated. This reflexive, soul-searching discourse should be commended for its courageous effort to bring to the surface and deal with internal contradictions inherent in identity-based politics. What is Mizrahi feminism? Who has the right to represent it? What are the main issues for such a Mizrahi voice? And: Do we, in fact, speak in multiple voices?

The act of self-revelation as Audre Lorde, quoted above, has argued has been indeed "fraught with danger" for Mizrahi feminists. But, as the following segments show, the journey from silence to self-valuation is

an important effort to reject external definitions of the experience, history and identity of Mizrahim in Israel. I turn, then, to the examination of attempts to define and interpret the Israeli reality by several Mizrahi feminist intellectuals. I wish explore not simply the unfolding debates of this evolving discourse, but also – to borrow a phrase from the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1994: 47) – "the discursive and disciplinary place from which questions of identity are strategically and institutionally posed."

## Representations

*The time of liberation is . . . a time of cultural uncertainty.*
Homi Bhabha (1994: 35)

Like many other controversial issues, the question of who can articulate and represent the Mizrahi voice was thrown into sharp relief by Vicki Shiran who raised the question of representation in her biting comments on an essay published in *Mitzad Sheni*. The author of the essay, Noga Dagan, is an Ashkenazi activist who was among the organizers of the Mizrahi conference. Dagan's essay attempted to analyze the shape and meaning of the emerging Mizrahi feminist thought within a framework of global feminist trends and theories.[14] Shiran objected to the position claimed by Dagan as the "theoretician" of Mizrahi feminism. "Who does she represent in her seemingly historical review?" asked Shiran pointedly. "What is her [Dagan's] identity and politics in the context of her wonderful 'identity politics' thesis? What interest does she serve when she determines that 'the concept of Mizrahi women is political and not ascriptive? Does she speak on my behalf or on her own?'" Shiran has no doubt that by positing a political, rather than ascriptive, definition of the category of Mizrahi feminism, Dagan aims to dismantle the Mizrahi collective, appropriate its message, and (without identifying herself) speak in its name.[15]

The "Dagan incident" enables us to explore the more general, complex relationships between Mizrahi women intellectuals and Ashkenazi feminist women on the one hand, and between Mizrahi intellectuals and the majority of lower-class Mizrahi women, on the other. It also leads to an interrogation of the boundaries of the collectivity defined at the intersecting categories of gender and ethnicity.

## Mizrahi Feminism and Ashkenazi Women

*The act of using one's voice requires a listener – a listener that is able to go beyond the invisibility created by objectification as the other.*
Patricia Hill-Collins (1991: 98)

Dagan is not the only non-Mizrahi woman to take part in the discourse and the political action related to Mizrahi feminism. Tikva Honig-Parnas, the editor of *News from Within*, explained her commitment to Mizrahi feminism from her particular position as an Ashkenazi woman in the following way: "My Mizrahi feminist stand is a political and ideological choice; it is not linked to my ethnic origin. I do not accept the basic claims of the oppressing class I was raised in. My wishes for social change and equality are linked also to the liberation of Mizrahim from their oppression." Honig-Parnas explains the political and ideological choices she made on her way to become an ally of Mizrahi feminism as a two-stage process.

First I discovered how classic Marxism ignored the subject of women's oppression, as the concept of "working class" refers actually only to the male worker. That's how I came to feminism. The second discovery was that the "working class" in the eyes of the traditional left in the world and in Israel misses the racial dimension. Here in Israel we saw an "abstract worker" (and thus Ashkenazi) and concluded that as long as the national Israeli–Palestinian conflict is not resolved, there is no chance in joining the social-class struggle. All this is actually argued while most of the working class [in Israel] is Mizrahi, and while one cannot distinguish between his "class" and his cultural-identity oppression. That's how I became a Mizrahi feminist (Honig-Parnas 1996).

Another Ashkenazi woman who was engaged in organizing the Mizrahi conference stated: "I feel tremendously privileged to be part of this gathering, particularly as an Ashkenazi woman." She goes on to explain that her work for the Mizrahi feminist cause enables her to act against what she calls "Israeli racism that was inculcated into me."[16] Prior to the first Mizrahi conference, Tikva Levi, manager of Hila argued: "Ashkenazi feminists in the general conference wanted to channel the discussion towards issues of ethnic origin. We had objected to that. In fact, half of the members of the committee organizing the Mizrahi conference are Ashkenazi. Mizrahi identity is not defined by one's ethnic origin. If there are women, or men, who in their analysis and their social consciousness are part of our struggle, we will not say no to them. Why should we? On ethnic origin basis? This would be in itself racism."

The voices quoted above make it amply clear that the direction taken

by Mizrahi feminists in Israel is not towards a rigid, essentialist, ethno-centric definition of membership. Levi (1995) and Shohat (1996) speak clearly about a *political* identification,[17] not a narrow ascriptive member-ship. The issue, if we go back to the Dagan incident, is not one of ones ethnic origin; it is about the right to represent. Shiran is very clear that her criticism of Dagan's essay does not imply that Ashkenazi women cannot and should not concern themselves with Mizrahi feminist issues. Instead, Shiran calls on Dagan to write *from her position* as a member of the hegemonic group and *in relation to* Mizrahi women and not *about* them.

Shiran's position resonates with Patricia Hill Collins' ideas and lead to a similar resolution. Hill Collins poses the question "Who can be a Black feminist?" (1991: 33). She rejects the essentialist, ascriptive idea (all African-American women by virtue of biology), but she also rejects the purely idealist analysis that presents membership as a conscious polit-ical choice by any person, regardless of her background, world view, and experience. In resolving the tension between these two extreme positions, Hill Collins directs her attention to the centrality of Black women intellectuals in producing Black feminist thought.

In the Israeli context, the argument, as I see it, is that the concrete, lived experiences of Mizrahi women intellectuals play a significant role in our understanding of the Israeli social and political reality.[18] Despite the divisions and variations among us, says Shiran, we all share a memory and a similar biographical and historical experience. What is needed at this point, Mizrahi women intellectuals assert, is a safe space where we can discuss our history and painful memory, and internally interrogate the difficult questions that link our position as oppressed (within the Jewish majority) and as oppressors (*vis-à-vis* non-Jewish populations).

The call for such a collective, intimate space where Mizrahi issues will be discussed in relative security, without the need to explain or apolo-gize, was made by several Mizrahi feminists. Levi explained the very need to organize a feminist conference apart from the "general" femi-nist conference as a conscious decision to create such a space where "we can clarify for ourselves what is Mizrahi feminism."[19] The workshops planned for the first Mizrahi feminist conference, says Levi, were intended to initiate a process of consciousness raising because "it is time we should discuss *among ourselves* these topics."[20]

Similarly, in Shohat's multi-cultural feminist framework, people with the right "political identity" can join the group of committed intellec-tuals. However, discussions and clarifications of "our dilemmas" must be carried out in a framework that is safe enough – where, in Shohat words: "we would not have to fend off negative images and hostile attacks." Shohat's analysis comes full circle to the same point raised by

Shiran about the need for *internal* debate as a necessary phase to be completed before a more secure Mizrahi feminist agenda is developed. The hope, articulated by several Mizrahi intellectual women, has been for *autonomy* for the Mizrahi feminist movement and not for *separation*. Autonomy, to paraphrase Hill-Collins (1991), is needed in order to create a safe, creative space of cultural and social redefinition; autonomy stems from recognition of internal strength – unlike separation that is motivated by fear.

Unfortunately, the hopes that the first Mizrahi feminist conference would enable internal interrogation and a feeling of empowerment were largely thwarted. In the aftermath of the conference, Biton, Shiran, Shohat, and others lamented that the conference missed the opportunity for developing an autonomous Mizrahi voice precisely because of the presence of Ashkenazi and Palestinian women in the conference. "We should not hide behind the broad back of what we call 'the Ashkenazi women racism,'" Shiran writes in her painful introspective review of the Mizrahi conference, "we should begin with an internal discourse that explores racism, paternalism, and dishonesty, this time among ourselves, against our own sisters and others."[21] The presence of Ashkenazi and Palestinian women in the conference, Shiran argues, prevented the emergence of such internal, difficult interrogation because we engaged in battling these women instead of dealing with our own issues, prejudices, contradictions, hesitations and questions. Mizrahi women used the Ashkenazi women in the same way as they were used by them in the Ashkenazi-centered annual feminist conferences. Claims Shiran: "We wanted to 'show them' who is in charge here, it was a show of force not an exchange." And Shohat concurs: "Only an in-depth analysis of the non-homogenous nature of the feminist project can bring about a vital cooperation between diverse women."[22]

Like Shiran, Shohat adopts a composite model that views ascriptive identity as the basis for a distinctive, political identity. Inspired by the multi-cultural discourse, Shohat speaks about the need for internal work to consolidate group solidarity. Coalitions based on proper analysis of the connections among gender, class, nationality, race, and religion can emerge, she contends, only after such work is completed. Unlike Shohat and Shiran, Tikva Honig-Parnas (1996: 34) warns that "the politics of identity" and "multiculturalism" might lead to closure, particularism, and reformist politics that could destroy the radical beginnings of the Mizrahi organized existence.[23]

But the "vital cooperation between diverse women" that Shohat was hoping for in the late 1990s is still not a reality in 2003. Far from it. One event, unfolding in January and February of 2003, made explicit the wide gap that still exist between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Israeli feminists. It began when Ahoti Mizrahi feminists made public their

systematic exclusion from academic panels and conferences, especially from panels that dealt with women. Such was the case, according to several Mizrahi feminists, in a Bar Ilan panel that convened to discuss the work of Hebrew University feminist legal scholar Orit Kamir. The panel included Ashkenazi women and one man, but no Mizrahi women. When challenged, Orit Kamir explained that the panel was not an academic affair but a "support and solidarity party" following her long struggle to secure tenure in the Hebrew University Law School. Kamir had also celebrated the publication of her new book *Feminism, Rights and the Law*. When asked why the book never mentioned Mizrahi women in Israel, Kamir responded: "I would have mentioned it if it existed." In the exchange that followed the event, Meir Amor, a Mizrahi sociologist who teaches in Canada, noted (on February 9, 2003) "Dr Kamir, and maybe some of her friends, resent the application of critical analysis by others to themselves." Shiran observes in her 2002 essay that Ashkenazi feminists refuse to give up their class privileges and share the few power positions that they have gained with Mizrahi and Palestinian women.

## Palestinian Women and Jewish Feminism

*Let us not forget who lives with the Arabs.*
Mira Eliezer (1996)

*I felt like a guest and not like a full participant.*
Amal Alsaneh (1996)

The issue of Mizrahi-Palestinian relations has exploded in the midst of the first Mizrahi feminist conference. During the conference, a Mizrahi popular singer, Margalit Tzanaani made a comment while introducing one of her songs. She spoke about "Jerusalem – the eternal capital city of the Jews." Her comment brought to the surface the delicate position of the Palestinian women who were invited to the conference and the divergent political views among Mizrahi women of varied back-grounds.

The ambivalence about the Palestinian question was there from the beginning. In planning for the conference, explained one of the orga-nizers, a conscious choice was made not to discuss the issue of Palestinian nationalism. "We thought it is too early to deal with this issue in our first conference" said Levi. "One needs to explore these issues in great depth and not with slogans." The slogans, she observed, might arouse the objection of the participants before any real and deep examination of the relationship was performed. For anyone familiar with the Israeli scene, Levi's comment and her hesitation to introduce

the Palestinian question into the agenda of the first Mizrahi-focused gathering were pregnant with contradictory meanings.

Was Levi projecting the hegemonic stereotypic views of lower-class Mizrahim as "Arab haters" in her choice to postpone the discussion of the place of Palestinian women in Israeli feminist agenda? Was she trying to skirt around the most explosive question about the shared Arabism of Jewish and non-Jewish women? Although she was criticized on both fronts, I do not share such a reading of her choice and that of the other Hila activists. Mira Eliezer (another Hila member) who sat on the panel convened prior to the Mizrahi conference said: "Let us not forget who lives with the Arabs. Who are we talking about when we say 'co-existence'? The Ashkenazim? Shalom Akhshav ['Peace Now' – a middle class Ashkenazi peace movement] people do not live with Arabs. Those who live in the mixed towns are predominately Mizrahim. They tell us Mizrahim are rightists while the settlements are inhabited mainly by Ashkenazim from the US." Adds Tikva Levi: "We must mention the hypocrisy of Meretz [a left of center party, whose constituency is mostly urban and kibbutz, middle class Ashkenazi] who argue against us that Mizrahim hate Arabs. It was them [Meretz supporters] who created our cultural denial. We must understand that the enemy is not the Arabs, but those who made us deny our Arabism."

The choice not to directly examine Mizrahi-Palestinian relations at the conference had backfired. While it was decided to invite Palestinian women as welcomed guests, there was no effort to create a specific agenda that interrogates Palestinian women's issues or to create a space for a distinctly Palestinian voice. Amal Alsaneh, a Palestinian student of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University, wrote about her experience at the conference (1996): "I felt like a guest, not like a full participant. The cultural similarities that linked me to the Mizrahi women who invited me did not diminish my sense of alienation. I felt more blocked over there than in the general feminist conference of the previous year. I felt oppressed. Yes, it is true that Ashkenazi women participated in the oppression of Mizrahi women, but the Mizrahi women, in their turn, oppress Arab women."

The Mizrahi women, concurred several Mizrahi activists in the aftermath of the conference, had exhibited the same racist attitudes and exclusionary practices towards the Palestinian women that they had experienced at the hands of Ashkenazi women. Biton expressed this position powerfully in her brief essay titled, "Oppressors and oppressed," published in 1996: "We know better than any group in Israeli society what oppression is because we are simultaneously oppressors and oppressed," she writes. "We are oppressed as women and as *'Frankiyot,'*[24] as 'women in need of fostering,' as 'house maids' as

'prostitutes' and more. We are oppressors because we are part of the ruling group as Jewish women and Zionists."

Biton figuratively articulated the entangled position of Mizrahi and Palestinian oppressions in this historical moment in Israel – "If indeed we have managed to rescue a few Mizrahi kids from the disadvantaged educational path, we have also succeeded in securing for that [Mizrahi] child a future of an oppressor and military occupier." And more specifically, with regard to the feminist conference she says: "We might have silenced a few paternalistic Ashkenazi women but have not managed to create a situation among us where Arab women could openly talk."[25] Biton, like Shiran, does not see weakness in the need to examine the Mizrahi position as oppressors of Palestinian women. She views such interrogation as a necessary step for a stronger and more coherent Mizrahi feminist agenda. The emerging Mizrahi feminist discourse will become the most radical and progressive voice in Israeli leftist discourse, projects Biton, only when it will fight oppression in all its articulations – the kind we are victims of and the kind that grants us a privileged position.

The relationship of Mizrahi and Palestinian women continued to take center stage in the more recent Mizrahi feminist discourse. In one exchange unfolding within the Mizrahi-centered Kedma website (www.kedma.co.il), Palestinian feminist Areen Hawari commented that the proposed topic for discussion for the upcoming feminist conference allowed for the inclusion of settler women and ignores the oppression wrought by the military occupation on Palestinians. Oppression is oppression, and the feminist movement cannot distinguish one oppression (based on gender) from another oppression (due to military occupation), insisted Hawari. Smadar Lavie, a Mizrahi Professor of anthropology, responded with a public letter that spoke of the forgotten oppression of Mizrahi Jewish women in Israel. She compares the position of the poor Mizrahi woman who is struggling to survive and "has no time or resources to contemplate 'the occupation' as a feminist item" and who has "no villa" to return to (alluding to the poetry written by Palestinians on their return to their rural homes). "I am the forgotten leftover of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict," Lavie writes. In this way, the Palestinian issue is brought into the intra-Jewish forgotten oppression: "You prefer to make coalitions with the local brand of European women who silence me and use your national suffering as a tool for fund raising and to advance their feminist careers." This exchange brought in many other comments (by Nassrallah, Nagar, Vered, Bakhar and others), and despite its painful overtones, it continues the necessary discussion of feminist politics as a discussion of the simultaneity of national, class, and ethnic divisions as well as gender in Israel.

## Ethnic and Class Divisions

Though the distinct class position held by Ashkenazi women *vis-à-vis* Mizrahi women and its implication for Israeli feminist agenda has been discussed above, little has been said about intra-Mizrahi class divisions. Shiran puts forward the question in her direct, uncompromising way:[26] "It is easy for us (Mizrahi women) to talk about the 'Ashkenazi boss who exploits her Mizrahi maid,' but is the Mizrahi boss less exploitative of her Mizrahi maid?" As we have seen above, the tensions that had emerged in the 10th conference were related not only to the large presence of the Mizrahi women organized by Hila, but also to their class background. Feminist organizers argued that these women who came with their many children viewed the conference as an opportunity to have a weekend at a bargain price. Confronted with these lower-class Mizrahi women, the conference organizers proposed to arrange another weekend for these women, with a few workshops thrown in to educate them about feminism. Yet, as Shiran notes with great pain, the woman who made that paternalistic comment was, herself, a Mizrahi feminist, who unlike the 200 Mizrahi "invaders" was of a middle-class background and had been a veteran activist in the mostly Ashkenazi organized feminist movement.

Henriette Dahan-Kalev has touched upon the issue of intra-Mizrahi divisions along class and educational background when she wrote (in the same issue of *Mitzad Sheni* that appeared after the Mizrahi conference) that despite her initial excitement she found the conference "populist." There was a fear among the organizers of the conference, contends Dahan Kalev, that simplified discussions about the nature of Mizrahi feminism assumed that more complex discussion might fly "above the head" of "lower class" Mizrahi women. Such internal paternalism led to populism and inhibited a serious discussion about the meaning of Mizrahi feminism.

For Shohat, intra-Mizrahi class divisions are not an issue. The distinction she makes is between intellectuals and the wider oppressed community. Shohat places the group of committed intellectuals (to whom she refers as "those of us who devoted much time, thought and work on these subjects") at the center. The role of this group of intellectuals is to carry out a thorough analysis of the varied life experiences of women and the links between their various forms of oppressions. Shohat argues for a direct and necessary link between a sound analysis of the multiple oppression of a particular group and the strategies for liberation to be adopted by members of that group. Only after performing such an analysis can the intellectual offer "the most suitable liberatory strategies" for women (and men) in "our communities."

Over the past three to four years Mizrahi feminists initiated a project

that directly addresses working class women. *Shnat Hapoalot* , the Year of the working women, has been an effort to actively seek women workers and offer them legal help as well as access to organization skills.

## Mizrahi Intellectual Thought and the Reshaping of Academic Agenda

The emerging intellectual Mizrahi feminist discourse is a vibrant, eclectic and a deeply courageous discourse. It has raised critical, unresolved issues that stand at the heart of the social experience of women in Israel in ways that mainstream Israeli feminist (and non-feminist) discourse had never dared (or was able) to carry out. It brought to the surface the unresolved question of the relations between Palestinian and Jewish women in Israel, thus opening the door for a closer scrutiny of the intersection of gender and national frames of identity formation. It has explored the deep tensions that structure the relationship of middle-class and intellectual women on the one hand, and working-class and underprivileged women, on the other. And it began an open, public discussion that examined the everyday and political implications of working within non-essentialist ethnic definitions of community.

Despite its limited scope in terms of its duration, number of intellectuals/activists engaged in it, and the meager institutional resources available for its production and distribution, the impact of Mizrahi feminist intellectual thought on mainstream Israeli feminist movement has been considerable. The yearly feminist conferences have adopted a strict policy of equal representation on all panels and workshops for Palestinian, lesbian, Mizrahi, and Ashkenazi segments. There is a growing awareness that feminist concerns are not limited to the issues of middle-class women, and the new thriving Mizrahi feminist organization, Ahoti ('my sister') has began to reshape feminist activist agenda to include the needs of Mizrahi and working-class women.

Yet this critical challenge posed by Mizrahi feminists has barely begun to impact on academic teaching and research agenda in Israel. Why is this the case? Why does the Israeli academic world remain a bastion of male-centered Euro-centrism? I have attempted to address this question more fully in another essay where I offer an exploration of the politics of knowledge production in Israel (see Motzafi-Haller 2001). A brief review of my argument will suffice at this point. Israeli academe, in general, and the more recently developed Israeli feminist discourse in particular, have defined Mizrahi women as a category of social analysis but had not allowed Mizrahi women to be speaking subjects. In the 1950s, research about Mizrahi women was informed by the same orientalist and modernist framework that has characterized all socio-

logical discussions of Mizrahi Jews in Israel. The blatant orientalist phase of the 1950s and '60s was replaced with lack of interest and almost no research on Mizrahi women in the 1970s and '80s. Ashkenazi feminist scholars did not study Mizrahi women in the 1970s and 1980s, not merely because (as they claim) they liked to study themselves, but, I suggest, due to their own particular location at the interlocking hierarchies of gender, national and ethnic relations in Israel. The 1970s and 1980s have seen Israeli feminists struggling to define the very right to engage in gender-specific scholarship. They had to work hard to dispel the powerful Zionist myth that claimed that Jewish women were equal to men in Israel. By distancing themselves from the image they had constructed of Mizrahi women as tradition-bound, uneducated, and domestic, they could fashion themselves as educated and modern and thus worthy of equality with men.

Chandra Mohanty (1995), citing Rosaldo (1980: 392), presents a similar process of binary construction of selves whereby Western feminists cast Third World women as "ourselves undressed." "These distinctions," writes Mohanty, "are made on the basis of the privileging of a particular group as the norm or referent" (1995: 261). Israeli Ashkenazi liberal feminism has placed the Jewish Ashkenazi male at the center as a norm, an unquestioned standard to emulate. It has never challenged both the nationalist exclusion built into this hegemonic male model nor its orientalist convictions.[27] Ashkenazi liberal feminists will be able to integrate the Mizrahi feminist challenge only if they make a profound shift in their thinking. Only when they challenge the male orientalist model as their norm, would they be able to rethink feminist struggles as struggles for equality in several, not a single, axis of social difference. The first step towards a scholarship that is introspective and truly feminist is to reshape feminist research agenda.

## Negotiating Difference: An Outline for a New Feminist Research Agenda in Israel

Mizrahi women have been powerless and marginalized in Israel due to concrete historical and political practice. Uncovering the material, and ideology-specific ways that have produced the powerless position of Mizrahi women in Israel clears a space where Mizrahi women can emerge as subjects, as active agents shaping their own histories. Drawing mainly on postcolonial and radical feminist perspectives, I have attempted over the past few years,[28] to set the stage for the kind of research agenda that is subject-oriented (in the modernist sense), yet one that avoids an essentialist definition of difference. The very skeletal overview of research themes and methodologies I will present below as

the basis for a Mizrahi woman-centered research agenda derives from questions and debates in postcolonial and radical feminist discourses, but is tempered by the Israeli realities and processes I seek to analyze.

A key tenet in such a theoretical reformulation is to posit Mizrahi women as the starting point of research. Indeed, it may seem extremely provocative to insist that the kind of research I hope to encourage is centered on Mizrahi women, while claiming all along that existing, conventional Israeli research had essentialized ethnic categories and orientalized Mizrahi Jews. Why, in other words, do I propose to begin with a group defined at the intersections of gender (women) and ethnicity (Mizrahi women), when these very categories must be problematized? This question has been at the center of post-colonial feminist theory and is clearly not unique to the Israeli setting. Gayatri Spivak's famous resolution for this epistemological and political conundrum, by positing "strategic essentialism"[29] as a necessary tactic, is a powerful, if not completely satisfying answer.

Bhabha's notion of "the process of identification" is more helpful for my purposes here. "The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective," Bhabha tells us (1994: 2), "is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation." There are several important lessons in Bhabha's thesis for the kind of new research strategy I propose for Israeli feminist scholarship. The first lesson rests on the critical idea that such research explores the articulation of social difference from the perspective of the subaltern subjects themselves and in their own words. It is important to distinguish between a pan-Mizrahi identity as an empowering basis for social action and theoretical reformulation on the one hand, and Mizrahim as a collective category based on a definition imposed from without, on the other hand. "Mizrahiyut" as a collective ethnic identity has been developed, as many are fast to note, as a tool for exclusion and discrimination of Mizrahim in Israel. Such a construction of cultural diversity results in hegemonic attempts to dominate "in the *name* of a cultural supremacy" (Bhabha 1994: 34). Here cultural differences are postulated as primordial, given and stable.

In the Israeli context, such definition of Mizrahiyut gave rise to prejudice and stereotypes that, in their turn, have structured educational and other discriminatory policies. Following Bhabha, bell hooks, and Hill-Collins, I wish to draw attention here to the articulation of social difference from the minority perspective as a process of constructing counter-knowledge. The articulation of cultural difference from the Mizrahi women's perspective does not mirror hegemonic representations of Mizrahiyut, but seeks to displace it and re-signify it.

In its most basic articulation, my idea is to move beyond the call for

more research *about* women of Mizrahi origin. I do not want to see more research that documents the "customs" of Moroccan or Yemenite women, research that "fills in the gaps" in our ethnographic knowledge. Instead, I call for an analysis of the process of marking and systematizing boundaries and categories from the perspectives and daily experiences of Mizrahi women. Following such a research strategy means that the very process of boundary making is deconstructed. It is an analysis of the ongoing dynamics that created, fixed and reproduced social categories in Israel. From this perspective, the universal Israeli who stands at the center of mainstream Israeli academe is revealed as an Ashkenazi male and loses his transparent nature.

And herein lies the theoretical significance of the Mizrahi intellectual discourse for the wider Israeli academic discourse. The Mizrahi feminist discourse presents a new epistemic starting point. Social difference, from this perspective, is never experienced on one axis of binary opposition (male-female, Mizrahi-Ashkenazi, lower class-upper class). Social difference is always multiple and it involves several, co-existing identities and relations of power. Identities are relational (i.e., construct themselves *vis-à-vis* other counter processes and collective identities) and are always shaped in contexts of power.

The consideration of the larger context of power relations within which the lives and daily experiences of Mizrahi women is embedded is the second critical element in a reformulated research strategy proposed here. The call for enabling the "voices" of these women to be heard must not be romanticized and left unanalyzed. The voices of these women, their articulation of how they experience life is not an "authentic" truth that stands alone. It must be contextualized. One excellent guide for such an exploration of the links between an analysis of actual experiences rendered by the subjects of the research and the larger set of social relations of power that define and, in turn are shaped by, these experiences is Dorothy Smith's now classic book *The Everyday World as Problematic* (University of Toronto Press 1998). Everyday lives of Mizrahi women in contemporary Israel, I propose, present us with a particularly fertile ground for examining such complex, on-going processes of creating and maintaining social identities at this particular juncture of Israeli history. By positioning Mizrahi women at the center and by focusing on these women's own articulation of concepts and experiences, we enable the ambiguous, multi-layered reality of life in contemporary Israel to take center-stage.

A third and final critical element in this brief outline of a reformulated research strategy is the presence of the researcher in the context of the research scene. Because we are concerned with a population that has been subjugated and objectified in academic discourse, it is critical that the researcher locate her/himself in the context of research. Such

research must adopt feminist research strategies that seek to minimize power differences between researcher and researched. Who was the researcher and how did she interact with her subjects is critical here not only for proper research ethics, but for the understanding of power relations in the research context.

## Notes

Most of the research and the writing for this essay was completed in 1999. Revisions of the analytical discussion and updates in the more recent developments were added on in June 2003. I have described the same events depicted here in part two of my more extended treatment of Mizrahi Feminism published in 2001 by *Signs: The Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

1   Ahoti has its own distribution list where important issues and debates are raised. Another site for discussion is provided by Kedma and can be accessed in *www.kedma.co.il/opinion/opinion file*. Both discussions are carried out in Hebrew. The Israeli Feminist Forum list (the IFF) run by Professor Marilyn Safir of the Kidma group in Haifa University also provides an important link. The issue of Mizrahi Feminism was debated there, briefly, in 2002.

2   The essays collected in *Israeli Society – Critical Perspective* (Uri Ram, editor Hebrew) work towards developing a critical analysis of the existing academic framework. Yet, aside from one article, by Ella Shohat, nothing is directly related to Mizrahi women's scholarship, even in this path-breaking work.

3   This is not to say that Ashkenazi feminist women in Israel have had an easy time in establishing themselves in Israeli academe. I argue that the academic careers of Mizrahi women, like that of other feminist/activist scholars, suffer not merely due to their gender, but also because of their social activism. I would like to insist that the ethnic background of Mizrahi women scholars is an *added* critical factor here. We have so few Mizrahi feminist women in academe, not because we are stopped at the door of academic institutions due to our ethnic background, but because so few of us ever make it to such a door. Bernstein (1993: 195) records that only 2.1 percent of Mizrahi women have an academic degree; among Ashkenazi women the equivalent ratio stands at 15.6 percent. Moreover, the few of us who have earned Ph.D.s have none of the insider connections (as daughters of, same neighborhood as . . . etc.) needed to enter the 'old boy' Ashkenazi-centered academic circles in Israeli universities. Hiring procedures in Israel, as I have learned over the past few years, do not even pay lip-service to proper, equal access standards principles. Even non-official social sensitivities for balanced gender ratios and ethnic representation are unheard of.

4   The marginality of Mizrahi women intellectuals is part of a larger phenomenon of the marginalization of Mizrahi intellectual thinkers – males and females – in contemporary Israel. The provocative article written by Prof. Yehuda Shenhav, Chair of the Sociology Dept. at Tel Aviv University in the

Israeli daily paper *Ha'aretz* in 1996 and the reactions it received illustrate this point precisely because of the unique central position Shenhav occupies in Israeli academic life. Shenhav articulated an assertive Mizrahi voice that was not new. The shock waves the article produced, as I argued at the time (1996), were due to his unique position as a Mizrahi who dares to speak *as a Mizrahi* from the lion's mouth of Israeli academe.

In February 1996, I organized, together with lesbian scholar Erela Shadmi and Palestinian scholar Nadera Shalhoov-Kevorkian, the annual conference of the newly established Association for Feminist and Gender Studies in Israel. The conference main theme was "Difference among Women in Israel". Contrary to Ronit Lentin's and Nahla Abdo's reference to the importance of this conference where they had both appeared, I found that the conference had left mainstream Israeli feminist scholars unaffected.

5  Note that this group includes women of Mizrahi and Ashkenazi origin and women of academic and non-academic background.

6  See similar arguments advanced in Azoulay (1991), Swirski (1993), Shadmi (1993), Motzafi-Haller (1997, 1998c), and Dahan-Kalev (1997).

7  Naomi Wolf in her 1994 book *Fire with Fire* (New York: Fawcett Columbine Book) makes the same argument with regard to the American Feminist movement of the 1990s.

8  Shohat (1996); Dahan-Kalev (1997), (1999); Shiran (1993), (1996); Motzafi-Haller (1997, 1998b, 2001).

9  According to Dahan Kalev (1999) in 1984 there were 255 registered women in the organized national feminist movement in Israel, only four were Mizrahi. These Mizrahi women had tried to raise Mizrahi issues but were never able to bring such concerns to the attention of the Ashkenazi dominated movement.

10  I attended such an innovative workshop led by Erela Shadmi in 1995. Shadmi led Ashkenazi women who spoke about their own experiences as Ashkenazi in contemporary Israel. What I heard in this workshop was, indeed, a unique voice in the larger Israeli discourse that posits the Ashkenazi experience as transparent. In Israel Ashkenazim are not "ethnics", they are "Israelis"; only Mizrahim are *"eidot"*, ethnic communities. An encounter that depicts this point occurred in a televised interview in the Israeli television's only feminist program *Mabat Nashi* in 1998. I appeared in the program along with known liberal feminists Yael Dayan and Shulamit Aloni. I challenged these two best known Israeli feminists to realize that if I am to be defined as Mizrahi in Israeli reality, they must explore their own privileged positions as Ashkenazi women. The two women rejected my challenge and insisted that they are "Israeli" not "Ashkenazi."

11  The following quotes are all from the August Issue 1996 of *Metzad Sheni*.

12  In Hebrew: "Anahnu Poh VeZeh Shelanu."

13  See Madmoni, *Metzad Sheni,* July–August 1996: 22–4. Madmoni quotes Smadar Lavi, Dahan Kalev and others. Atalya Moses, in a short piece entitled "Out of years of long solitude" made that point forcefully.

14  Shiran argues that the academic style the essay adopts is pretentious. Despite its highly theoretical language, the essay does not provide proper

references or citations that would have supported its academic/theoretical style.

15 Spivak (1988) makes a general argument that is applicable to our Israeli case when she doubts the ability of what she calls "intellectuals of the first world" to "let the subaltern people speak."

16 Cited in Madmoni (1996), p. 23.

17 Says Shohat (*Metzad Sheni*, October 1996, p. 32): "Our definition of Mizrahi feminism is inclusive and is not limited to the spheres of experience; it also concerns political consciousness."

18 My use of Hill Collins' insights here do not suggest that I make direct structural parallels between the positioning and politics of African American women in the US and Mizrahi women in Israel. In many ways, the positioning and discourse of Chicano women in the US is more relevant to the Mizrahi case. I wish to thank Nira Yuval-Davis (personal communication January 15, 1999, Beer Sheva) for alerting me to this point. Recently, I have begun to explore Middle-Eastern feminist discourses and have found several interesting insights and parallels between their process of defining a feminist agenda that stems from local conditions and the process evolving in the Israeli contemporary feminist scene.

19 *Metzad Sheni*, March 1996, p. 5.

20 *Metzad Sheni*, March 1996, p. 7.

21 *Metzad Sheni*, October 1996, p. 28.

22 *News from Within*, April 1996, p. 21.

23 An excellent discussion that compares Mizrahi feminist views with bell hook's radical feminist thought is offered in Ronit Shamai's unpublished paper, University of Tel Aviv, 1997.

24 A pejorative Yiddish term for Mizrahi Jews.

25 My translation of Biton's words.

26 Mizrahiyut VeAkherot," *Metzad Sheni*, October 1996, p. 28.

27 In an almost surreal encounter, I found myself giving a lecture in an international conference ("Gendered Communities: The Challenge to Religion, Nation and Race" held in Tel Aviv University on March 16, 1998) where I cited a known Israeli woman historian, Bili Melman. Melman, I argued, had written perceptively about eighteenth and nineteenth century European women who had challenged the orientalist views of Mediterranean women portrayed in the male literature of their time. In these European women's writing, i quoted Melman: "the concept 'Oriental woman' . . . ceased to be a homogenic concept, the essentialised characteristic of gender identified with an inferior culture . . . autonomy and subjugation were not grasped [in such women-centered literature] as unchanging life conditions but as historical, geographical and class conditions affected by economic and political changes as well as transformation in law and custom." I congratulated Melman's sound analytical understanding and wished that such insights be brought into contemporary Israeli scholarship. Melman, who was one of the organizers of the conference, walked into my lecture late, and had missed my discussion of her work. When I completed my presentation, Melman voiced her objection to the Israeli thesis I presented.

28  My work has been presented in various Israeli and non-Israeli settings. See
    Motzafi-Haller (1996, 1997b, 1998a–d).
29  See her famous 1988 interrogation of the critical question "Can the subal-
    tern speak?"

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# Rock Aesthetics, Israeliness and Globalization

### Motti Regev

Fostering 'national' forms and works of art is of particular importance to the ideology of nationalism. The arts – literature, poetry, music, painting, sculpture, film – are believed to express the uniqueness and specificity of the nation. Their use and consumption are supposed to evoke the deepest emotions and strongest feelings of both attachment and belonging to the nation as a community. As a cultural community, so it is widely believed, the 'nation' should have its 'own' unique and singular forms of art. The universal character of art, and especially the globalization of culture in recent decades, puts this notion under heavy pressure, making it very difficult to maintain. But the belief in 'national' art persists. Artists in all fields are constantly making efforts to somehow bridge their inclination to make art that, according to them, expresses the uniqueness of their collective identity (usually the nation), yet at the same time keeps pace with developments and innovations in the aesthetic features of their art form. Nowhere is this more obvious then in the case of popular music – a typical art form of the twentieth century. 'Israeli rock' is a cultural site where musicians constantly struggle to preserve and express a sense of 'Israeliness' in their music, while at the same time they are eager to make music that sounds as contemporary and recent as any work of rock music. This chapter looks at some aspects of this practice, focusing on the work of Yehudit Ravitz, whose long and successful career made her the most prominent female rock auteur in Israel; and on Tea-Packs, a band whose distinctive east-west hybrid sound became an emblem of Israeli culture in the 1990s.

## Rock Aesthetic and National Musics

Academic accounts of the history of contemporary popular music are practically unanimous in their assertion that around the year 1955, popular music underwent a sort of 'great divide' (Wicke, 1990; Peterson, 1990; Friedlander, 1996). The post 1955 period is referred to as the 'rock

era'. In this period, popular music came to be dominated by styles and practices derived from, influenced and inspired in many different ways by the initial rock'n'roll style of the mid 1950s. By the 1980s, the growth of rock'n'roll derived musics into a wealth of styles and sub-styles has rendered the term 'rock' vague and inaccurate. The word is sometimes used as an 'umbrella' term for the plethora of late twentieth century popular music styles (hip-hop, electro-dance, 'alternative' rock, metal, reggae, 'ethnic' rock etc.); on other occasions, it designates only the 'traditional' electric guitar bands modeled after the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, or the singer-songwriters modeled after Bob Dylan, Neil Young or Joni Mitchell.

It is in this context that the wider notion of the term 'rock aesthetic' is preferred here. I mean thereby a set of constantly changing practices and stylistic imperatives for making music whose main ingredients are electric and electronic sound textures, amplification, 'untrained' and spontaneous forms of vocal delivery, frontal presence of rhythm instruments, studio craftsmanship and an eclectic logic that encourages the application of these to any musical style – plus an emphasis on musicians as auteurs, and not just performers (Regev, 1994).

Understood in this way, the rock aesthetic emerged during the second half of the twentieth century as one of the most ambiguous cultural contexts within which issues of national/local identity and global culture are contested. On the one hand, Anglo-American musics associated with the rock aesthetic are often portrayed as some of the most cultural-imperialist art forms, next only to Hollywood film and television. From Elvis Presley, through the Beatles, Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones, to styles as diverse as punk, disco, heavy metal, reggae, and hip-hop, the rock aesthetic has been a constant 'foreign' presence in most countries of the globe since the mid 1950s. With the music itself accompanied by visual styles of appearance and by marketing and promotion devices – of which MTV is the most salient – the rock aesthetic has been perceived as an intruding cultural form, damaging local and national forms of traditional and indigenous musics. On the other hand, the rock aesthetic has often been used as a cultural tool for re-constructing contemporary national and local cultures, thereby signifying authenticity, identity, and insistence on the indigenous nature of such cultures. Musicians like Thomas Mapfumo from Zimbabwe, Youssou n'Dour from Senegal, Goran Bregovic from (ex)-Yugoslavia, Cui Jian from China, Gianna Nannini from Italy, Leon Gieco from Argentina and groups like Akvarium or Kino from Russia are just a handful of cases, all exemplifying how the application of the rock aesthetic came to be perceived by local audiences as indigenous as any local/national cultural form (Jones, 1992; Kushman, 1995; Ramet 1994; Stapelton and May, 1990; De Garay Sanchez, 1993).

Elsewhere, I have explored the sociological logic that makes this apparently paradoxical phenomenon possible (Regev 1997). Using Bourdieu's (1993) notion of 'field' and 'habitus', and Lash's additional concept of 'thrownness' (Lash 1993), I have argued that musicians and audiences of popular music in the second half of the twentieth century are – historically, culturally and socially – 'thrown' into two fields: the field of contemporary local/national identity, and the field of popular music.

The field of national culture is a space of positions, wherein the issue at stake, around which the field is organized as an arena of struggle, is the repertory of practices, tastes, sensibilities, elements of knowledge and canons of art forms and art works – in short, the specific cultural capital and habitus – that defines 'natural' membership in the given national culture. Each position in the field is 'taken' by a different variant of the national culture. Historically 'thrown' into this field, for which the ideology of nationalism serves as a doxa, popular music musicians and audiences are inclined to create and enjoy music for which they can claim, or demonstrate, that in one way or another it 'belongs' in the national culture.

The field of popular music is an artistic field. It is structured around issues of authenticity, creativity and innovation. Forty years of rock aesthetics, and the practices of the global music industry, have made it the dominant cultural capital and habitus of the field of popular music worldwide. That is, the knowledge and information associated with its history and styles, as well as the corresponding repertory of sensibilities, bodily expressions, and nuances of emotion, have been embraced by musicians all over the world as a taken-for-granted artistic imperative for making contemporary popular music (Walis and Malm, 1984; Robinson et al, 1991; Taylor, 1997; Mitchell, 1996). Making or enjoying popular music based on the rock aesthetic gives musicians and audiences in countries all over the world a sense of participation in the 'cutting edge' of the contemporary field of popular music.

Two major cultural strategies are employed by musicians and audiences in order to overcome the tension between membership – or 'thrownness' – in the field of national culture and the field of popular music. One of them is 'imitation' of rock styles – that is, production of songs with lyrics in the local language, whose sonic texture is very much in the vein of any recent rock style. Another strategy is that of hybridity. Here musicians work at merging and fusing existing local and national music traditions with contemporary and recent components of the rock aesthetic. In either case, interpretations of the music as expressing or representing a 'new' – 'modernized', 'globalized' – variant of the national or local culture are essential components of the cultural strategy. The rock aesthetic thus produces a history that brings a

growing number of popular musics from different parts of the world into being participants in one field, the international field of popular music. Thus, instead of being disparate, relatively independent musical languages, local styles of music become part of one history, variations of one cultural form – without necessarily losing their sense of difference. The production of national styles of 'rock' thus exemplifies one of the cultural logics of globalization. Namely, that the globalization of culture – rather than being cultural 'homogenization' or 'imperialism' – is a process wherein local and national art or other cultural forms join the respective international fields constructed around those forms (i.e., international fields of film, fashion, cuisine, visual arts, etc.). In Bourdieu's terms, the local/national forms become positions in those fields, participating in the struggles for whatever is at stake according to the particular logic of each field.

In what follows, I seek to discuss Israeli rock along these lines. That is, to examine Israeli rock as a major cultural tool that gives Israelis a sense of participation in contemporary global culture, yet at the same time maintains a sense of uniqueness, of national identity. To accomplish this, I focus on the practice of hybridity, as it is embodied in the career moves of two key musicians – Yehudit Ravitz and Kobi Oz, leader of the band Tea-Packs. For Each of them, I examine briefly their movement between typical 'Israeli' and 'rock' cultural contexts, and their eventual construction of an 'Israeli rock' formula – that is, a sound texture that both makes them participants in the quest for 'Israeliness' in popular music, and also contemporary international musicians obeying the logic of their art field.

## Israeliness and Israeli Rock

Typically, the discourse on the globalization of culture presumes a certain historical narrative. In it, existing 'national', local or traditional cultures have been increasingly exposed to and invaded by the global culture, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, thereby transforming those national cultures. In the case of Israel, this narrative is highly problematic, because there has been no historically deep 'national' Israeli (as different from Jewish) culture to be invaded. On the contrary, Israeli culture, in itself, is sometimes considered as a component of the 'global' invasion into the Middle East. Yet, for Israelis, something of a 'native' or traditional Israeli culture does exist. This is the cluster of cultural practices and works of art known as *ivriut*, or Hebrewism, constructed during the formative years of the pre-state and early statehood period. Hebrewism, with the image of the sabra, kibbutz life, rituals invoking heroic continuity with ancient past, and the body

of literature known as *'dor ba-aretz'* ('generation in the land' – i.e. the work of authors Moshe Shamir, S. Yizhar and many others) – is the quintessential 'invented tradition' of Israel (Almog, 1996; Zerubavel, 1994; Ben-Yehuda, 1995; Alter, 1994; Ram, 1995). In the field of popular music, Hebrewism is associated with the body of songs known as *shirey eretz Yisrael* (songs of the land of Israel) and with the corresponding performance ritual of *shira ba-tzibur* (communal singing). Let me stress that I use the term shirey eretz Yisrael in its widest and most general meaning. Namely, as including early songs written in the pre-state Yishuv period, the work of the *lehakot tzvaiot* (army entertainment units), which were the dominant phenomenon in Israeli popular music until the mid 1970s, and some other music phenomena from the 1950s and 1960s, most notably songs from the Israeli Song Festivals and the repertories of vocal groups such as Ha-Tarnegolim (The Roasters) and Shlishiat Gesher Ha-Yarkon (The Yarkon Bridge Trio). Despite its well acknowledged East European and Russian roots, its consciously constructed, ideologically motivated attempts at 'east-west' fusions, as well as French chanson and American folk influences, the genre of shirey eretz Yisrael gained the undisputed status of being the (invented) 'folk' music of Israel. Signifying early beginnings, rootedness and love of country, the genre, in conjunction with the shira ba-tzibur rite, is used to evoke the strongest feelings of collective national identity (Hirshberg, 1995; Shokeid, 1988).

It is against this consciously nationalistic music culture that 'Israeli rock' emerged as a seemingly critical and cosmopolitan type of music. Struggling first through scattered successes in the 1970s to gain legitimacy, by the 1980s the genre became the dominant position in the field of Israeli popular music (Regev 1992). Thus, Israeli rock became no less associated with hegemonic Israeliness than shirey eretz Yisrael. Keeping pace with trends and developments in the rock aesthetic, and incorporating them, Israeli rock – probably more then any other art form in Israel – embodies the claim of 'Israeliness' to participate in what is believed to be the frontier, or the 'cutting edge' of contemporary world culture. At the same time, however, Israeli rock musicians – because of their 'thrownness' in the field of national culture – are inclined to create 'Israeli authentic' music. With 'Israeliness' in music already constructed and institutionalized by shirey eretz Yisrael, this means that elements of that genre are therefore, in one way or another, incorporated in order to signify 'Israeliness'. The inclination of Israeli rock musicians towards 'Israeliness' is also clearly evident in their choice to sing in Hebrew (unlike rock musicians in some non Anglo-American countries, like Sweden, who sing in English. For example, the group Abba).

Israeli rock thereby represents most strongly the variant of Israeli culture that I prefer to term 'globalized Israeliness' (see Regev 2000). That is, a variant of the national culture whose agents believe in full and

equal membership of 'Israeliness' in anything 'global' and contemporary in the fields of art and culture as opposed to the perceived separatism and traditionalism of other variants of the national culture.

In its various sub-styles and historical phases, Israeli rock attempts to maintain a delicate balance between its 'foreign' components and those most clearly perceived as 'Israeli' or 'local'. In fact, the careers of prominent musicians in the genre could be examined as a quest for their 'Israeli rock' sound. In other words, they search for a typical sound which is inspired and influenced by trends and developments in the rock aesthetic, yet at the same time maintains elements connoting 'Israeliness'. For some of them, this is manifested in a pendulum-like process, in which their typical sound sways between 'rock' and 'Israeliness'; others engage in a linear process of exploration of sonic textures, instrumentation, or vocal styles. In either case, musicians reach a certain peak when they eventually achieve what might properly be called Israeli rock: an Israeli take on the rock aesthetic.

The above pattern was set by singer Arik Einstein. His participation in the High Windows Trio (1967), and his albums Poozy (1969), Shablool (1970, with Shalom Hanoch) and At Avigdor's Grass (1971, with Miki Gavrielov) – in which he teamed up with the band the Churchills to create an unprecedented (in Israel) electric sound texture – are usually referred to as the 'birth' moments of Israeli rock. Later in the 1970's he restrained his 'rock' sound and shifted to a more relaxed one in a series of albums in which he recorded classic shirey eretz Yisrael, as well as new songs written in a similar vein. These new songs were composed for him by musicians like Yoni Rechter and Shem-Tov Levy, who at the same time led experimental projects inspired by the British 'progressive' rock movement of the period. In the 1980s Einstein returned to a 'rockier' sound, not unlike that of his earlier albums. At this stage however, with the older Hebrewist tradition and the rock aesthetic completely intertwined in his work – that is, integrating 'folk traditional' and 'global contemporary' elements – he became the emblematic singer of hegemonic Israeliness.


## Yehudit Ravitz


The musical work of Yehudit Ravitz is also a good case in point. Considered by many to be the most important female musician of Israeli rock, her career exemplifies the hovering of Israeli rock musicians between various cultural contexts until eventually achieving their 'own' Israeli-rock sound. Three different moments mark the start of her career in 1977: membership in the band Sheshet, vocals with Arik Einstein in the song 'atur mitzkhekh zahav shakhor' ('your forehead is embellished

with black gold')[1] and appearance in the Israeli Song Festival. Between these three poles, her position in the field was clearly defined as both 'Israeli' and 'rock'. With Sheshet, Ravitz participated in a band highly inspired by British 'progressive' rock and American 'jazz-rock' styles of the period, which was led by Shem-Tov Levy (in an interview, Levy mentioned the band Gentle Giant as an inspiration). That is, a musical practice of exploration and even experimentalism embedded in the rock aesthetic. Her vocals (together with Corinne Alal) with Arik Einstein on the song 'atur mitzkhekh' are a salient component of the sonic texture of that recording. Originally a poem by Avraham Halfi, it was composed by Yoni Rechter especially for Arik Einstein. A sophisticated ballad in the tradition of shirey eretz Yisrael, it is nevertheless a studio creation – that is, a construction and mix of separately recorded different 'tracks' – and therefore the product of music-as-art practices associated with the rock aesthetic. The song has been twice voted by juries of music professionals as 'the best Israeli song ever.'[2] The participation of Yehudit Ravitz in the recording put her at the core of the fusion between 'Israeliness' and rock aesthetic elements, as pioneered by the so-called 'elite' or 'founders' of Israeli rock. Also in 1977, Ravitz performed a song in the Israeli Song Festival. The event was an annual, prestigious contest of new songs inaugurated by the Israeli Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in 1960 as a framework for fostering the creation of 'authentic' and qualitative Hebrew songs. Broadcasted 'live' on the national, sole television channel on Independence Day night, during the 1970s it was a major cultural event with the widest exposure possible. There, Yehudit Ravitz performed the song 'Slikhot' ('forgiveness'), a poem by Leah Goldberg composed by Oded Lehrer. Chanting softly, playing her acoustic guitar, and accompanied by a full symphonic orchestra, her performance of the song was plain 'Israeliness', as defined by shirey eretz Yisrael.[3]

Ravitz's first albums in the 1980s contained a balanced dosage of 'Israeli' and 'rock' songs. Some of them were her own compositions, others were especially written for her by other prominent composers. By her fifth album – Derekh ha-meshi (Silk Road, 1984) – she opted for a clear 'rock' context. Except for an interpretation of one 'classic' shirey eretz Yisrael song, all the songs were her own compositions (she hardly ever writes lyrics). Her authorial position was expressed also in her responsibility for the arrangements – which emphasized a 'funky' electric guitar sound throughout the whole album. Her next album – Baah me-ahava (Coming from Love, 1986) – was even more 'rockier'. Inspired by the trendy Bruce Springsteen sound of the period, it had a pompous rock sound, full with synthesizer 'walls' and echo laden drums and vocals. An accompanying tour found her on stage dressed in black leather and fronting, with her electric guitar playing, a large rock band. Successful as this album was in terms of sale figures, Ravitz met with

critique of her exaggerated 'rockization' – especially after another album in the same vein was a commercial failure. After a long hiatus between new albums, Ravitz came up in 1993 with the album Ve-meod lo pashut le-khakot (And it is Not Simple to Wait). Taking credit for musical production and arrangements, and composing all of the songs, her 'rock' and 'Israeli' idioms have been completely merged. This was most clearly audible in the hit song 'Tmuna' (Picture). Originally a poem by Dalia Rabikovitch, it reminisces early girlhood anguish, countered with pastoral descriptions of sheep, fields and sea. Ravitz yearning vocals perfectly match the lyrics, and the composition – an up-tempo ballad – completes the almost 'traditional' shirey eretz Yisrael character of the song. At the same time, the sweet sadness of the song is accentuated throughout by her doubled voice at the end of each verse (a typical 'rock' practice for signifying 'softness', pioneered by Buddy Holly in his song 'Words of Love,' 1958), consistent heavy drumming and bass pulse, and the sound of a slightly distorted, 'dirty' electric guitar: at the song's 'intro', in between phrases, in a 'solo' interval, and at the end of the song. The formula of 'Tmuna' has been successfully repeated in other tracks on the same album, and in her subsequent album as well – Eizoh min yaldah (What Kind of Girl, 1996) – particularly in the title song.

And thus, the soft 'Israeli' female singer, who picks up a quasi-pastoral poem for lyrics and composes a matching ballad, and the 'rock' auteur, who – through studio production practices of multi tracking and carefully arranged electric instrumentation – creates a 'global' contemporary sound texture, become inseparable in the work of Yehudit Ravitz. Indeed, as a fine case of 'world rock', the song 'Tmuna' was suitably included in a compilation album of 'world' female musicians, next to songs by Angelique Kidjo (from Benin), Sofia Arvaniti (Greece), Amina (Tunisia), and others (Women of the World – International; 1996).

### Tea-Packs

Another case that I want to examine here briefly is the band Tea-Packs, because it represents a different cultural tactic of fusion between 'rock' and 'Israeliness'. The 'Israeliness' in the work of Tea-Packs is the one of mizrakhiut (i.e. 'ethnic oriental Israeliness'). It is the cultural variant of Israeliness associated with the second and third generations of the migrants from Muslim and Arab countries, and particularly those inhabiting poor neighborhoods and 'development' towns on the periphery (see Yiftachel in this volume).

Between 1992 and 1999, Tea-Packs made six albums, one of them a

film soundtrack, and one mini album (see discography below). With this body of work, it gradually gained among critics and the public alike the status of being the most successful expression of east-west fusion within contemporary Israeliness (Saada-Ophir 2001). The band is originally from the southern 'development' town of Sderot, and it is essentially a vehicle for the creative force of its leader, Kobi Oz.

Culturally and historically 'thrown' into the underprivileged sector of Israeli Jewish society, Kobi Oz opted for a 'protest' position as a musician. That is, he chose to emphasize the Israeli mizrakhi experience and especially that of life in 'development' towns. Many of the songs' lyrics which Oz writes depict the experience of life in the periphery, of being neglected and marginalized by hegemonic Israeliness. He accomplishes this feat by cleverly mixing several styles and levels of Hebrew, thereby assuming the voice of peripheral Israeliness, yet at the same time commenting on it. In the music itself, Oz and the band incorporate various elements that make it sound 'ethnic oriental' to westernized ears. These include rhythm and melody patterns, use of typical Middle Eastern instruments, and various vocal techniques by Oz. Thus, between the 'social' lyrics and the oriental musical elements, Oz and Tea-Packs emerge as musical representatives of 'peripherality', as a voice demanding attention to life in 'development' towns as a variant of Israeliness.

At the same time, Oz is a 'rock' musician, and very well tuned to innovations in style, music production practices and sound textures within the rock aesthetic. This, and other cultural components in the work of Tea- Packs, indicates that the band is a conscious actor in the international field of popular music. To begin with, the English spelling of the band's name, as it appears on all the albums, does not signify the same meaning as the Hebrew spelling. Properly transcribed, the English version of the Hebrew name would have been 'tippex'. That is, a brand name signifying erasure of 'typo' mistakes, the 'whitening' of things 'black'. Nothing of this meaning remains in the English spelling adopted by the band. It clearly indicates a wish to be accepted in possible foreign markets as 'musicians' pure and simple, without the internal cultural-political connotations of Israel. In addition, not all of Tea-Packs songs contain ethnic touches. Many of them are jumpy, catchy pop tunes or well crafted traditional ballads. And, most importantly, the elements signifying 'protest', and a challenge to hegemonic Israeliness, are immersed within a traditional rock band sound: drums, bass, electric guitar and electronic keyboards. Oz is very keen on the electronic sound textures and production practices of the 1990s. His credits on all the band albums include – next to authorship of music and text, as well as singing and keyboard playing – 'programming, sampling, loops'. Indeed, the typical sound textures associated with these electronic tech-

niques have been increasingly present with each album. By the most recent releases, the mini album Ha-etzev avar la-gur kan (Sadness has Moved in Here, 1998) and the album Disco Menayek (1999), it came to dominate the sound of the band.

The overall sound of Tea Packs is, therefore, in the best tradition of rock aesthetic eclecticism. In their case, it is impossible to separate between the musical expression of life in 'development' towns – a very Israeli-typical experience – and the most updated techniques of the global 'placeless' craft of making pop/rock songs.

## Conclusion

Tea-Packs and Yehudit Ravitz are only two examples, selected here for their salience and the certain degree of clarity they demonstrate. The point made is that the rock aesthetic, as a cultural practice and an artistic ideology, is not necessarily used in a way that undermines or contradicts 'Israeliness' in music. Rather, it is used in a way that redefines local and national identity in music. Audience research should be made in order to demonstrate precisely how the music made within the context of 'Israeli rock' is used to produce experiences of 'Israeliness'. As cultural artifacts, musical works of Israeli rock represent a sense of identity that is 'global' and 'national' at the same time. They are units, or cases, within the histories of rock music and Israeli music. They thus bring Israeli popular music into the realm of rock, uniting their different histories into one.

The rock aesthetic is a global music practice and artistic ideology, strongly associated with Anglo-Americanism. Nevertheless, its initial, historical perception as music of 'resistance' or 'subversion', as well as its image of being the focal point of artistic innovation in popular music, has rendered it a 'placeless' practice. It therefore came to be seen by musicians and audiences around the world as a legitimate provider of tools and materials, practices and meanings, for them to re-define their sense of locality and nationalism in music. In the process, a growing number of national and local popular music cultures became permutations and variations of the one 'global' art form of popular music.

The image of 'national culture' and its art as a unique, singular and homogenous entity is believed to be declining by the end of the century. There is a tendency to dichotomize the effects of the globalization of culture on it. The 'external' pressure, most extremely expressed in the 'homogenization' thesis (Ritzer, 1993), and the 'internal' pressure, exerted by sub-national (regional, ethnic, religious) entities, are believed to undermine traditional images of national culture (Hall, 1991).

The rock aesthetic, and its implementation within national fields of

popular music, suggests that there is more subtlety to the process, similar in some ways to Appadurai's notion of global cultural flow (Appadurai, 1990). The rock aesthetic is one arena that demonstrates that the globalization of culture, among other things, provides materials and meaning to actors within national contexts, who use them to re-define and re-formulate their sense of national identity. Globalization, in other words, is not necessarily about the undermining of national cultures. It is rather about re-constructing and re-inventing the typical meanings and contents of national cultures in a way that increases the amount of congruence between them. That is, with globalization, the overlap between different national cultures in various areas of art tends to increase, yet at the same time actors in such areas retain their sense of national and local difference. With the rock aesthetic, 'Israeliness' preserves a sense of local uniqueness in music, and at the same time becomes an actor in the global field of popular music.

## Notes

1   The 'classic' recording of the song first appeared on the album Eretz Israel ha-yeshana ve-ha-tova, part 3 (Good Old Eretz Israel).
2   First in a poll conducted in March 1988 by the magazine *Musica* (issue no. 12) among 110 music professionals; then in a poll conducted among 26 music professionals by the Israeli Television, for its special broadcast on the State's 50th anniversary at Independence Day (April 29, 1998).
3   The song can be found on Yehudit Ravitz's Greatest Hits collection.

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# Challenges

# Between Periphery and 'Third Space': Identity of Mizrahim in Israel's Development Towns

## Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia
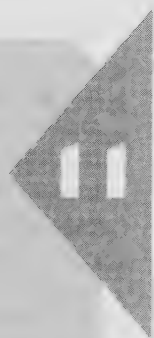
*Land of Milk and Honey*

('Sfatayim' 1992 – "Morocco to Zion" Album)
Lyrics: Haim Oliel

*You who left the distant village,*
*You who were respected in the Maghreb,*
*You left property, and brought a fez,*
*You left much wealth, to fulfill a vision . . .*

*You who immigrated from the green village,*
*You who they called Lala shuk,*
*You left everything there*
*You brought just a kaftan and a red polar*
*But you realized a dream . . .*

*You who were filled with belief,*
*You who brought the mimuna festival,*
*You wanted to be alike, you changed your names,*
*Jojo is worthless, Frecha is a disgrace,*
*You licked the honey, was not always sweet,*
*The milk spilt, but you didn't cry over it,*
*With all the hardships, the language, the walls,*
*You planted roots and bore fruit.*

The above song, by the Israeli band 'Sfatayim' (Lips), from an Israeli southern development town, serves as a fitting opener to this chapter. The song's lyrics (and tune) expose the duality, ambivalence, and bi-directionality of Mizrahi (Eastern) identity. On the one hand, the Mizrahim (plural form, denoting Jews from Arab and Muslim countries) experienced hardships, discrimination, and confinement to peripheral towns, mainly during the 1950s and 1960s. But on the other

hand, they came to terms with, and even sustained, the Zionist settlement project that marginalized them in Israeli society. This duality constitutes the backbone of Mizrahi identity in Israel's development towns.

This chapter focuses on place and identity among Mizrahim in the towns. We explore the transformation experienced by the Mizrahim by investigating patterns of identity formation, focusing on key aspects of collective identity, namely, the role of a hegemonic state, cultural traditions, ethno-class stratification, and inter-generational transformations. The chapter first examines these issues from a theoretical perspective, and later details an empirical survey conducted to understand the attitudes of Mizrahi residents in development towns over a range of spatial, cultural, socioeconomic, and political issues.

We argue that the settlement of Mizrahim in peripheral towns led to the creation of a 'trapped identity.' However, the 'entrapment' – that is, a situation in which a group faces significant obstacles for mobilization against its marginalized position – is typical to immigrant, and not indigenous, minorities. Hence, the predicament and social processes experienced by peripheral Mizrahim are very different than the ones experienced by Palestinian-Arabs, as discussed by Jamal and Sa'di in this book. One of the main differences lies in their 'entrapment within' the Israeli-Jewish nation-building project, as opposed to indigenous groups, who are 'trapped outside' that project.

Our analysis shows that a number of salient factors molded Mizrahi identities in the towns, including discriminatory state policies; partial inclusion into the Zionist nation; persisting Jewish–Arab tensions; continuing Judaization of Israeli/Palestinian; deepening socio-economic stratification; and the decline of the welfare state. Thus, the identity of the Mizrahim in the towns crystallized in the 'gray areas' between Israeli-Jew and Arab culture, inclusion and exclusion. The Mizrahim's ambiguous space has caused their 'entrapment.' On the one hand, the group cannot assimilate into the mainstream of society, yet on the other hand, it is unable to mobilize a competing communal project. It is thus left in an ambivalent, twilight zone, creating what Bhabha (1994) termed, a "third space."

Our approach stresses the settler-immigrant nature of society as a central force shaping Mizrahi identity within the Israeli 'ethnocratic regime' (see: Yiftachel 2002). That regime advances the expansion and control of a dominant ethnic nation over contested territory, political frameworks and peripheral minorities. As noted elsewhere (Tzfadia 2000), in such a context, the settlement-immigration process functions as a mechanism for turning new immigrants into a relatively weak and assimilating communities, 'sandwiched' between a powerful 'founding' or 'charter' group, and an excluded and dispossessed indige-

nous population and, most recently, groups of 'aliens' or labor migrants (see: Stasilius and Yuval-Davis 1995; Kimmerling 2001).

Yet the relationship between the 'founding' group and immigrants is never totally dominated by the former. The interaction between the two groups creates Bhabha's "third space" (1994), where new hybrid identities and social dynamics are created. The metaphorical and physical "third space" is molded by uneven power relations, thereby reflecting the infusion and impact of hegemonic values and practices. But the "third space" also creates a platform for later social and political mobilization, premised on the partial inclusiveness due to the assimilation project. In this process, localities become central to the process of identity formation. It is there that the materiality of social life takes shape, ethnic and social networks are built, and a process of 'spatial socialization' ensues to give meaning and concrete shape to the immigrants' values, memories, goals, and interests (see Paasi 1999).

Typical to immigrant-settler societies, the only available 'path' for marginalized immigrant groups remains individual assimilation into the dominant culture. Concomitantly, the dominant group represses potentially challenging identities applying discriminatory spatial and economic policies, and generating derogatory discourses in key public arenas, such as education, the media, the arts, and politics. Hence, the 'entrapment' of a marginal group inhibits the development of alternative spaces for identity-formation. Our study shows that Mizrahim in the development towns find themselves in such an 'entrapped' position, and subsequently develop an identity that is smothered, fragmented, and confused.


## The 'Development Towns'

The planned establishment of the Israeli development towns in peripheral regions is not unique. After World War II this was a broadly accepted planning strategy, practiced in states like the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Ireland, India, Spain, and Malaysia. The new towns had a twofold purpose: economically they were intended to serve as regional centers of growth and development, and socially they were to provide for a range of educational, cultural, health, and housing needs (Golany 1976). These towns were supposed to create opportunities for social and class integration, thereby reducing the chances of out-migration (Gans 1973). Meeting these requirements necessitated coordination of building plans, employment, and social services (Phillips and Yen 1987). Unfortunately, for the most part, this was not achieved. Further, given the logics of capital and political forces, the new towns, especially in peripheral areas, often became nodes of neglect and marginality.

They turned into low-demand, low-prestige localities, drawing low-income immigrants and other marginalized groups (Harvey 1993).

In Israel twenty-seven 'development towns' were established during the 1950s and 1960s, mainly in the peripheral north and south (see: figure 11.1). The official discourse gave several main reasons for this massive project: 'population dispersal,' 'decentralization,' 'immigrant absorption,' and 'integration of the exiles,' all routinely replicated in academic literature (see: Schachar 1971; Efrat 1987; Lipshitz 1991). The establishment of the twenty-seven towns was the outcome of the first national outline plan, known as the 'Sharon Plan' – named after Arie Sharon – head of the Planning Authority in the Prime Minister's Office in 1948–52. Sharon sought to provide Israel, anticipating absorbing 2.5 million people, an urban plan (Kark 1995). This plan created a pyramid with five primary types of settlement in a hierarchical relationship. One major category missing from the urban landscape prior to the founding of Israel was Jewish middle-sized towns and urban centers with a population ranging from 6,000 to 60,000 (Sharon 1951; Troen 1994). These communities came to be called 'development towns.'

By creating a national community around the project of settlement and peripheral development, the Sharon Plan intended to advance the Judaization of territory and to assist in the process of nation building. By the mid-sixties, it had steered about 200,000 immigrants to the devel-

**Key:**

■ Metropolitan or major Employment center

☐ Development town> 50,000 people

☐ Development town > 20 - 50,000 people

▫ Development town< 20,000 people

—. The Green Line

▪ Selected for in-depth study

1 Yeroham
**2 Dimona**
3 Arad
**4 Ofakim**
5 Netivot
6 Sderot
7 Ashkelon
**8 Kiryat Gat**
9 Kiryat Malaachi

10 Bet Shemes
11 Ashdod
12 Yavne
13 Ramla
14 Lod
15 Rosh Haayin
16 Or Akiva
17 Tirat Hacarmel
18 Afula
**19 Bet Shean**
20 Tverya
21 Migdal Haemek
22 Natzrat Illit
23 Acco
**24 Shlomi**
25 Carmiel
**26 Maalot Tarshiha**
27 Hatzor
28 Kiryat Shmona
29 Katzerin
30 Ariel
31 Ma'ale Edomim
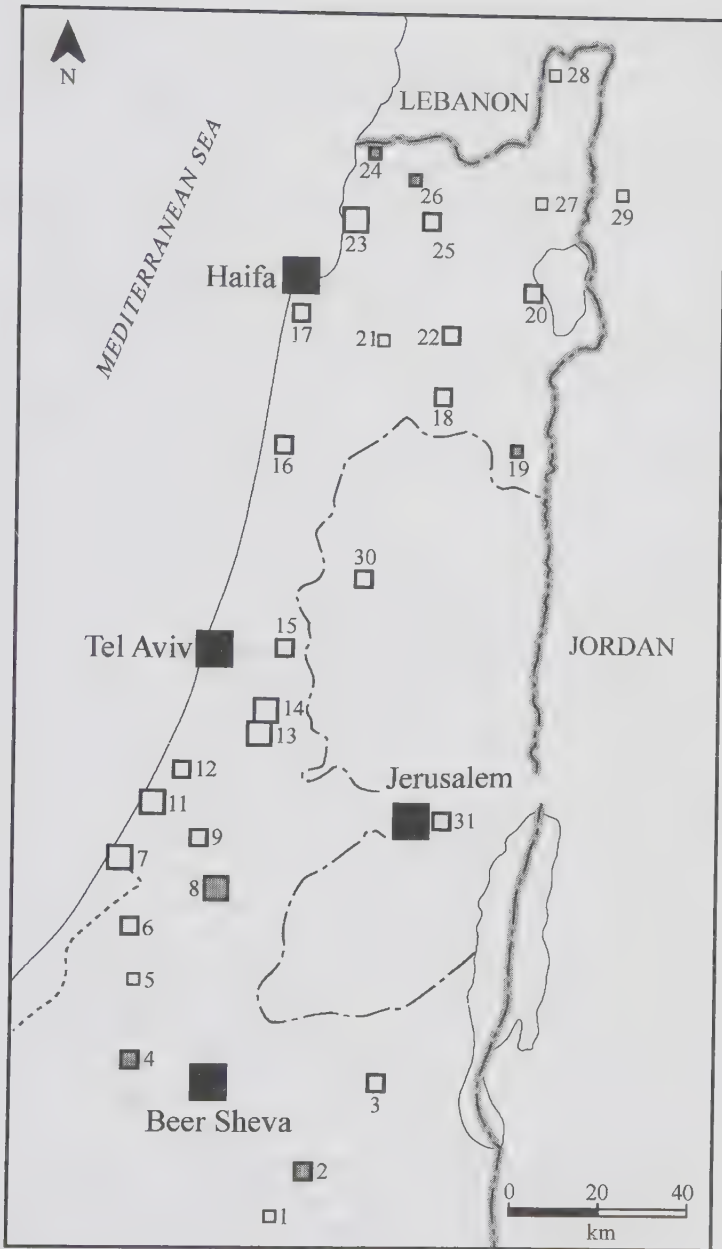
**Figure 11.1** Israeli Development Towns, 2003

opment towns, the vast majority being Mizrahim (Efrat 1988). In a classic case of 'planning from above,' most residents were brought to the towns from temporary immigration camps ('ma'abarot') or directly from Israel's ports, and were lured by the supply of inexpensive public housing (Swirski and Shoushan 1985; Law Yone and Kalus 1994). But, the immigrant Mizrahi population, now residing in the towns, remained largely segregated from both more established Jewish groups (mainly in rural settlements or older towns), and from the local Arab population, which remained the target of control and containment.

A major goal of the Sharon Plan, along with other contemporary institutions, was to advance the national goal of 'integration of the exiles.' Like the policy of population dispersal, this policy was intended to enhance nation building. It was the Israeli version of the American 'melting pot,' but aimed only at Jews (Shuval and Leshem 1998). If the policy of 'population dispersal' (that is, 'Judaization of space') aimed to maximize the overlap between the state's territory and Jewish control, *the melting pot policy aimed to maximize the overlap between Jewish population and Zionist culture.* The values and practices urged to be adopted by all Jewish groups were drawn from the dominant Ashkenazi culture. The Mizrahim were subsequently pressured to shed their Arabic and Middle Eastern culture and adopt a new Israeli (read, Ashkenazi) identity, marked by high level of secularity, militarism, collectiveness, nationalism, and European orientation in the arts, politics, gender, and labor relations (see: Shohat 1997; Zerubavel 2000). These principles called for uprooting any diasporic remnants (Raz-Karkotzkin 1993), and pressed for exchanging the previous Jewish communal identity, defined chiefly by religion and ethnicity, for a national identity defined by territory, modernity, secularity, and quasi-western values. This belief, we must remember, was imposed on the largest Jewish group in Israel.

Moreover, the implications of the 'population dispersal' strategy partially *contradicted the strategy of 'ingathering the exiles,'* since it created inter-ethnic (Ashkenazi-Mizrahi) gaps through policies of uneven development (see: Cohen 1970; Spilerman and Habib 1976; Cohen 1970; Swirski 1989) thereby legitimizing patterns of segregation and inequality. Over time, as shown in table 11.1, this created a distinct ethnic geography of inequality. Given the high concentration of Mizrahim in the development towns, reaching 85–90 percent during the 1960s and 1970s (Efrat 1987), the association between Mizrahi identity, peripheral location, and economic deprivation became highly conspicuous. This spawned pervasive sentiments of resentment among peripheral Mizrahim, and generated, in later years, a new politics of anger and difference (see: Peled 1998a).

**Table 11.1**   Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics of Development Towns

| Indicator | Dev. Towns | Israel |
|---|---|---|
| North African and Asian origin (%) (1983)[1] | 81 | 44 |
| Immigrants (%) (2000) | 64 | 39 |
| Mean salaried income (NIS) (monthly)[2] | 5,520 | 6,494 |
| Ownership dwelling (% of households) | 66 | 73 |
| Labour force unemployed[3] (%) | 11.2 | 6.9 |
| Population receiving a disability allowance[3] (%) | 10.2 | 4.2 |
| Households with cars (%) | 45 | 56 |
| Employed persons in manufacturing[4] (%) | 30.1 | 19.5 |

*Sources*

[1]  Central Bureau of Statistics, 1983
[2]  Israel Social Security, 2000 (http://www.btl.gov.il)
[3]  Central Bureau of Statistics, 1995
[4]  Central Bureau of Statistics, 1998

During the 1990s the demography and physical structure of the towns changed dramatically with the arrival of mass immigration from the former Soviet Union and (to a lesser extent) from Ethiopia. The towns became the center of cheap housing construction once again due to government politics of land allocation and financial incentive to developers. Consequently, most peripheral towns absorbed large groups of low-income immigrants, straining their social services and employment opportunities. As shown by Tzfadia (2000), the process of "negative selection" continued during the 1990s, widening the gap between the socioeconomic level of the towns, and mainstream Israeli cities (table 11.1). Because the Israeli mean includes the Arab sector, generally more impoverished than the development towns, this intra-Jewish gap is even more pronounced than shown in the figures, Given the size of development towns (reaching 800,000 by 2000 (CBS 2001), the on-going negative selection dynamic became central to the reshaping of Israeli identity and politics.

## Mizrahi Identity in the Development Towns: Empirical Exploration

The data analyzed in this section are derived from an attitudinal survey conducted in 1998 among North African immigrants in six representative peripheral development towns, three in the north (Shlomi, Ma'alot and Beit She'an), and three in the south (Kiryat Gat, Ofakim and Dimona). The survey consisted of 294 interviews, which examined the

attitudes of residents over a range of subjects connected to feelings about place, identity, and position in Israeli society.

In order to trace longitudinal trends, the survey focused on families living in the towns for at least two generations. Half of the respondents were first generation Israelis – born and raised in North Africa; the other half were these immigrants' children – born and raised in Israel. The project examined only non-Haredi (ultra-orthodox) families, chiefly because of problems of accessing that population.

Data collection relied on a closed questionnaire administered in face-to-face interviews, using quantitative analytical tools. This method has some drawbacks: it is often blind to subtleties of sentiments; it makes researchers unable to reflect the experience and 'feel' of a place; and unlike open interviews, it downplays the ability of interviewees to artic-ulate their own emotions. However, this methodology does have the capacity to represent a wide spectrum of participants and trace broad social trends as a basis for macro-scale comparisons and generaliza-tions. Being fully cognizant of both the advantages and disadvantages of this research method, an attitudinal questionnaire was chosen as the principal research tool, supplemented by several in-depth open inter-views of local leaders and residents. Let us turn now to a brief historical and geographical account of the development towns and the plight of the Mizrahi immigrant-settlers.

## Identity and Place

Localities never exist in a vacuum, but are constructed through their material and discursive settings. A 'place' is constituted through the attachment of historical, social, and cultural meaning (see: Harvey 1989; Taylor 1999; Tuan 1977). The omnipresent 'matrices of power' result in the creation of hierarchical systems of places, in which mar-ginality and centrality are ceaselessly constituted, maintained, and transformed through cultural, political and economic practices, and the accompanying discourses of prestige and stigma (Massey 1993; Shields 1991).

The importance of power relations in place-making is conspicuous in our data. To begin with, our survey shows that the 'places' known as development towns were created by 'reluctant pioneers,' who had no other residential choice at the time (see figure 11.2). More than half of this population was taken to the peripheral towns by the authorities straight from the ship or temporary immigrant camp (ma'abarah) with little opportunity to object. The story of the forced dispatch of Mizrahim has already been told by a collection of local narratives (Shelly-Neuman 1996). The data verify this phenomenon, and further note that the collec-
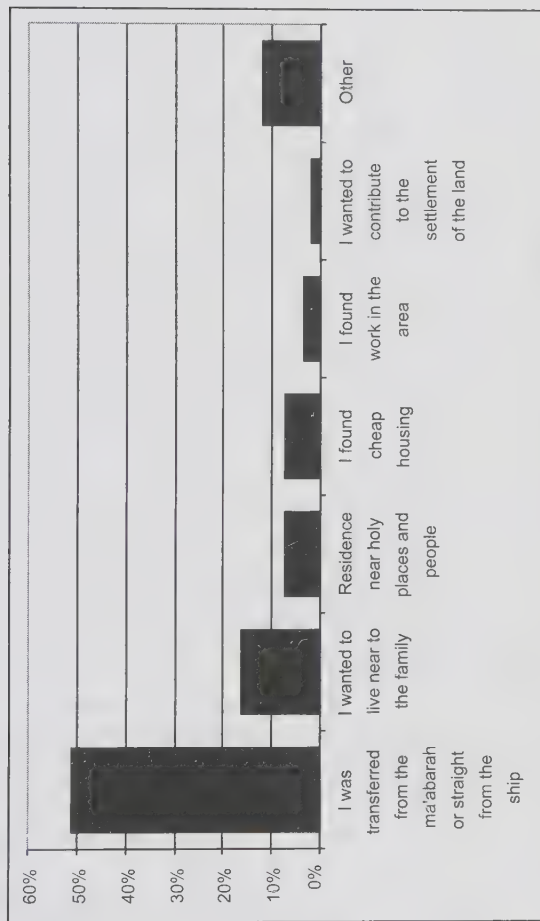
**Figure 11.2** Locational Choices: "What is the most important reason for living in the town?"

tive memory of forced settlement has become central to peripheral Mizrahi identity formation.

But the resentment of forced settlement does not dominate the sentiments of town residents. An ambivalent perspective is detectable in other responses. For example, most respondents (63%) claim that the establishment of the towns in the fifties was "necessary." But at the same time, the majority (57%) also believes that the state's policy towards the towns is discriminatory, particularly in comparison to the state's treatment of nearby (mainly Ashkenazi, rural) kibbutzim (72%). A puzzling question then arises: how were geographically, economically, and culturally discriminatory policies instituted without arousing serious opposition? Moreover, how was it possible to gain the consent of Mizrahi residents for such policies, as partially reflected in the survey?

One answer to this puzzle can be derived from the prevailing hegemonic order of the settler society, which incorporates the immigrants (as inferior, but nonetheless, as members) of the nascent, settling nation, while simultaneously excluding the indigenous population. In Israel, the definition of the Zionist nation as Jewish, and the on-going expansion into (historical, claimed, or lived) Arab space, in which the Mizrahim participated, has worked to incorporate Mizrahim into the collective identity, thereby preventing them from undermining the hegemonic order created, at least partially, at their expense. (For an expanded discussion see Yiftachel 1998; 2000; Tzfadia 2000).

In Israel, then, the hegemony of Zionism, including its settlement and security practices, is taken for granted, and viewed as unavoidable and unquestionable. According to the survey, this is the common perception in the towns, despite some bitterness about the past, and despite some notable local variations. There is no real attempt to question the importance of the idea of settlement in general (a central component of Zionist hegemony), and the establishment of development towns in particular. Indeed, 63% of the survey participants claimed that the development towns are 'important for state security'. The concept of security, as has been discussed extensively elsewhere, is one of Zionism's hegemonic proto-ideas (see: Ezrahi 1996; Kimmerling 2001).

The survey shows that *localism*, as a center of identity formation, has perhaps emerged in order to reconcile the tension between the Zionist esteemed value of settlement and their actual deprivation. The Mizrahim's shared fate, daily life, common origin, and similar economic class have created a clear sense of belonging to the development town. To some extent, this is a counter-move to negative images commonly produced about the towns in the general Israeli public, which have frequently served as an impediment to mobility and development (Avraham 2002).

The images constructed by the locals are different. For them, the

development town is an arena for building their lives and not a stigmatized periphery. It is a living social environment and a site of socialization through daily practices and interactions, which create a sense of place and security (Agnew 1987; Smith 1990). Places are areas of contestation, perceived differently by different people. Hence, the sense of place and identity is never homogenous or stable, but rather subject to on-going challenges (Davies and Herbert 1993). As regards the Israeli development towns, previous anthropological research has already (indirectly) considered the subject of local identity through the analysis of local symbols and sacred rituals, which are claimed to have created 'positive local sentiments' (see: Ben-Ari and Bilu 1987).

The current survey aimed to explore, in more depth, the nature of local sentiments in development towns. Thus, interviewees were asked to score pairs of contradictory adjectives describing their town on a scale of 1 to 7. The main findings are displayed in table 11.2.

It can be immediately discerned from the table that the majority of respondents believe their town is friendly, safe, accommodates descent populations, and is improving. These indicators of solidarity, which can be termed 'positive local sentiments,' stem in part from a certain 'local pride' that has developed over the years in development towns. This has been reinforced by the discourse of local newspapers and, as noted above, by the development of local cultural symbols that enhance local identification (Ben-Ari and Bilu 1987). In addition, the emergence of capable local leadership has managed to wrest 'control' of the development towns from external party functionaries, further increasing local pride and identification (Ben Zadok 1993).

**Table 11.2** "Describe your feelings about the town you live in" (distribution of answers in percentages)

| My town is | Among all respondents | Among the first generation | Among the second generation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Friendly place/ | 85 | 88 | 83 |
| Unfriendly place | 9 | 11 | 8 |
| Safe/ | 71 | 74 | 67 |
| Dangerous | 10 | 8 | 12 |
| Has good population/ | 64 | 72 | 57 |
| Has bad population | 16 | 8 | 24 |
| Improving/ | 62 | 67 | 58 |
| Regressing | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| Attractive/ | 59 | 66 | 54 |
| Ugly | 21 | 17 | 25 |
| Developing/ | 56 | 63 | 49 |
| Frozen | 23 | 22 | 23 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Connected to country/ | 52 | 63 | 49 |
| Isolated on periphery | 23 | 20 | 26 |
| Something you are proud of/ | 49 | 56 | 43 |
| Something you are ashamed of | 21 | 13 | 29 |
| Favored/ | 38 | 45 | 34 |
| Neglected | 34 | 25 | 42 |
| Liked by the country/ | 34 | 40 | 29 |
| Disliked by the country | 35 | 24 | 45 |
| Has a high quality of life/ | 31 | 32 | 30 |
| Has a low quality of life | 40 | 34 | 35 |
| Rich/ | 13 | 16 | 11 |
| Poor | 49 | 47 | 51 |

Note The table is based on an aggregation of the consecutive score data (1–7): 1–3: negative; 5–7: positive; 4: apathetic (not included in the table).

However, even in small localities, often associated with consistency and continuity, identities are constantly challenged (Massey and Jess 1995). They are contested by internal dissatisfaction and unrest, and by the images, views, and practices of other groups, particularly when a place has entered the national consciousness as marginal and stigmatized. This may cause the emergence of "resistant identities," born out of conflict and inequality between disgruntled groups and the centers of power (Castells 1997). Respondents were acutely aware of the development towns' negative image among the general Israeli society, 74 % felt that their town is disliked by the rest of the country (see table 11.2). Because local residents continue to attempt creating a different narrative of place, the emergence of significant resistant identities is yet to occur. As noted in the table, respondents describe their town as safe and friendly, and believe that despite its problems, it is "an excellent place in which to live."

The inter-generational prism offers another angle of analyzing local sentiments. While members of both generations feel solid affinity with the towns and exhibit positive local sentiments, the younger generation views their towns with a more critical eye. This is particularly true when the question of the status of the towns in Israeli society is examined in a series of questions such as: "Are the development towns connected to the country or isolated on the periphery?" "Are development towns favored or neglected?" and "Are development towns liked or disliked?" The responses show a tendency among the younger generation to see the development towns as more disliked by the country (45%), as neglected (42%), and as isolated in the periphery (36%) (The differences between the two generations are significant at [$p<0.05$]). In other words, while the younger generation has a greater desire to integrate into the Israeli center and avoid the 'identity trap,' it is also more aware of the difficulties of integration and mobility.

However, it is not enough, for local residents at the periphery to construct a positive narrative about their place. Difficulties stemming from planning failures (Efrat 1987), discrimination in the allocation of resources (State Comptroller 2000), unemployment, inferior education system, and cultural stigma are well known to local residents. In the absence of promising economic prospects (Razin 1991), a desire to emigrate has been pervasive in the towns, despite local attachment. Of the surveyed participants, a high percent (63%) expressed a desire to leave the development towns, most of them in the direction of Israel's central regions. This phenomenon is more prevalent among the younger generation, as further discussed below.

## Identities in Places

As illustrated above, local group identities are never constructed in isolation, but are embedded within their environments, and are shaped through interactions with other groups, places, and forces, in a process labeled by Paasi (2000) "spatial socialization." Accordingly, relationships between town residents and other Israeli groups are intimately linked to the policy strategies of 'population dispersal' and 'integrating the exiles,' and are shaped by the partial contradiction between them. The policies created spatial proximity and economic dependence between the towns and the surrounding populations (Razin 1991), especially the kibbutzim, who were the elite group of Israeli society, and a major cultural symbol of the new, modern, western-oriented, Zionist Israeli (Shohat 1997; Zerubavel 2000). Other groups influencing the development towns are local Arabs, 'Russian' immigrants, and ultra-orthodox Jews who became geographically adjacent during the settlement process. The daily interactions and power relations between these groups had a major impact on identity formation in the towns.

A clear indication of the nature of these interactions is reflected in figure 11.3, where respondents were asked to indicate their perceived closeness/distance from other groups in Israel/Palestine. The index of 'perceived distance' was built on values ranging between 1 (closest) and −1 (most distant). The distribution of responses is plotted in figure 11.3.

The chart portrays a stark social perception, in which identification is related to geographical proximity and power position. Town residents express proximity with their 'own' community (Mizrahim in the towns and in Israel), and also with other nearby groups (like Ashkenazim in the towns). Perceived distance is larger, but not extreme, towards socially distant *local* groups (such as local Russian and Haredim, and even, to a lesser degree, settlers in the Occupied Territories). The perceived distance to the Palestinians is matched by similar sentiments

of distance and remoteness from two localities symbolizing western-oriented Ashkenazi elites in Israel – residents of Ramat Aviv (an affluent Tel Aviv neighborhood) and "Schenkin" (a bohemian Tel Aviv inner city area). Figure 11.3 is a clear reminder of the social fragmentation and stereotyping rife in Israeli society, and the 'entrapment' town residents feel, distant from both the higher echelons of Israeli society, as well as from neighboring Palestinian Arabs. However, between these poles a more variegated picture emerges, which may open some possibilities to new perceptions, based on geographical proximity and the development of regional interests.
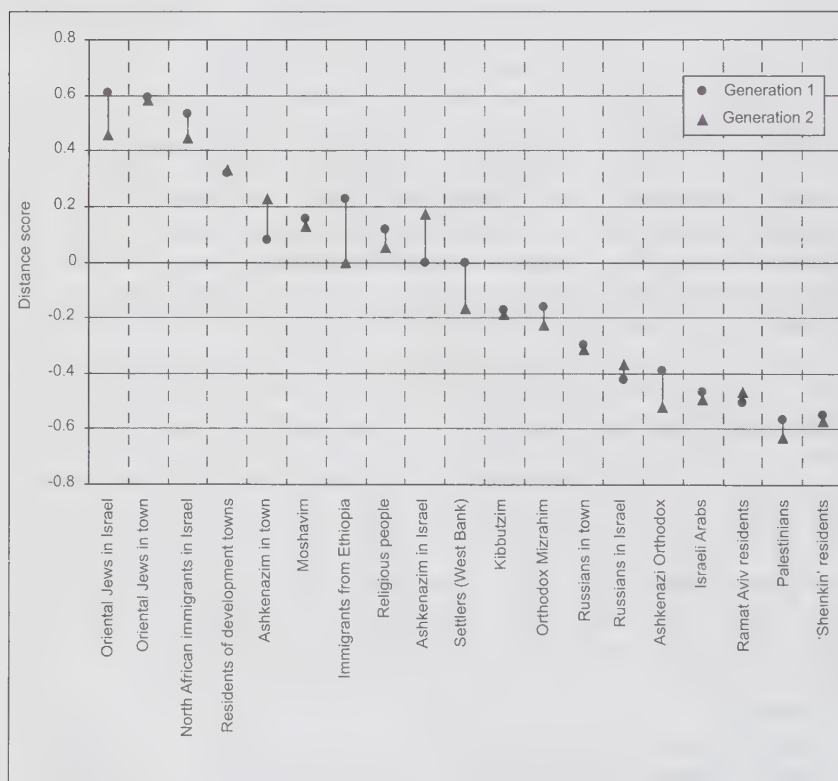


**Figure 11.3** Inter-Group Distance: Describe Closeness/Distance toward the Following Groups

The sentiments of closeness/distance displayed in figure 11.3 assist in defining collective identity by nuancing the process of 'othering' according to a range of positive and negative group criteria. In general, development town residents feel closeness towards Mizrahim in the

towns and in other parts of the country, highlighting the emergence of a 'fractured region' connecting isolated 'islands' of Mizrahim. Residents of the towns also showed relative apathy towards the West Bank settlers, other religious groups, and the Kibbutzim, despite often sharing the same geographic district with the latter. The perceived distance, and even hostility, towards the icons of Israel's Ashkenazi elites ("Ramat Aviv" and "Schenkin") reflects the wide ethno-class disparity, which has developed between these groups. It is noteworthy that the kibbutzim – once themselves part of the Israeli elites – are perceived as closer to the towns. This is probably partially due to their geographic proximity and to their recent decline in status.

Interviews also revealed that the perceived distance embodies more than the wide (and widening) economic gap and conspicuous geographical remoteness. It also reflects very different cultural orientations, whereby the periphery perceives the elitist groups as supporting globalization, Americanization, and 'Post-Zionism,' and hence a deliberate diminution of Zionism and its major achievements (see: Ram 1999; Regev 2000; Silberstein 2002). These orientations, which rest on educational, economic, and cultural capital of the Israeli elites, threaten the Mizrahim in the development towns, by devaluing their main resources for mobility in Israeli society – national affiliation. As will be discussed below, these sentiments reflect not only the marginality of town residents from the agenda of the Israeli centers, but they can also serve as a guide to Mizrahim's visions of the desired future of Israeli society.

Beyond the national factor, the perceptions of distance outlined in figure 11.3 can be discerned as moving along two main axes: geography and ethnicity. Geographically, town residents tend to feel closer to residents of nearby localities. This is illustrated by the greater sense of closeness to Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in "my town," than to their counterparts "in the rest of the country." The impact of ethnicity is also conspicuous. Other Mizrahim (as well as Ethiopians, who are often represented in Israel as belonging to an 'eastern' culture) ranked higher than most other groups. Cross-regional ethnic affinity reminds us of the social and cultural geography of 'fractured regions,' typifying settler societies in general and Israel in particularly, whereby 'regions' are constructed by 'chains' of settlement without territorial contiguity. Yet, they form a framework for mobilization based on ethnic affiliation and common political goals (Yiftachel 2001). Thus, three major factors – ethnicity, place, and socioeconomic status – combine to create the hierarchy of perceptions towards social distance.

Finally, the inter-generational angle reveals that sentiments towards other groups in Israel/Palestine have remained quite stable over time. Within this overall stability, we can note that respondents born in Israel feel somewhat closer then their parents to Ashkenazim in the locality

and elsewhere, and to residents of Tel Aviv. In other words, they feel closer to the country's elitist groups, indicating their greater desire and ability to integrate. The same group also shows greater proximity towards Russian immigrants and towards local Mizrahim, indicating their solidarity with peripheral groups, which are geographically and economically similarly placed. The identity of town residents is also well reflected in perceptions on the future orientation of the state, as discussed later.

## Nation, Culture and Peripherality

As already mentioned, relations between centers and peripheries are rarely purely dichotomous, instead their interactions often produce a "third space" in which new identities and dynamics take shape. But the "third space" is never a product of equal interaction, but rather reflects a skewed, often confused, and always constrained site of identities. Identities emerge from an uneven encounter of centers and peripheries, and are often unnoticeable to the 'naked eye' (Bhabha 1994). This dynamic is critical in the development towns where residents have had to negotiate, first and foremost, with the Zionist (Ashkenazi) perception of religion and nation, as articulated by Kimmerling (1999: 340):

> The main characteristic of the social order in Israel is the Zionist hegemony. This hegemony is expressed in the taken-for-grantedness of the equivalence between the Jewish religion and nation. It is common to both the Right and to the Left, to Ashkenazim and to Mizrahim, to the poor and to the rich, to women and to men, to the religious – in their degrees and hues – as to the secular.

Indeed, the vast majority of respondents (95%) define themselves in the survey as "Zionists." As noted by Kimmerling, this is manifested in a total acceptance of the inseparability of Jewishness and Israeliness, that is, between their own religious and national identities. Figure 11.4 shows that the most common self-definition is "Israeli-Jew" (60%). This definition is stripped of communal-ethnic (a'dati) affiliation. Such self-categorization reflects a prevailing sense of belonging to a national group and not to an ethnic minority. The first choice of "Israeli-Jew" is far higher than the average in Israeli-Jewish society, which stands at only 18.5% when faced with exactly the same range of options (Smooha 1992: 78).

Notably, 19% of respondents in the towns chose not to use the title "Israeli" and simply use "Jewish" as the most appropriate category, as opposed to 17% among Israeli-Jews at large. Hence, the label "Israeli" on its own received weak support, being selected by only 8% of respon-
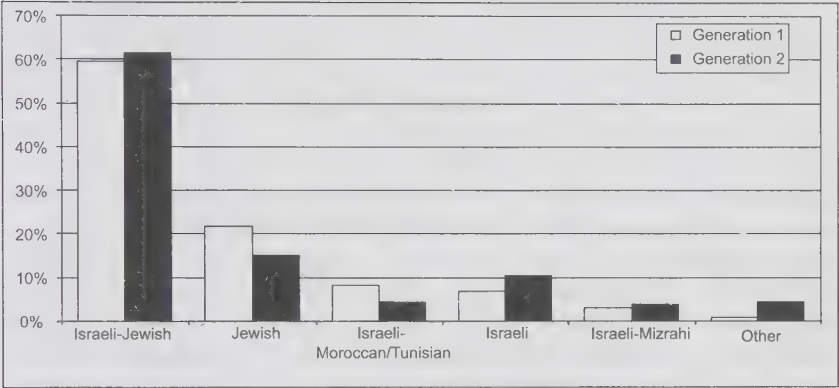
**Figure 11.4** Collective Identities: "Which (one) definition best describes you?"



**Figure 11.5** Collective Affiliation: "Which of the following affiliations (one only) is most suitable for you?"

dents. That number is only a quarter of the 36% of Jews in Israel who selected this category (Smooha 1992), indicating a sentiment of marginality that prohibits peripheral Mizrahim from perceiving themselves as simply or fully "Israelis." Surveys among other marginal groups, such as Haredim (ultra-orthodox), Russian-speakers, or Palestinian-Arabs have also shown low support of the category "Israeli" (see: al-Haj and Leshem 2000), which enjoys its strongest support among the Ashkenazi middle-classes (see: Kimmerling 2001).

Finally, communal-ethnic categories such as "Moroccan/Tunisian-Israeli" or "Mizrahi-Israeli" were selected by only 10% of the respondents, although this is far higher than the national average, where less than 1% identified themselves as members of a "hyphenated" identity. For example, only 7.5% of Russian speakers in Israel identified themselves as "Russians" and 1.6% as "Israeli-Russians," even though they have immigrated to Israel only in the last decade. The categories of "Jew," "Israeli," or "Israeli-Jew" were selected by 80.7% of the Russian immigrants; most of them (45%) preferred the "Israeli" category (see: al-Haj and Leshem 2000).

The weakness of state category ("Israeli"), in comparison to a religious-national category ("Jewish") may indicate certain unease with Zionist hegemony, especially its secular, state-oriented elements. Such self-identification creates tensions with the orientation of powerful groups in Israel, although a major confrontation is averted by the ambiguity of Zionism itself towards 'Israeliness.' As reflected in the towns, in recent years, the categories of "Jewish" and "Zionist" have overshadowed "Israeli" as a single dominant category (Kimmerling 2001). The reduced identification with "Israeli" also marks the on-going difference between Mizrahim and mainstream Israeli society. Mizrahim place greater importance on tradition and religion (hence the popularity of "Jewish"). Such an attitude is reflected by the 60% of respondents identifying themselves in another question as "traditional" ("messorti" – a category denoting partial observation of religious rules), being twice the proportion among the Jewish-Israeli public (see: Peres and Yaar-Tucman 1998).

These figures correspond well with another set of responses focusing on the issue of ethnic-national-religious collective attachment (figure 11.5). Here, the vast majority of respondents (64%) see themselves, first and foremost, as part of the Jewish people, and only 4% identify first with the Moroccan/Tunisian ethnic community. Other notable groups of respondents stress only one dimension of the national-religious combination – 23% emphasize the national, while 9% prefer religious affiliation.

The inter-generational prism reveals here, again, a high degree of similarity, with more than two-thirds in both generations supporting

combined national-religious identification. Inter-generation differences appear at the margins, with a larger proportion of the older generation identifying exclusively with the Jewish religion, while a larger segment of the younger generation lean towards an Israeli identity, reflecting their greater (although still partial) integration into Israeli society. The greater integration is also marked by the use of the term "Mizrahi" mainly among the younger generation. This is an Israeli-made term, designed originally to mark the difference, and by implication the backwardness, of "Oriental (Mizrahi)" Jews. Recently, this term has resurfaced as a more positive locus around which Mizrahi identities are formed anew (see: Shohat 1997; Chever et al. 2002).

These self-definitions are linked to the respondents' cultural preferences, to which we shall return, as well as to their perception of the future of Israeli society. Overall, we can trace a strong desire to integrate into the mainstream of Israeli-Zionist society, but this desire is tempered by some critique, especially regarding the erasure of their ethnic culture, and the attempt to secularize the Mizrahim. Hence, 77% of respondents supported a state with a traditional-Jewish character, 12% supported a religious state, and only 8% advocated a more secular state. Thus, we can trace some elements of what Castells (1997) claimed to be "resistant identity," which builds itself in opposition to society's dominant frameworks and values, although such identity has not gathered pace to form any noticeable backbone of coherent consciousness in the towns.

## Arab–Jewish Relations

Given their long-term support of rightist Jewish parties, especially the nationalist Likud and orthodox-nationalist Shas, it is not surprising that Mizrahim often hold hawkish positions on Arab-Jewish relations. This has been reinforced by the elections of 2003, with right-wing voting in development towns reaching 74.5% (compared with 56% state-wide, and 66% among Israeli-Jews). This pattern has been relatively stable in the towns since the early 1980s, with the main fluctuations evident internally within the rightist camp, between the two main parties – Likud and Shas.

Several explanations have been advanced in the mainstream literature for this pattern, including Mizrahi memory of oppression in the Arab world, coupled with a desire to turn these relations upside down (Peres and Smooha 1981), and with an alleged leaning towards authoritative, traditional, and hence 'irrational' nationalist culture (Shamir and Arian 1982; Seliktar 1984). Other approaches stress more rational behavior, including a reaction to the discriminatory policies suffered by the Mizrahim at the hands of Israel's Ashkenazi elites (Smooha 1993) or

hostility towards the Arabs based on labor-market competition (Peled 1990 1998b).

The missing link in these explanations is the dynamic of a settler society, and its typical ethno-class stratification produced by the new ethnic geographies of the settlement process. In such a setting, the immigrant group finds itself in constant tension, with both indigenous and 'founding' groups. Given its inferior position *vis-à-vis* the dominant ethno-class, the immigrant group attempts to minimize the difference between the two groups. But its opposition to ethnic discrimination is complicated by its own ethnic prejudice *vis-à-vis* indigenous groups. This leads to the adoption of rightist nationalist positions, which attempt to locate the immigrants as political partners to the founding ethno-class and hence 'lift' their communal and political status. For the immigrants, then, nationalism constitutes important 'political capital.' Let us now examine respondents' attitudes towards Arab-Jewish relations.

**Table 11.3** "What should be Israel's Policies towards the Arab Citizens?" A Comparison with the General Israeli-Jewish Public (in percentages)

| Support in | Dev. Towns | Israeli Jews |
|---|---|---|
| 1 The Arabs will live in Israel as citizens and accept their position as a non-Jewish minority in a state belonging to the Jews | 50 | 26 |
| 2 The Arabs will live in Israel as a national minority, recognized by the state, and enjoying proportional representation | 16 | 23 |
| 3 The Arabs will live in Israel as a minority with equal civil rights | 14 | 24 |
| 4 The state should make the Aravs live outside Israel | 12 | 20 |
| 5 The Arabs will live in Israel in Arab cantons with autonomy in internal matters | 7 | 3 |
| Other | 1 | 4 |

Statements 2, 3, and 5 in table 11.3 present various variations of 'dovish' orientation (advocating Arab-Jewish reconciliation and equality) while statements 1 and 4 are more hawkish (hard-line control). The first statement is closest to the mainstream Zionist position and is supported by 50% of respondents, almost twice as high as in the general Israeli public (based on Smooha 1992). A total of only 38% support conciliatory policies towards the Arab citizens as opposed to 48%

among the general public. Twelve percent support the extreme rightwing option of a 'transfer' – forcing Arab citizens leave the state – although this was lower than the Israeli mean.

The strong support for a hawkish line in statement 1 is also echoed by responses to a question about Arab and Jewish attachment to the land. The vast majority (79%) supported the perception that Israel is only the Jews' homeland, while 21% defined it as the shared homeland of Arabs and Jews. It is likely that the recent shift to the right of Israeli public opinion, following the 2000–2003 al-Aqsa intifada, have made this pattern even more conspicuous in the towns.

But the hawkish position prevalent in the towns is also relatively moderate, as reflected by several indicators. For example, on the long-term resolution of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, most respondents expressed opinions corresponding with the centrist and moderate factions of the ruling Likud party (table 11.4). The support of more extreme right-wing options, such as Israeli control to the Jordan River received only 15%, being markedly lower than the 30% support among the general Israeli-Jewish public. Likewise, support of what is perceived as a far-leftist position, namely a Palestinian state in the 1967 borders, was supported by only 12% of respondents, constituting only half the national average.

**Table 11.4** "What should be the nature of permanent Israeli–Palestinian settlement?" (in percentages)

| Support in | Dev. Towns | Israeli Jews[1] |
|---|---|---|
| Keeping the territories with Palestinian autonomy | 66 | 36 |
| Israeli control to the Jordan River | 15 | 30 |
| A Palestinian state within 1967 borders | 12 | 15 |
| Democratic-secular state between River and Sea | 2 | 5 |
| Other | 5 | 14 |

[1] Based on Arian (1994).

Hence, the position of the Mizrahim can be described as 'moderate right' – they support preserving the inferior status of the Arab citizens, and Israel's continued control over Palestinian Territories, with Palestinian autonomy. Full Palestinian independence and equality to Israel's Palestinian-Arab citizens received only marginal support. This nationalist orientation – typical of lower, middle-class immigrant-settlers – forms an important backbone to their national, religious, and ethnic identities.

It may be useful to return for a minute to the broader settler-society perspective and to echo Said's (1978) insights into the pervasive stigma-tization of indigenous cultures by the discourses and practices of settling groups. In order to weaken resistance to the colonizing efforts,

and legitimize the colonial dispossessing process in the eyes of the settlers, Zionism has systematically worked to demote and marginalize Arab-Islamic culture, which was portrayed as backward, primitive, corrupt, lazy, and at the same time, dangerous and cruel (see: Shohat 1997). This construction 'trapped' the Mizrahim – themselves a product of Arab and Islamic societies – in a position of weakness and suscepti-bility to the overt dictates of dominant Ashkenazi-Zionist culture. Castells (1997) notes that such marginalization is often the platform for the surfacing of "resistant identities," which are shaped in opposition to dominant frameworks of power in order to unsettle and transform society.

However, the domination–opposition dichotomy, which moves between total acceptance of the dominant identity to complete rejection, does not provide a satisfactory account of the Mizrahim's identity dynamics given their position as members *'inside'* the ethnocratic settling project. As mentioned, it is a "third space" of hybrid identities, which combine elements of dominant and marginal cultures, that explains Mizrahim's position. Yet, as Bhabha (1994) shows, in the "third space" identity is never settled, because the power dynamic, which constitutes this metaphysical and 'real' space, prohibits the possibilities of full integration or total separation.

To investigate these dynamics in greater depth, and to penetrate below the surface of declaratory political or identity positions, the Mizrahim in the towns were asked in more detail about their cultural preferences. Here the main issue is between the ever-present temptation of assimilation and the desire to maintain an ethnic identity. Both forces are evident in the protocols of every immigrant community, let alone a large and spatially concentrated group such as Mizrahim in the devel-opment towns.

## Cultural Preferences

In attempting to pinpoint cultural preferences, a list of key personalities was prepared in key cultural fields, each symbolizing specific orienta-tion and association with other groups in Israel. Respondents were asked to mark three of the ten personalities offered on the list to which they feel affinity and affection. This enabled us to get a wide range of cultural preferences (within the limits of the lists we prepared). The emerging pattern would then sketch the collective cultural orientation in the towns (figure 11.6).

By and large, cultural preferences in the towns, especially among the younger generation, are relatively close to the Israeli-Jewish main-stream. The most popular musicians, authors, as well as public

**Figure 11.6** Cultural Preferences – Collective Orientations (part a)

The chart legend indicates: Generation 1, Generation 2

Top chart: "Mark the three male singers you like most from the following list"

Categories (left to right): Poliker, Einstein, Tippex/Sefatayim, Shlomo Bar, Farid El-Atrash, Ofer Lavi, Ze'ev Nehama, Aviv Gefen

Bottom chart: "Mark the three female singers you like most from the following list"

Categories (left to right): Shoshana Damari, Yaffa Yarkoni, Rimonde Abuksis, Zehava Ben, Hava Alberstein, Etti Ankari, Nurit Galron, Umm Kulthum

Both charts use a vertical axis ranging from 0% to 100%.

**Figure 11.6** Cultural Preferences – Collective Orientations (part b)

personalities, generally come from the established (mainly Ashkenazi) circles of Israeli society. To illustrate, singers such as Arik Einstein and Nurit Galron, and songwriters Naomi Shemer and Ehud Manor, who represent western-oriented cultural elements dominant in Zionist society, all rank very high. Likewise, Haim Yavin – a prominent Ashkenazi television personality – and Major General Amnon Shahak (at the time the IDF's Chief of Staff) were ranked very high by the towns' residents. The dominance of Ashkenazi-Israeli culture is perhaps most prominent among writers: beside Shemer and Manor, respondents also ranked high Haim Nachman Bialik and Amos Oz, again, two prominent Ashkenazi authors.

Yet, as noted above, the cultural pattern is more complex, displaying a diversity of orientations in almost every category. Among the writers we also find Mizrahim such as Sami Michael and Erez Bitton, each receiving reasonable support. The pattern was more prominent among musicians, with Etti Ankri, Yehuda Poliker and 'Tippex' (with popular lead singer Kobbi Oz) ranked very high.[2] These represent Mizrahi singers who write and sing about the country's social peripheries, using mainly western-style music, with occasional Mizrahi tunes. While these singers have entered the Israeli mainstream, and hence are popular among the general public, their selection also indicates affection to 'local' artists and especially to those emerging from the development towns, like Etti Ankri (who grew up in Ramla, a development town in the central region) and Kobbi Oz (hailing from the southern development town of Sderot).

Solid, if not overwhelming support is also given to artists using Mizrahi music, and combining elements of western and eastern styles. Shlomo Bar, Zehava Ben, and Offer Levi are among the leading musicians of this genre. Among the singers we should also note the low ranking of Aviv Geffen – a popular rock-pop singer among Israel's young generation (himself Ashkenazi and closely linked with the Tel Aviv music scene). His low ranking may be linked to towns' general aversion to conspicuous markers of Ashkenazi elitist culture, as was noted earlier with the perceived alienation between the development towns and places like Ramat Aviv and 'Schenkin' (for a discussion about the globalizing aspects of Israeli music and culture, see Regev, this volume).

The inter-generational differences in cultural preferences were found to be more consistent and distinct ($p<0.05$) than any other inter-generational comparison (figure 11.6). The findings of the comparison show a clear tendency for the younger generation to prefer personalities and artists identified with the local, Israeli output, less with the Mizrahi canon, and above all not with Arab artists. There is a clear tendency of the members of the younger generation to prefer artists and figures

identified with the Israeli mainstream represented, as noted, by Arik Einstein, Yehuda Poliker, Nurit Galron, and Hava Alberstein, and prominent figures such as Major-General Lipkin-Shahak, the president of the Supreme Court, Aharon Barak, and celebrity Pnina Rozenblum. Their sympathy for the 'Tippex' band shows a wish to exit marginality and approach the center by combining local and international cultural components. It is also related to the general success enjoyed by Tippex, currently one of the leading Israeli pop groups

By contrast, members of the older generation display two major trends: first, a greater affinity to the main pillars of Zionist culture; and second, on-going attachment to Mizrahi-Arab culture. The firm link to Zionist culture is illustrated by the very high support given to Arik Einstein, Shoshana Damari, and Yaffa Yarkoni – all linked to the main building blocks of Zionist culture. The high ranking of Damari combines the support of mainstream culture with the Yemenite-Mizrahi flavor of Damari's music, making her the most popular singer among the first generation. Links to the Mizrahi and Arab cultures are also reflected in the relatively high ranking of Shlomo Bar – a Moroccan-Israeli singer, who has imported North African music and popularized it in Israel. Arab cultural icons, such as legendary Egyptian singers Um Kulthoum and Fareed al-Atrash, and author Emil Habibi, did not rank high, but their mere existence among the favorites, in the face of systematic stigmatization of Arab culture in Israel, is worthy of mention.

These patterns point again to the partial effectiveness of the Israeli strategy of 'ingathering of exiles.' Immigrant cultural transformation, while evident, is rarely complete or total. Indeed, pockets of Mizrahi and Arab cultures surface time and again, even among the younger genera-tion. The making of a hybrid "third space" is perhaps most prominently evident by the high ranking, among both first and second generation, of the famous Rabbi and *Tzadik* (Man of Virtue) – the late Baba Sali. Beginning in the 1970s, Baba Sali built himself as a focal point for local-popular-religious culture, drawing on the North African blessing tradition. Baba Sali (now replaced by his successor-son Baba Baruch) forms a prominent node of local-religious-ethnic identification, high-lighting the emergence of new forms of Jewish ethnicities standing both in and out of Israeli culture and thriving on the social and geographical periphery.

Clearly, these cultural preferences should not be analyzed in isola-tion, as if 'culture' is a set of pure, stylistic orientations. Rather, as Jackson (2000) well explains, culture is always embedded in material, spatial, and power relations, expressed in our case by the cultural oppression of the Mizrahim during the 1950s, their geographical marginalization, and economic dependence. While cultural oppression denied the validity and worthiness of many Mizrahi-Arab cultural

values and practices, the geographical segregation, paradoxically, worked to preserve that culture. Hence we can discern a somewhat confused cultural mixture, and an incomplete, ambiguous process of identity transformation.

It must also be noted that other immigrant groups arriving in Israel during the late 1940s and 1950s also suffered from a policy of cultural erasure, especially Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe. However, they were far closer to the dominant Ashkenazi-Israeli culture, housed in more favorable locations, and received more substantial economic support than the Mizrahim. Further, because their traditional culture was never stigmatized to the same extent as Mizrahi culture, they were able to more successfully integrate into the Israeli mainstream (see: Segev 1999). The situation appears to be quite different in regards the mass wave of immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union during the 1990s. Here, tolerance in Israeli society appears to have increased, and the Russian culture, which was never seen as directly threatening 'Israeliness,' was allowed to thrive and integrate into Israeli society (see al-Haj and Leshem 2000; Kimmerling 2001).

In this comparative vein, the plight of Mizrahim in other locations should be mentioned. As well shown by Weingrod (1995) and Lewin-Esptein et al. (1997), housing location was a key factor in determining the material success of second-generation Mizrahim, favoring those residing in Israel's main cities, especially the Tel Aviv and Haifa metropolitan regions. Benski (1993) also shows that the combination of class and special factors created 'three paths of the melting-pot' in which the upper echelons are characterized by Ashkenazi networks prominent in Israel's main urban centers, the bottom rungs are Mizrahim at the peripheries, while in the middle rung, the two groups assimilate, chiefly in Israel's growing suburban rings.

Seemingly, the imposition of a new ethnic identity appears to be one of the main victories of the Zionist ethnocratic project. The creation of this new identity involved the de-Arabization of the Mizrahim, the near total erasure of their cultures (Shohat 1997), the nationalization of their politics, and their assimilation into Israel's economy and expanding middle class (Smooha 1993). But as Bensky (1993) and Yonah and Shenhav (2002) show, Mizrahi identity has been preserved at the social and economic peripheries, not as a distinct cultural orientation, but as a *diffused sense of origin and solidarity, fueled by persisting marginality and hardship.*

Hence, the oppressive nature of the Zionist project appears to have partially backfired on the Ashkenazi 'founders,' who left space for the legitimate expression of Mizrahi identity and community. The "third space" created between host and original cultures turned hostile to the dominant Ashkenazi group. The Mizrahim not assimilated into Israel's

middle-class channel their frustration and mobilization-power into a variety of protest, political, and cultural movements, most notably the religious-ethnic movement Shas (for detail see: Peled,1998a; Dahan-Kalev 1999; Shalom-Schitrit 2001). Much of the energy fueling these movements is rooted in negative sentiments towards the Ashkenazi elites. These sentiments are still evident at the beginning of the 21 Century, and are a major factor in the inability of Israel's dominant (and mainly Ashkenazi) classes to make political and social coalitions (or partnership/associations) with the mass Mizrahi electorate at the periphery.

It can also be suggested that the spectacular success of the Shas movement in the development towns during the 1990s lies precisely in its ability to offer a way around the Mizrahi 'entrapment,' by developing identities and politics that bypass the ethnocratic-Ashkenazi logic of Israeli society. However, even Shas is not building a Mizrahi project, and rather emphasizes the religious (Sepharadi-orthodox) orientation of the Mizrahim. In this way it manages to penetrate the Israeli power centers with the legitimizing force of Judaism, which forms an effective basis for gaining state resources. Thus, Shas provides a broad base for political mobilization by linking communal and economic frustrations with the religious components of Mizrahi culture, previously repressed in Israel. But Shas, too, is careful not to build an explicit ethnic-cultural project of 'Mizrahiness' (*Mizrahiyut* in Hebrew, meaning open Mizrahi cultural orientation), which still has no legitimacy in Israeli. This is illustrated by its refusal to adopt the term 'Mizrahi,' preferring instead the more religious 'Sepharadi' label.

## Instead of a Conclusion – "Dust Heights"

The song "Dust Heights," below, was written in the mid-1990s by Kobbi Oz, leader of 'Tippex' Band and from the development town Sderot. The song provides a telling conclusion for this chapter, and by articulating the pain of the rejected, the marginalized, and the forsaken; it connects to the next chapter, which deals with another marginalised group. This ironic song begins with a country-Western tune and moves gradually into a soft Arab-Mizrahi warble. The lyrics scorn and tease the empty promises attached to one of Zionism's highest values – the settlement of the frontier. With irony and sadness, Oz points to the role of the Mizrahim: not hero settlers, but downtrodden, helpless immigrants 'thrown' into the desolate periphery.

Yet, despite the protest expressed in the song, it is not militant or confrontational, but resembles a biblical lament – sad and quiet – with empathy to the people whose unfortunate fate made them 'outcasts' in

Dust Heights. There, in the desert, the Mizrahim conduct their daily, difficult lives, and continue to long for a fulfillment of a dream. Which dream? Apparently not the original messianic dream of redemption, nor the Zionist dream of settling the frontier, but now a dream of getting on the road from "nowhere" to the coveted heart of the Israeli mainstream. In the midst of these conflicting sentiments of frustration, marginality, and lure of inclusion, lies the ultimate Israeli "third space" – the development town.

'Dust Heights'
*(Tippex Band, 1995; Lyrics: Kobbi Oz)*

*It's not impressive, the ministers thought*
*There are empty patches on the map*
*Down there a settlement is missing*
*So the powers send an order down:*
*'We'll build a town*
*And bring some people*
*So they fill with their lives all the new houses'*

*It's good, plenty of dots on the maps*
*And the media promised good exposure*
*So the ministers ordered in a sleepy voice*
*And went to look for other 'emergencies'*
*A second-rate clerk made the distance*
*To announce the opening of the new town called:*
*Dust Height . . . dust . . . dust . . . dust . . .*

*In Dust Heights at Dusk*
*People gather along the central path*
*Remembering dreams of the forsaken*
*Solidarity of the 'down-trodden'*

*They paved a road, black and narrow*
*Cutting deep into the desert*
*At the edge, they built some homes*
*As if they threw around match boxes*

*Coffee shops with drunken men*
*And others just lock up at home*
*And each and every one just dreams*
*About a day they will get on the road to/from nowhere*

*In Dust Heights at Dusk*
*People gather along the central path*
*Remembering dreams of the forsaken*
*Solidarity of the 'down-trodden.'*

**Notes**

1    No relation to Israel's current Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.
2    In Hebrew, the band's name symbolically has the same name as a white-out substance.

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# Absent Voices: Citizenship and Identity Narratives of Palestinian Women in Israel

Hanna Herzog

The concept of citizenship has been the subject of intensive academic discussion over the past decade, starting from the commonly-held premise that it is a contested concept. Feminist theories have injected even greater contentiousness into the debate, though feminist studies have also offered definitions that endeavor to dissolve the dichotomies characterizing the literature. Feminist approaches try to bridge the gap between the perception of citizenship as a right (Marshall 1950) and as an obligation (Mead 1987); between the definition of citizenship as a personal status and its definition in relational terms (Tilly 1995); between its presentation as inclusive and exclusionary (Hammar 1990; Soysal 1994); between the demand to realize the latent principle of universality that is embedded in the term, and to exercise the right to be different (Young 1990); between the fact that citizenship is traditionally assigned to the public sphere, and the demand to extend it into the private sphere as well (Pateman 1989; Phillips 1993); and, finally, feminist approaches attempt to dissipate the apparent tension that exists between the theory and praxis of citizenship (Lister 1997). While the literature generally strives for exhaustive definitions of the concept, which are then applied in describing and analyzing reality, I wish to illuminate the subject from women's point of view: how women, as social agents, experience and attribute meaning to their world as citizens.

I will argue that the world of the Palestinians in Israel is shaped by the contradiction and tension fomented by the socio-geographical demarcation and limitation of their living space, and is compounded by the deprivation and disruption of possibilities for existence within an already confined space. Their exclusion from the mainstream of the Israeli society has the effect of tightening local bonds and reinforcing the Palestinian Israelis' collective identity, while the central government stifles the potential embedded in the experience of isolation and alien-

ation, relentlessly disrupting and undermining its possible translation into political organizing at the national or even broad community level. Within the tension generated by and between these clashing forces, the Palestinians' world is shaped (Herzog 1995). For Palestinian women, these levels of tension are overlaid by an additional layer that shapes their world: the tension between an exclusionary gendered regime and an inclusive community-national regime. At the point where these divergent forces intersect, the women carve out their own path, creating distinctive life spaces that are the basis for their claim to civil participation and equality.

## Research Method and Data Collection

The study is based on 50 open-ended, in-depth interviews conducted with Palestinian women citizens of Israel during 1995. Half of the interviews were conducted in Hebrew and the other half in Arabic, the latter carried out by an Israeli Palestinian research assistant. The sample includes women who are members of either one or several peace organizations and who originated from different geographical regions in Israel, from both rural and urban locales. The interviewees varied in terms of their religious affiliation, age, education, and marital status. The common denominator was that they have been active agents in the peace movement.

In-depth interviews serve as an instrument that amplifies the voices of the Palestinian women. At the same time, the interview is a social arena in itself. The interview process induced women to articulate various subjects, some of which they had already addressed consciously, while others surfaced only in the course of the interview and while they constructed their personal narrative. "You are recording my biography here," one subject said. "These are things I have never told anyone before." The interview event gave women an opportunity to narrate their own stories, to represent and/or to negotiate with the meaning of their citizenship and identity.

Every interview is an event which creates one more layer of reality. Once constructed, the narrative becomes part of the subject's life and, equally, part of the researcher's world and indeed of scientific inquiry itself. Thus, the research situation forms part of the communicative process that takes place during the construction of one's social, personal, and collective world.

In-depth interviews enable the researcher to delve down to the stratum of the alternative discourse and uncover the foci of resistance to, and subversion of, the dominant discourse. Women's individual ways of narrating their social experience enhance our understanding of

the multiple regimes that constitute their citizenship and social identity in a society in a protracted conflict.

## Presence and Absence as Allegory and Reality

Since 1948, the Palestinian society in Israel has undergone far-reaching changes, not least in the roles of genders. Nevertheless, the patriarchal conception remains dominant: the male is at the center of the public sphere, while women's major role is perceived as lying in the private sphere. The Israeli regime conferred the liberal, universal principle of citizenship to Palestinian males and females alike, and enfranchised them all. However, the principle of republican participation was applied solely to the Jewish population, excluding the Palestinians (Peled 1992); Smooha identifies it as an ethnic democracy (Smooha 1990), while ethnocracy is the term preferred by Yiftachel (1997). Though not declared openly, both concepts treat the ethnic and national regimes as neutral, gender-blind regimes. The two concepts ignore the gendered structure that is deep-seated in Israeli democracy as well (Herzog 1999).

Civil exclusion of the Israeli Palestinians was accompanied by a mechanism that confined and focused life within the local community. Political localization was bolstered by a government and party policy that for years supported the clans (*hamulot*) as a mediating element between Arab citizens and the state. In this case, as in many similar cases in Arab states, men and woman are nested in familial and highly patriarchal communities; the state is seen as repressive and external. As a result, both men and women find security in these communal-based relationships. Gender issues are secondary; familial bonds are seen as sources of support and security against the oppression of the state (Stork 1996: 208). The dominance of the clan system reinforces the prestigious social status of males in the society and furnishes their ticket to civil participation.

In the Israeli case, the segregated exclusionary national-ethnic regime has reproduced and even strengthened the dominance of Palestinian males. After 1948, the vulnerability of the Arab male was heightened as he lost his sources of income, was absent from home for long stretches (seeking work), and was exposed to a foreign culture where he met Jewish women whose behavior he found alien. Above all, he was dependent on the Israeli authorities, and his national identity was under threat (Mar'i and Mar'i 1991). In this traumatic situation, the Arabs clung to their cultural tradition where a patriarchy composed of husbands, fathers and very often brothers, is in a position of authority *vis-à-vis* women (Hassan 1991). Women became the markers of the communal

boundaries (Yuval-Davis 1993). The pervasive sense of insecurity brought about greater social supervision over the women in the society. Indeed, control of women became a gauge by which the Arab society measured its ability to preserve its independence and singularity. Women were assigned the task of preserving and transmitting the culture, and society bolstered its ethnic and national identity by protecting women's honor (Hasan 2002; Shokeid 1980). Though included in the national discourse, the clan pattern forced upon Palestinian women "mediative" Israeli citizenship, which is subordinated to the local patriarchal principle, leaving them on the familial and civil margins.

At the same time, every discussion of the status of women in general and of Arab women in particular must address the split between women's everyday life and the dominant cultural code (Herzog 1998b; Mernissi 1987). The existential reality continues to force Palestinian women to adopt behavior that diverges from the traditional patterns, such as working outside the home and even away from their immediate community. Concomitantly, new channels of opportunity have arisen, such as the possibility of acquiring an education and a profession, thus creating new options and generating new ambitions. In practice, however, the Israeli regime continues to restrict the options for change and thereby frequently supports the traditional patterns. An example is the geographical demarcation of the Palestinians in Israel within certain areas of residence. This perpetuates the living spaces within the framework of the Arab settlements, but more crucially it has the effect of channeling most activity into the confines of the village and the home. The fewer positions available to Palestinians outside their towns and villages, the harsher are the internal competition and conflicts. This can be easily demonstrated in the acrimonious conflicts for positions in local governments, and the almost total exclusion of women from local politics (Herzog 1998a). Another example can be drawn from the educational system. While Jewish Israelis consider teaching to be a feminine profession (since most teachers are female), in the Israeli Palestinian communities the profession is still dominated by males, particularly in high-schools. The limited occupational opportunities open to educated Palestinians males outside their localities is one of the explanations suggested for the slow process of feminization in Palestinian communities. Moreover, educated women are barred from leaving their communities by national discrimination and by their own cultural norms. As a result of both factors – competition with men and confined by norms – many women, though possessing a profession and education find themselves relegated to the kitchen and to traditional caring family roles. Demarcation thus becomes both a concrete and a symbolic element in the limitation, exclusion, and/or silencing of the

economic, political, and cultural living spaces of Palestinian women.

Demarcation of boundaries tends to create a perceived binary world of Jews versus Palestinians, women versus men or private versus public. Including women's experiences dismantles such binary frames. The interviews with the Palestinian women disclose diverse patterns of dialectical relations between being uprooted and striking roots, being ejected and remaining permanently, belonging and alienation, exclusion and inclusion. These dialectic relations shape women's place at the practical and symbolic levels. Since the focus of the interview was the women's activity in peace groups, they were naturally led to address the issue of the Arab–Israel conflict. Some chose to do so in the well-known terms of the political discourse on the conflict. This discourse, which is embedded in the public arena and framed in national language, engages with the dispossession of national rights and relations between collective groups and states. However, most of the subjects wove their personal narrative into the national story, introducing the presence of women into a story from which they are usually absent. By narrating their social experiences, women re-frame the dominant Palestinian national stories and the prevailing perceptions of activism for peace. I argue that the way women narrate their social experience unveils the multiple regimes constitutive of citizenship and identity, and suggests alternative definitions of citizenship, identity and women's role in society and its collective memory. Three stories will serve to illustrate this claim.

## The Absent Voices

### We were there too: the untold story

Amal [not her real name], now in her late fifties, joined the Communist Party in 1956, while she was engaged to her future husband. When she first met him she did not know that he too was a party member. She described in detail the hardships they endured as they embarked on married life, including a period that verged on sheer hunger. The woman's private story was interwoven with a description of the political situation in the mid-1950s: Iran, Egypt, the Baghdad Pact, and so forth: "And there was also the story in Algeria, the revolution there against the French occupation. I heard about Djamila Bouhired . . . It fired me with enthusiasm and encouraged me to act . . . I had a slightly different perspective on things [i.e., different from that of society and of other women]. I thought the question of women's participation in [political] activity had to be accorded a central place, that if women did not receive their rightful status in our society, the situation would be even

worse. Why does our society, as an oppressed nation, continue the campaign to oppress its daughters? I too am a daughter of that nation, and I have feelings. It is inconceivable that because I am a woman she [sic] can be ignored together with her roles and her needs. Anyway, at that time I was caught up in an ecstasy of activity . . . at both levels: of politics in general and the level of women."

Interviewer: "Did your enthusiasm come at about simultaneously with the frustration at your personal situation, which you described earlier – when you reached a state of hunger?"

Reply: "Yes, it was exactly at that time. I was driven by a sense of rebellion, revenge, a desire to reform, to shout, to improve things, by tremendous anger . . . " But she then continued, "First of all, I want to tell you that my feelings of frustration and anger at the establishment were not new. The anger started somewhere else. My tragedy was that I began to feel the anger after my mother's death in 1948." She then related a painful story involving her sick mother and the arrival of Israeli soldiers next to the village. "We children had to escape to the village of Yarka. I will never forget the tremendous slap my brother gave me because I refused to leave my mother in bed by herself . . . I was the eldest daughter, I remember that I did not even go out to play, so she would not be alone." Amal was then about ten years old. "With mother's illness, and the fact that she died while the war was going on – I fantasized that if there had not been a war, maybe mother would have received better treatment and lived longer. That is what I thought at the time; I did not know this was an illness you do not usually recover from . . . I imagined that with all the money they were spending on bombs and mortars, on cannons and all the rest of it, that huge budget – if they invested the same amount in promoting research, in finding a cure for cancer, they might have found it long ago. In the same way I thought that peace would stop the flow of money for purchasing arms, so it could be diverted to other goals that would benefit humanity . . . So that no one would have to suffer the way I did at my mother's death . . . "

Even if Amal constructed the past and did not actually think in those terms at the time (she was very young), her description reveals the intertwining of collective and personal memories of uprooting and ejection. It dissolves the binary world that creates a distinction between the personal and the collective, the domestic and the public. Implicitly the narrator is also negating the claim that ideas of equality between the genders began to trickle into Palestinian society only during the past decade, in the wake of the encounter with Western and Israeli feminism. The roots of her feminist mode of thinking are embedded at the intersection of care and responsibility for her mother, the sense of subordination generated by her brother's authoritarian position, and the

collapse of security resulting from the uprooting from her village following the Israeli conquest.

As the interview proceeded, a picture emerged of the experience of the family's women. Women took an active role in remaining on the land and striking new roots, rebuilding the "home". The history of women's autonomy goes back to earlier days, preceding the confrontation between Jews and Palestinians. Her grandfather was taken to a remote village during World War I and all trace of him vanished, so her grandmother, who was considered a widow, raised her children as semi-orphans. "She had two camels, actually one camel for each of her children. She would go to the village of Julis, load the camels with stones – building stones – and take them to Haifa. After selling and unloading the stones in Haifa, she would use the money she had received for them to buy goods for the grocery store and the clothing store that her father and uncle had in her village." Later, in order to sustain the family, she moved to the Druze village of Yarka. "So she went to live in Yarka for six years. That was a closed village belonging to a different community, but during that time she proved herself. Even though she was young and beautiful, she was very traditional. Everyone knew that what mattered for her was raising the children."

This story also shatters the dichotomous view that classifies the world into male and female spheres of activity, masculine and feminine traits, that finds a contradiction between traditionalism based on dependence and insularity, and modernism based on independence and crossing the village boundaries. Amal tells the story of an independent woman who is not dependent on men for her livelihood or for her family's upkeep, and who even removes herself from her native village and her family roots. Leaving the confines of the village means leaving a confining social control. Women who take this course are suspected of violating the rules of modesty, hence the narrator emphasizes that even though her grandmother violated the cultural code by her actions, she preserved "her honor and the honor of tradition."

After the death of Amal's mother, in 1948, her grandmother raised her and her siblings until their father remarried. The stepmother came from a traditional household, where discrimination against women was flagrant. Amal was not even allowed to go outside to play. The stepmother was a guardian of the gendered codes. "When I went out to play they would shout at me, 'Your brother is coming,' so my brother turned into a threatening demon . . . The truth is that my brothers became my enemies while I was still very small . . . When I reached the age of 14 I was 'quarantined' – no going out alone, no going out without permission, without giving a report." Amal told an elaborate story of domestic chores that effectively imprisoned her in the house, of her emerging consciousness: "Even though we are an oppressed nation, we are also a

nation that oppresses its daughters." "All the time I asked myself why my brother had to be my enemy."

Amal's personal story about her grandmother and about her own life is a lengthy account of a struggle for economic and social survival in which women play a major role. Amal's husband was a teacher, but he lost his job because he was an active Communist. In addition to barring him from teaching in the village, the military government also denied him a permit to leave the village so he could seek work elsewhere. Political supervision, combined with the military government, demarcated the boundaries of the Palestinians' political and economic life. Paradoxically, this very limitation made available to the teacher's wife new life spaces and options. She described in considerable detail her activity in the party and her participation in anti-government demonstrations. The main motif of her story is how she utilized her womanhood and her feminine wisdom to save her husband.

The men are exiled for their political activity and the women mobilize to bring them back. "In those difficult times, when our comrades were persecuted by the authorities, it was only women who appeared in public, who kept up the profile of our activity . . . The women were not afraid." She enumerated a long list of women's actions over the years against the military government and on behalf of women: "We women took as much part as the men in shaping the community's life and its response to events going on around us. Maybe even more than the men. I rushed around with the youth in *Banki* [acronym for the Communist youth movement], with the young women, with the [Communist] Front, with the party, the forces of peace and democracy . . . all of it, all of it . . . And in addition I was supposed to make sure that there was food in the house." "My husband bore no part of the burden regarding the children and the house." Amal constructs the historical continuity of the collective story of the Palestinians in Israel as a sequence in her family history where women are taking a leading role, as keepers of the tradition as well as challengers. In her story, women achieve a presence in the collective narrative by dissolving the boundaries between the civil, political, and personal worlds.

## The never ending story of struggle for equality

Suha [not her real name] a young, educated woman, about 30 years old, who is active in a number of social organizations including peace groups, told her personal story interwoven with the collective narrative. "In my village, 45 percent of the residents are refugees who came to the village in 1948 from surrounding villages. The percentage of women from refugee families who studied and acquired an education is much

higher than that among the women who were originally from Kabul [the name of the village], but this is the only area where you can see a difference. Our village is poor. The village suffers from suffocation because compared to other villages we do not have farm land." Later in the interview she noted that at the end of the 1970s the village was politically split between the refugees and the local residents. The refugees were identified with the Communists and the local residents with the *Bnei Hakfar* (Sons of the Village) movement. The distinction between "locals" and "refugees" persists in the Palestinians' consciousness even if the latter have lived in the village for fifty years (Al-Haj, 1986 ).

All the residents earn their livelihood outside the village. "The men work in the Jewish sector and the women work in farming and in factories. Take my brother's family, which is very representative, where two daughters are now working but they do not see one *agora* [a penny] from their labor . . . Their father takes their entire wages, and even if they become engaged they must support the father's family." The reality that is created by the economic situation and dependence on the Israeli market – brought about by Israeli government policy – helps the gendered regime to consolidate.

In her youth, she was a member of the Communist Party, though her activity in the party was possible only because her brother accompanied her. Besides helping her become politically active, her brother provided her with reading material and backed her application to visit the Soviet Union with a youth delegation. But after her brother died, the situation changed radically: every attempt to engage in public activity generated a fierce battle at home. Her decision to attend university produced a similar reaction. Finally, she persuaded her father that she should live in the dorms because, she told him, "If I come back late and miss the bus and I get back to the village at night . . . , well, when he heard that, he said it would be better if I roomed with other girls." She described in detail the strict regimen to which she had been subjected by one of her brothers, including savage beatings, if she stayed away overnight. "He himself had plenty of love affairs in the early 1970s, but with me he played the same record over and over: 'Are you going to be like the girls from one of those villages, from *Meilia* and *Tarshiha* . . . a tramp, you know . . . who doesn't come home?' . . ." This brother was also involved in political activity and was tried on security charges; but he stringently supervised her political activity during her student years.

Suha's plan to return to her village and work as a teacher after receiving her BA was thwarted, this time by the Israeli authorities, because of her family's political activism and because her brother was in prison. She found herself trapped between internal social demands "not to be outside" and an Israeli regime that prevented her from working "inside," in her home village. Living at home, in any event, was

now intolerable, and she decided to pursue her studies. Her mother, who was illiterate, was far from enthusiastic about her schooling – let the boys study, she would say. To please her mother she used to come home during vacations and work in the fields. Later, though, she preferred to stay in the city and wash dishes at a restaurant in order to pay her way through university. But she was always under tremendous pressure to come home during vacations, hounded by the perpetual question: "What are you doing there alone?"

The interviewer asked why, if her family was so involved politically, they opposed her studies. She replied, "They did not depart from society's accepted norms. Even after I managed to persuade my parents, I still had to persuade my brother and my brother-in-law." Underlying the opposition (which eventually collapsed) was a particular attitude: "We in the Arab society harbor a concept of the dishonor of women." Finally overriding her parents' objections, she left home to study, received a scholarship to attend an American university, and finally gained recognition and status in her own village thanks to her scholastic achievements.

During her studies she formed ties with many Jewish women and later found work in a government ministry. Nevertheless, she feels that she is "beyond the pale," always being made to feel that "I don't belong." She is "active in many left-wing political organizations and in peace organizations. But I have few close social relationships, and for many of the Arabs I know who work with Jews, such relationships are nonexistent. Social relations are bounded by the national 'market.'" Although her peace activity has enabled her to participate in the political discourse and brought her closer to Jewish and Arab men, it has not given rise to intimate social relations.

After completing her studies, Suha returned to the village and worked with women, which she found tremendously satisfying and fruitful. However, "the problem with work in the village . . . [is that] the men, and this is always my feeling, want to grab all the cards, meaning that they'll run things while I do the dirty work . . . It's true that you do not find this only in the Arab sector, but it is very pronounced [there]. So I joined feminist organizations – but discovered that my interests [as a Palestinian] were pushed into the corner." In encounters with Palestinians from the territories she "felt marginalized." Asked by the interviewer whether she could not identify with the attitude of the Palestinians from the territories, she replied, "I could definitely support their viewpoint, but in fact they are much stronger, they have the strength, the possibility, and the ability to express themselves far better than I can. They simply don't need me . . . I could not speak either in their name or in the name of [Jewish] Israeli women . . . It is not good to be in the middle . . . The women's movement in the territories is part of

a national liberation movement that is seeking political independence, and the struggle for women's liberation exists only on the margins. My struggle is completely different ... I do not see myself leaving the Galilee one day to go and live in the territories. My struggle to improve my status as a minority and as a woman is taking place in my home." Suha narrates her private experience as an ongoing search for a "space" where she can realize herself and her social identity. Her recurrent efforts for social involvement depict her multi-dimensional search for citizenship and social identity. Her peace activity is just one arena out of many where she tries to experiment with her citizenship. The way she narrates her never-ending struggle represents her as an active agent negotiating with her social partners on the meaning and forms of being an equal citizen.

## It is my right to decide who I am

Palestinians living in Israel confront contradictory social definitions of belonging. For them, questions about social boundaries are crucial and existential. Grounding our studies on women's experience, we are obliged to elicit their own definitions and discover how they cope with their national and citizenship identities, and how these intersect with their gender and feminist identities. It is important to note that most of the interviewees in my study raised this issue by themselves.

Hunaida [not her real name], in her late 40's, was born in a small village in northern Israel. Crossing boundaries and living on the borders is a leading theme in her social experience. She married outside of her ethnic and religious group and had to leave her home town. For years she had no social ties with her family, who refused to acknowledge her marriage. Crossing the cultural codes resulted in crossing geographical boundaries and she moved with her new family to the Jerusalem area. "I live in no-man's land, in an area that was considered before 1967 as no-man's land. Now it is formally part of Jerusalem. It was annexed, the place is now part of Israel, but in practice it makes no difference". Later in the interview, she described in detail the grim conditions prevailing in that neighborhood.

Throughout the decade during which she worked at the Orient House in East Jerusalem, Hunaida tried to blur the boundaries between her national identity and her formal citizenship affiliation. Then: "after quite a lengthy period of hesitation and confusion, I decided once and for all: I told myself that I am an Israeli and that I am opting for Israeliness . . . People there [in East Jerusalem] can allow themselves – under the precepts of the Intifada – to throw stones. I do not allow my son to do that, and I do not allow myself to take part in their activity

against the occupation – because I do not recognize it. I mean that I draw a distinct line and clear boundaries, between the outcome of the 1948 war and that of the 1967 war. Those are two separate files as far as I am concerned, and I belong to the 1948 file." The woman whose major life experience was of crossing boundaries has decided to draw a border line, demarcating "we" – the Palestinians living in Israel – and "them" – those living in the occupied territories. "I have plenty of problems, but they are different problems, and my methods of work and activity differ from those of the people in the territories . . . " Her decision relies not only on theoretical and political consideration, but results mainly from everyday practices: "With my oldest boy I tried everything. I sent him to school in East Jerusalem, but then reached the conclusion that it was time for us to get things straight in our heads, both for us [her and her spouse] and the children: we will be part of Israeli society. Now the boy is attending a Jewish high school and taking private lessons in literary Arabic because what they get in school is inadequate." For Hunaida, being Israeli is not just possessing an Israeli identity card, nor simply obeying the Israeli legal system [not throwing stones]. It also means acquiring cultural capital (Hebrew and Arabic culture) and being an active agent in shaping the future society. Hunaida is very active in the peace movement and is a central figure in Jewish-Arab encounters in Israel; she lectures at various institutions and writes in Hebrew/Israeli and Arabic/Palestinian papers on topics related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In the Hebrew papers she writes particularly about Israel's Arab citizens, while in the Palestinian ones she attempts to introduce various aspects of Jewish citizens' life to her Palestinian readers.

Armed with her MA degree in International Relations from the Hebrew University, Hunaida tried to cross another borderline by applying for a job in the Israeli Foreign Ministry. "At first I was rejected because I was an Arab, then I applied to a professional tender, not to the political nominations, but I failed in the security classification. In another attempt, I was turned down because of my age, and finally because I am a woman. In the interview, I was asked how I could manage in a position requiring considerable travel with two kids and a husband . . . I gave up, though not before complaining, unsuccessfully, to the Civil Service Commissioner."

Ostensibly, peace organizations can provide an egalitarian setting for their Jewish and Palestinian members. This was not Hunaida's experience, however. A major women's peace organization advertised for a person to fill the salaried position of director: "I saw their ad in the paper and said to a colleague, 'What do you think?'. He said 'Great, apply'. I told him they wanted a Jewish director and an Arab coordinator." Interviewer: "Did it say so explicitly?" Hunaida, smiling: "It wasn't stated, they didn't say so. They wanted a number two who spoke Arabic.

But what do you think? I knew all along what would happen, but applied anyway because I was unemployed at the time. But I wasn't chosen. In the end, the coordinator was a Jewish woman who knows Arabic."

Joint activity has boosted solidarity between Jewish and Palestinian women, but in many cases Palestinian Israeli women feel left out. Hunaida is on the executive committee of a leading peace organization, but lately has been devoting more time to her community, working with Israeli Palestinian women within their own organizations, in an effort to raise their status. Her richly diverse personal experience in social and political affairs has led her to conclude that she is "truly oppressed as an Arab [i.e., from the national aspect], and then as a woman." Of her activity she says, "I think I have to make my voice heard, like other voices in the country . . . My struggle on behalf of the Palestinians in the territories is part of my identity as a Palestinian woman, while my struggle to improve my status in Israel is part of my Israeli identity. I have a minority status, and I want to improve my situation as a minority within the state. I do not live in Syria, and I do not want comparisons to be made between our situation and that of women or students in southern Egypt or Sudan. I pay income tax to the State of Israel, and I want all the services it provides, and not from a Zulu tribe, if you get my drift. When push comes to shove, I will not approach either Nelson Mandela or Mrs. Thatcher, I will turn to my Prime Minister, whom I elected. I will shout and shout, I will not let him off easily . . ."

During the interview she also explained her view of the connection between a resolution of the Palestinian problem in the territories and the status of the Palestinians in Israel: "There were times when you could state which problem was more urgent, there were times when we could not wage a struggle over our problems. Twenty years ago I never heard a woman admit that she was a battered wife. There was a war then, and it wasn't the right time to talk about it. Today, things have changed. I see no possibility that the Arabs in Israel will achieve equality if the other problem [of the Palestinians] is not resolved, because the other problem is about land, it is the cardinal one. I feel like a domino – every time there is escalation between the Palestinians and Israel, I am badly hurt. Like walking a tightrope, I had to walk cautiously so as not to fall. I am fed up with the whole thing already. I want the conflict to be resolved, and then I can work on demanding my rights." For her, as for many other Palestinian women, peace embraces peoples as well as states. It should allow the inclusion of Palestinian Israeli women as well: "In my struggle there is less room for cooperation between Jewish and Arab women. We have different problems . . . For example, the slogan of the women's organizations, 'Take back the night' [women's

campaign for personal security and rape prevention]. That is a fine slogan, but we haven't even taken the day yet . . ."

Different conditions and different needs are only two of the elements informing the drive of Palestinian Israeli women to act within their own independent groups. One aspect of peace is equality, but equality is incompatible with dependence on the Jewish establishment and on the Jewish society in general. "I do not rule out cooperation between Jewish and Arab women, providing it takes into account my mentality and my problems. But the very fact that a Jewish woman comes to our localities disqualifies her in advance as an example and a model, and ultimately also as an agent of change. The very fact that she is a Jewish woman makes us draw a line . . . 'Look, a Jewish woman is wandering around in the villages' . . . Our real need is for uni-national groups of Arab women, because that is the only way it will be possible to cooperate with Jewish women's organizations. That kind of cooperation is at a completely different level . . ." Palestinian women are looking for a mode of cooperation based on an equal footing.

Many of the interviewees perceived the peace process as an opportunity for the Palestinians in Israel to introduce the issue of civil equality to the political agenda and to raise the question of gender equality within their communities (Herzog 1999).

## An End to Present Absence – Concluding Remarks

Neither of the above three personal stories is unusual in terms of the issues they raise. Where they are, perhaps, unusual, is that their diversity enabled me, as a researcher, to use them to represent the wide variety of life experiences revealed in the interviews overall. Their modes of expression show an almost complete nullification of the accepted boundaries in the discourse on citizenship. They dissolve the boundary between the personal-biographical story and the collective-public one, and they underscore the inseparable connection between the national conflict and the civil and gender conflicts. Crossing and blurring social boundaries, while simultaneously reconstituting new ones, is a major theme in Palestinian Israeli women's experiences.

The interview transcriptions relate the life experiences of women whose voices have not been heard. The interview subjects were very open in describing the multidimensional aspects of their lives as Palestinian citizens, as women, as members of their own communities and as partners in the peace process. Voices of resistance emerge from the tension that is generated by and between women's contradictory affiliations and experiences. Simultaneous presence and absence is a leading theme in their social experience. Through the interviews, the

absent women became present, even actively so. Palestinian women citizens of Israel reveal themselves as social actors who critically examine the dominant discourse on peace, citizenship, national boundaries, ethno-cultural codes and the gendered regime. Their narratives reveals the split between women's everyday life and the dominant cultural frames. While negotiating with dominant Israeli perceptions of citizenship, a multi-tier discourse of citizenship emerges (Yuval-Davis 1997).

Through the active role they take in the public sphere, they challenge male dominance in Israel and particularly in their own communities. They join the labor market and participate in bread-winning; they acquire academic education and use it to pave their way into the public sphere; they take part in the peace movement; and join local feminist-oriented organizations. Women are constituted as active social actors, carving out their own means and identities, within the constraints of the various regimes they are subjected to. Reflecting on their histories, they empower her-stories. They challenge the "mediative" Israeli citizenship accorded them as women in a gendered regime, as a Palestinian minority in an ethno-national regime, and as subordinated women in a highly patriarchal local-national regime.

The peace arena creates for Palestinian Israeli women a space where they can examine their status as citizens, negotiate the limits of Israeli citizenship and challenge it. It is an experience that is simultaneously inclusive and exclusionary. While these women are excluded as Palestinian from the dominant republican discourse that identifies civic virtue with military virtue, they are incorporated through their membership in peace organizations by the virtue of liberal citizenship and the political right to organize (Peled 1992). While membership in peace organizations includes them as active citizens it also marginalizes them. As women they are marginal *vis-à-vis* the men, and as Israeli-Palestinians *vis-à-vis* the other partners: Jewish members of the peace organizations and the Palestinians in the Territories.

They challenge the Israeli nation-state conception of citizenship and call for the incorporation of Israeli Palestinians. Moreover, peace, for them, is not only peace between states or representative of states but also between the state and its citizens, and between the citizens and their communities. Whereas the dominant discourse emphasizes work in joint organizations as an expression of equality, the Palestinian women proposed an alternative, multicultural, discourse, reflected in the demand for work in separate organizations as an expression of equality and mutual recognition and respect. Without doubt this is a call of defiance *vis-à-vis* the patterns of dependence and paternalism that were prevalent in the Israeli society and are also trickled deep into the peace movements. Though they positioned themselves in the Palestinian national community they simultaneously draw a border line between

the Israeli Palestinian community and the Palestinians in the territories. Solving women's problems is conceived as part of the peace process as they construct it, as an integral part of their demand for equal citizenship. Finally, their defiant call also takes the form of blurring the boundaries between the private and the public, by interweaving a personal-biographical narrative into the collective public narrative and dismantling the traditional role division between the genders.

The interviews were taken at the time that the Israeli–Palestinian conflict seemed more then ever close to resolution. However, since then not only did the Al-Aksa intifada cut off the dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis beyond the Green Line – it also filtered into the delicate fabric of relations between Israel's Jewish and Palestinian citizens. The voices of Palestinian women citizens of Israel have become more relevant then ever and their challenge has just been exacerbated.

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# New Associations or New Politics? The Significance of Israeli-Style Post-Materialism

## Uri Ben Eliezer

Over the last fifteen years, public interest in Israel has developed on a variety of issues related to the individual, and his/her rights, preferences, body, identity, and environment (mainly ecological). These issues have gradually been absorbed as an integral part of public discourse at the local and national levels, and consistently garner a great deal of coverage in the media. They are at the core of various forms of protest, guided by grass-roots organizations, non-profit associations, social movements and even political parties. These organizations wage struggles for a long list of causes, including peace, civil rights and freedom of expression, discrimination in the work place, police violence, sexual harassment, gay and lesbian rights, the right to civil marriage and secular burial, needs of new immigrants, rights of foreign workers, animal rights, nature conservation, air pollution, exposure to radiation and other environmental health hazards, etc.

In the past, these subjects, which are concerned with quality of life, and even quality of death, were not considered to be of interest to the public at large. Suddenly, however, they are all around: "Earth is in danger – what can you do?" we are asked by members of the Israeli branch of Greenpeace; "Preserve the coastline, the green, the landscape," we are told by representatives of the Israel Union for Environmental Defense; "Don't be apathetic – say no to a country filled with highways," the Society for Protection of Nature in Israel tells us; "One condom and you're covered," explains the Israel Association of Family Planning; "It's better to go naked than to wear fur," declare activists for "Anonymous," at a demonstration at which they picketed – bare chested – in front of several Tel Aviv fur retailers; or "Let the chickens live," which was the caption on a poster distributed on Yom Kippur eve in Jerusalem's markets, where chickens are ritually slaugh-

tered in atonement for sins. All of this constitutes a refreshing change in a society in which the public rhetoric has for many years focused on issues such as state, nation, territory and wars, religion and commandments, immigration, enlistment, mission and commitment.

According to the government registrar of non-profit associations, there are close to 30,000 such associations in Israel today; in 1982, there were only 3,000.[1] The associations may be differentiated from one another by their level of organization, objectives, strategies, style, and the extent of their relationship with the state. It is abundantly clear that they represent a new phenomenon on the Israeli landscape, the significance of which should be deeply considered. Are we only speaking of new associations, that is, the addition of another political player in the "old politics" arena? Or are we witnessing a far-reaching change, the conception of a new politics and a new form of participation and influence? Is Israeli society being transformed through these associations into a more democratic, multi-identity and multicultural society? One that is more open to global trends, and that is less dependent on state authorities, on the one hand, and on the private sphere, on the other?

## New Politics, New Social Movements and Civil Society

In the modern era, the political system has always been characterized with protest that reflected organized attempts to change reality. From the 1970s on, it became clear that a new form of contentious politics is emerging, carried by 'new social movements'. The term relates not only to a new phenomenon; it also constitutes a theory that explains it own conception. As opposed to theories such as resource mobilization theory, which assume that human beings are rational creatures organizing in order to maximize their interests, the theory of new social movements emphasizes the historical and cultural circumstances out of which a new interpretation of reality emerged. The theory considered the changes taking place in our world during the second half of the twentieth century, toward a society known alternately as post-modern, post-materialist, technocratic, or even programmed (Kumar 1995; Thompson 1995). The new social movements – peace movements, student movements, women's movements, civil rights movements and environmental movements – are conceived as giving expression to this change. They are the carrier of the new politics which usually manifests itself outside the established parties and the traditional political methods (Muller-Rommel 1989; Poguntke 1993).

The new social movements are significant, according to scholars such as Alan Touraine, Claus Offe and Alberto Melucci, because, unlike the past, there is no clear present-day model of an ideal society, no longer

any single organizing principle, divine commandment, historic materialism, or an attempt to idealize the market. The new movements – given the kaleidoscope of ideologies, the diversity of perspectives, the various types of knowledge, and the ability to weave together a world of contrasts without creating any substantive contradiction – are regarded as both a symptom and a cure of the new era. A new era in which the cultural means of production are, in certain respects, replacing the material means of production, and the ability to impose interpretation over reality and to create symbols and images is becoming more significant.[2]

Some critics have asked "how new the new social movements really were?" (Tucker 1991). But as the phenomenon gained strength and began to spread, it became more difficult not to recognize its uniqueness, especially when compared to the quintessential political frameworks of the modern era – political parties, interest groups, and the "old" social movements. What makes the new social movements particularly unique is the fact that they seem to be driven not simply by narrow interests or the desire to amass as much economic or political resources as possible – as part of the instrumental struggle over the division and allocation of the national 'pie' – by a wish to gain 'ownership' over collective goods that affect the entire public (Dalton and Kuechler 1990: 10–16). This is because the new social movements seem to target their criticism at the modern order, the symbols of development and progress that are at its core, and at the nation-state that is perceived to be the carrier of this order (cf. Conca and Dabelko 1998; Bauer 1994). Another unique attribute is the attention devoted by the new social movements to various subjects – such as attitude toward nature, work, the body, sexuality, interpersonal relationships, human rights, children rights, animal rights, etc. – that were non-issues in the past. If one can rely on the famous studies conducted by Inglehart, these shifts in public attitudes testify to the change in the advanced industrial societies of the late twentieth century; from preoccupation with material issues – the struggle for bread, so to speak – to post-materialist issues that concern quality of life and new lifestyles.[3] These issues do not coalesce into a comprehensive world-view with a high degree of unity and totality, such as was the case with socialism, communism and capitalism. Instead, they represent a pluralism of ideas, values and identities (Larana et al. 1994; Johnston and Klandermans 1995). The new movements are perceived as directing their criticism toward the centralist, bureaucratic, hierarchical, formalistic, instrumental, mass character of modern politics, which stifles any opportunities for real social change. As a substitute, they offer new techniques of mobilization that are consciously designed to overcome the "iron law of oligarchy" as posited by Roberto Michels, imbuing their movement with a communal and even 'familial' character (Melucci 1985; Scott 1990; Della Porta and Diani

1999: 110–36). One last quality that distinguishes the new social movements is that the classic political bodies, including the 'old' social movements, have always aimed to change the center, whereas the new social movements, in fact, try to gain autonomy from it. Which leads us to the concept that has gained wide popularity in recent years – 'civil society.'

The concept of civil society has a long history, and as is often the case for other concepts, its meaning shifts from time to time (Perez-Diaz 1998; Alexander 1998). We will employ the concept as it has been used over the past decade, primarily in the wake of events surrounding protests of the Solidarity movement against the Republic of Poland during the 1980s (Ost 1990). This has to do with the conclusion reached by the Solidarity activists, according to which revolutionary social change is impossible both because of the hold exerted by the nation-state on the economic and military means of production, and its ability to put down any frontal uprising against it. As a substitute, the activists developed a "third road" philosophy that called for establishment of a separate social realm or public sphere that would serve as a sort of ideological alternative to the single 'truth' that the nation-state and capitalism represent (Arato 1981; Cohen and Arato 1995; Frentzel-Zagorska 1990).

From the Eastern European experience, the new perspective spread far and wide, taking a form that was not limited to authoritarian regimes; on the contrary, the liberal state was also perceived as having a polity that reduces and even restricts public expression, participation and influence (Cohen and Arato 1995). And out of a tradition whose intellectual roots are primarily derived from Hegel, Tocqueville and Gramsci (Kumar 1993), the concept was identified as a realm of activity that is separate from both the state and the economy, and which includes associations, organizations and social movements that are linked with one another, motivated by ideal interests no less than by material interests, such that they provide an alternative to the dominant world-view and garner influence primarily by cultural means. The new meaning attached to the term civil society is not identified with the bourgeois society, as it was in the past. On the contrary, its existence is unrelated to a class or material orientation, and the groups that comprise it often come out openly against Western capitalism and the various forms of its 'collaboration' with the liberal state (particularly those, perhaps, that led to establishment of an apolitical consumer society) (Keane 1988; Tucker 1991; Honneth 1993; Cohen and Arato 1995; Alexander 1996).

The relationship between new social movements and civil society is self-evident. Civil society exists if and when areas of interaction and collaboration are created between the various new movements. Certainly, these relationships do not entail an all-inclusive social or

national integration effort, but an effort at dialogue, coordination, and communication; the multilateral ability to launch an alternate discourse that entails a meta- political critique of the existing social order. In any case, civil society is composed of reflexive groups and organizations that are fully aware of the significance of their activity, their unique political role, and their opportunities for changing reality. This awareness exists to such an extent that it is possible to differentiate between two types of politics, which the civil society comes to combine. The first consists of the processes by which identity is formed at the individual and collective levels, as it occurs in movement frameworks. The second is the manner in which such cultural and political novelty is then translated into attempts to influence conventional, establishmentarian, sometimes statist, politics, which is extraneous to the narrow world of the movement. The one type of activity can be termed 'identity politics,' and the other 'instrumental politics'.

The two levels are not mutually exclusive. However, the first type of political activity expands political involvement and participation, precludes depoliticization of the populace and creates alternative meanings while experimenting with various new social forms. Political activity at this level is not simply a means to an end; it constitutes an object in itself (Larana et al. 1994). Due to these processes of constructing identity and 'otherness', and the creation of new forms of social relationships, the phenomenon of the new social movements and the civil society cannot be tabulated in terms of instrumental orientation, considerations of profit and loss, or even to questions of victory or defeat, as is customary in the 'old' political system. This is because the new social movements offer another experience of time, space, lifestyle, as well as a redefinition of politics. It may be likened to what Mellucci (1985) described as a sort of "symbolic amplifier." In this regard, however, one should not make the mistake of attributing an apolitical meaning to civil society, unless in reference to its aversion to conventional politics, especially to party politics. The political role of the new social movements becomes rather clear when one bears in mind that there is no more apt definition of politics than the struggle over the rules of the game and the attempt to determine them.

Social movements may as well be conscious to the second level of political activity – that which is more instrumental and interest-oriented and directed toward the state and the well-established political center in an attempt to influence distribution of local and national resources, activities of the political parties, the legislative and the decision-making process. Sometimes they even make an effort to assume a share of government as the example of the green party in Germany testifies (Poguntke 1993). In any case, a civil society exists only when both levels of politics actively coexist. This will occur only when the new identities

and cultural experiments secure a stable, bona fide grip among a range of groups and sectors, and are translated into conventional politics with the attempt to influence reality at large (Cohen and Arato 1995; Melucci 1996; Della Porta and Diani 1999).

Equipped with this theoretical scheme, and aware of the argument that theoretical writings on new social movements are far more readily available than thorough case studies (Muller-Rommel and Poguntke 1995: xvi), we can ask whether a civil society does indeed exist in Israel? Are the new associations and organizations just new players in the well-established 'old' political system, or, alternatively, are we witnessing the formation of a new politics? One that contains new themes and new styles in the post-materialist form, that are translated into participatory dispositions and techniques, which in turn succeed in altering the political agenda and the structure of domination in society? (Poguntke 1993; Muller-Rommel and Poguntke 1995). In order to answer these questions, we must first examine the extent to which the Israeli social movements succeed in creating an alternative world of identity and meanings, complete with coordination, agreement and cooperation between them, and translate it – through the use of instrumental and formal politics – into broad, comprehensive influence. The main argument I shall attempt to prove in the pages to come is that although signs of alternative identities and new 'truths' that are collectively organized and active appear in the last decade in Israel, these ostensible elements still bear a restrained, incomplete, and even vulnerable character, so much so that they do not provide any evidence of a substantial transformation from which a civil society and a new politics might emanate. Moreover, I will argue that both the vitality and limitations of the new phenomenon stem from the historic circumstances of its inception. In this regard, it should be noted that although one may find similarities between the Western new social movements and the phenomenon currently underway in Israel – in terms of type of organization, form of protest, issues at stake, strategies, etc. – it is the differences between the two that are of greater interest, differences without which it is impossible to understand the significance of the 'Israeli style' contention and the general differences between the 'West' and the 'rest'.

The chapter has three parts. The first part has been devoted primarily to elucidation of the problem that is at the core of this essay. The second part will describe the institutional environment from which – and in opposition to its organizing principles – the new phenomenon sprouted when an appropriate political opportunity structure was formed. In the third part, I will present (through three sections: politics of identity; instrumental politics; and the state's 'bear hug') the attributes of the new protest formed in Israel, and the way it was translated into what may be called a politics of associations.

## Under Hegemonic Structure

A far-reaching liberal world-view has never struck root in Israel. The 'founding fathers' of the Jews who immigrated to Palestine from Russia in the early years of the twentieth century brought with them a collectivistic political culture. They were socialist and conceived of representing the monolithic truth, the 'general will'. This will, however, was more of a national or ethno-national than of a socialist nature, and in certain respects it influenced and was influenced by the conflict with the Arab residents of the country (Shafir 1989; Kimmerling 1983; Shalev 1992). The Jewish leadership faced a weak petty-bourgeoisie that was unable to translate numerical majority into political force, thereby preventing the development of an alternative individualistic, liberal world-view for many years to come (Shapiro 1984). As a result, a non-liberal, collectivistic democracy came into being, with a political society – some would say a mobilized society – at its center (Ben-Eliezer 1993).

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the nation-state implemented the collectivistic principle known as Statism (Levi 1998). It instituted a subsistence economy, expropriated various civilian, voluntaristic functions and transferred them over to the authority of the state, and by means of various arrangements, transformed the populace into a nation-in-arms, which adopted the army and war as its focal points (Ben-Eliezer 1998a). For many years, these arrangements blurred any possible ostensible distinction between state and society. The individual of the restrained non-liberal democracy was judged according to the criterion of what he could contribute to the collective (Ben-Eliezer 1998b). And if there were any haphazard attempts, for instance by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, to implement liberalization "from above" (Keren 1989), they were nixed by the arrival of the 1967 Six-Day War and the ensuing occupation of the territories. These events gave a new lease on life to ethnos and blood, the vision of a Greater –and stronger – Land of Israel, and the preference of 'security needs' over 'the good of democracy', as if it were some abstract equation under discussion. In the political realm, this common denominator succeeded in bringing about several national unity governments, and when these failed, it was usually the right-wing party that gained power, with periodic – and failed – attempts by liberal parties (for example the Democratic Movement for Change in 1977) to assume a role as a third power group in politics.

During the 1980s, the incidence of protest rose to unprecedented levels (Herman 1996). Yet it soon took on a tone of moderation and restraint, even of co-option by the establishment. Political participation at large is the name of the game of collectivistic democracy, and so it

was that protest movements such as the "dovish" Peace Now or the "hawkish" Gush Emunim, which may have operated in their own peculiar ways, never succeeded, and essentially never even tried, to propose an alternative ideological world-view and to undermine the ruling paradigm of the nation-state (Lustick 1988; Newman and Herman 1992). It is not without reason that Lehman-Weitzing (1992: 57–61) labels the Eighties in Israel the "period of routine protest." Indeed, during this decade there were an immense number of demonstrations, but they became part of the rules of the game. The main issues raised were limited to security/peace issues. Many of the demonstrations were even organized by political parties, thereby furnishing them with yet another channel of influence. Toward the end of the decade, a turning point took place.

Tarrow (1989) argues that in order to understand contentious collective action, one must look to the political system for answers. It is the political environment which either encourages or discourages people from using collective action. Tarrow calls this a "political opportunity structure." This sort of structure, created in Israel in the late 1980s, was the result of a combination of reasons. The first consisted of an economics rationale – at the time, Israel was moving from a centralized, collectivistic economy that was characterized by a great deal of government involvement to a decentralized market economy with little government control. It didn't take long for the results of the economic liberalization to become noticeable. Within a period of twenty years, Israel was transformed from a poor country with a lackluster economy to one of the dozen most developed countries in the world, and a genuine Middle Eastern economic superpower. Essentially, a kind of 'bourgeois revolution' took place, propagating a neo-liberal outlook that bore similarities to trends that gained popularity in Reaganist America and Thatcherist Britain (Shafir and Peled 2000; Ram 2000).

Another reason for the development of the political opportunity structure in Israel was the Intifada, which broke out in 1987. The popular Palestinian uprising exposed the weakness of the nation-state, the difficulty for its army to operate as an army of occupation, a role in which it was forced to act as a sort of colonial police force fighting stone-throwing women and children. The Intifada also proved how tired Israelis had grown of occupation and war. "The beatings are hurting the beaters, as well," as one journalist wrote, and a public chorus of disapproval gradually formed in Israel, bringing with it an awareness of the rights of Palestinians and their distress. There were initial indications of the emergence of a society engaged in domestic affairs, one that is cognizant of global changes, especially the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a society whose members are assiduously working to improve their quality of life and lifestyle – so much so that

the Intifada grew insufferable, and the peace accords that Israel signed in the early 90's took on supreme significance (Peled and Shafir 1996; Ezrahi 1997).

The political opportunity structure that spawned a new form of protest stemmed from another, no less important reason: during the 1980s, partisan politics found itself in a continued state of crisis, which even the national unity governments, including the two largest political parties in Israel, were not only unable to resolve but also, in fact, exacerbated. A sort of paralysis set in, in the wake of which the bargaining power of the small parties, especially that of the religious parties, increased. The public became fed up with party politics and its practitioners, especially what came to be called the "stinking scheme," a political plot hatched by Shimon Peres to bring down the Yitzhak Shamir government through a complicated political maneuver. The scheme eventually failed, but as a result, many were roused to action.

## "Constitution for Israel" and the Hunger Strikers

Unpredictably, around this time an unprecedented wave of protest swept through Israel, a country that has always had its fair share of demonstrations and social protests. The public's sense of revulsion was expressed in a slogan that was current at the time: "We've had it with you – You're corrupt." The public mood shifted, and calls for a general overhaul of the political system became prevalent. The most prominent activists were a group of law school professors from Tel Aviv University, who drafted a constitution, the basic tenets of which were publicized in August 1987. This was the beginning of the "Constitution for Israel" social movement, which heavily marketed its messages and garnered extensive support in a country that has Basic Laws, but has never had a written constitution.

In response to the stasis that followed the 1988 elections, the protest activities of "Constitution for Israel" picked up speed, and were complemented by other initiatives, such as a campaign that was spearheaded by a few young people – eventually totaling twenty four individuals – who embarked on a hunger strike in late March of 1990. They demanded a change in the system of government. The strike began with two people, then three, and eventually thousands began to stream in. Large numbers of people began visiting, talking, showing solidarity, and even sleeping with the strikers in tents. Gradually, more tents were added, more signs were posted, more books were filled with signatures. It was a textbook example of how a social movement is formed. There was also a group of mayors who joined the protesters (without hunger striking), enlisting in the cause. By any yardstick, the momentum that was created

was thoroughly impressive. Some "Constitution for Israel" demonstra-
tions were attended by over 100,000 people; one was attended by over
200,000 persons (*Ha'aretz*, April 8, 1990; *Yedioth Aharonot*, April 8, 1990;
Bechor 1996). It was a clear indication of a cycle of protest.[4]

The struggle differed from previous protests in that there was an
almost across-the-board outcry against the constituent elements of the
'old politics': denunciation of parliamentary politics in a society in
which politicians had accustomed the public for decades to think of
them as indispensable; and a demand that a mechanism be created
whereby the primary decisions would be made by the people. However,
the outburst of spontaneity soon abated, and the protest was gradually
institutionalized. The hunger strikers were divided by internal tensions
(*Ha'aretz*, April 15, 1990). The spontaneous, popular, outspoken char-
acter of their tactics, as well as the chance of an increase in public
participation and involvement, seemed to threaten some members of
the protest movement itself, who called for restraint. For example, the
following statement by Professor Uriel Reichman, the chairman of
"Constitution for Israel," was given in a newspaper interview: "There
are people among us who sought to be militants . . . they called for a tax
strike, claiming that the taxpayers' money is used to bribe the parties,
and that the people have no real representation. I put a stop to it, because
it would be a horrible tragedy if the last vestiges of the rule of law in this
country would vanish, and we would have anarchy" (*Yediot Aharonot*,
March 25, 1990). The more 'rebellious' wing of the protest movement
also demonstrated some notable signs of restraint and inner cleavage
(*Yediot Aharonot*, March 1, 1990).

In addition, attacks were directed toward the democratic character of
the "Constitution for Israel". Its "Constitution Document" did not make
Israel a country for its citizens, but only reinforced its ethno-national
character. The draft was full of deep animosity for political parties and
an almost mystical belief in the power of legislation to heal the ills of
society. And perhaps most problematic of all, it proposed procedural
corrections for a democracy that had considerable problems: a society
embroiled in a protracted occupation and war, with security interests
reigning supreme through emergency laws in force ever since Israel's
establishment (see debates on these issues, *Ha'aretz*, April 13 & 19, 1990).

By and large, the protest nevertheless implied a new repertoire of
contention.[5] It was a liberal challenge against a society that had
subsisted for years on the collectivistic ethos and that put security issues
at its center.[6] Indeed, the events of the early 1990s had two substantial
outcomes: the first took place in March 1992, when the Israeli parliament
(Knesset) adopted the Direct Elections for Prime Minister Law. Even
before the passage of this legislation, the large political parties had
decided to enact "democracy in the election of representatives to

Knesset," or in less formal parlance, "primaries" (Doron 1996). These were signs of a new politics to emerge. The same trend was responsible for groundbreaking new civil rights legislation: Basic Laws on this issue were enacted by the Knesset, and the "Constitution for Israel" movement, as well as several other associations active in this area, were partially credited with the victory. But was it not a Pyrrhic victory? Wasn't it possible that the response of the political establishment to pressures, and its readiness to accept changes, were actually evidence of a political window of opportunity that subsequently closed?

By their nature, protest movements are formed rapidly, and also go through periods of somnolence. By late 1990, "Constitution for Israel" had practically disappeared, and with it, the hunger strikers. The idea of a constitution was shelved, as well. But the protest itself did not die out. It was translated, rather, into an upsurge of collective action on several fronts in Israel, underscoring the fact that a new phenomenon was afoot, one in which ideological discussion and debate on matters of principle have penetrated everyday discourse. This was the case in the affair of Carmella Buchbut, who killed her husband and was offered protection by several women's organizations; this was also the case in the appeal by Alice Miller and women's organizations against the State of Israel and the Israel Defense Forces, in which they were charged with discrimination for having prevented Miller from competing with men for acceptance into the air force pilots course. There was a public outcry over statements made by public figures like President Ezer Weizman or the singer Meir Ariel on the place of gays and lesbians in society; public debate on the deaths of soldiers in training accidents raised questions concerning the sanctity of life; controversy was created over the new Trans-Israel Highway; and objections to construction of new marinas and other structures along Israel's coastline raised debates concerning Israel's quality of life. Through these and other affairs, it became increasingly clear that there are new forces within Israeli society that view perceived problems and injustices differently than in the past. Not only do they raise new issues onto the agenda, they also propose different ways to resolve them.

The nature of public discourse has been changing in Israel, in large part thanks to the groups, movements and organizations that have been established in recent years, which see themselves as representatives of the public, its desire and needs. A simple list of the associations established in recent years would fill entire pages. There are over 15 associations concerned with the rights of animals – "Let Animals Live," "Anonymous" and the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals are only a few examples. Hundreds of green associations are deeply involved in environmental issues. Some are home-grown, such as the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, while others, such as

Greenpeace, are non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many of them have much in common with the new wave of transnational movements that concern themselves – at times in disregard of the sovereignty of nations and their territorial boundaries – with issues such as environmental hazards and infringement of individual rights. There are municipal and local associations, as well; practically every city and geographical region in Israel has its own area-focused organizations. There is not a single ecological danger – the Ramat Hovav waste disposal site in southern Israel is but one example – that has not raised the anxiety threshold of Israeli citizens. Radiation from cellular antennas is another example of fears, along the lines of the "risk society" posited by Beck (1992), that have over the past two years translated into mass hysteria, organizational efforts, and collective action. This testifies to the fact that many people in Israel are shaking off the unadulterated romanticism that development and progress once enjoyed.

"Green" has become a much-in-demand color. Even the Dead Sea Works, the leader of an industry that has most assuredly harmed nature, have adopted an advertising slogan: "We are the green in the desert," and the Jewish National Fund, which is an ethno-national organization responsible for preserving only Jewish-owned land, advertises that it represents "one hundred years of green." Most associations, however, are not free-riders. Some, like "The Association for Civil Rights," are engaged in fighting for individual rights, while others, like Hot-Line for Workers try to protect workers, among them Palestinians and migrant-workers. Some associations, like The Movement for Quality Government in Israel, or Amitai, assiduously oversee proper government practices or the propriety of civil servants. They often act by means of petitions to the country's courts. Dozens of organizations that address the rights of women have been established, for the most part by feminists. The Counseling Center for Women is just one example. There are associations, like KIAF, that represent gays and lesbians, A Council for the War on AIDS, associations that look after the rights of children, the most important of which is E.L.I., and others, such as ALMAG that uphold the rights of men, mainly in a divorce process. Some are active in the campaign for civil marriage, others are concerned with a woman's rights over her own body, for example, on the issue of abortion – The Association for Family Planning. Some associations, like LILACH, fight for the right to die with dignity, either through euthanasia, or through non-religious burial, while others, like Sikkuy or Adalla, Edva, or the democratic rainbow try to transcend Israel's ethnic division, and the list goes on.

## Politics of the Associations

It is difficult to offer any broad generalization about the new collective action that is developing in Israel. A full discussion would require typology of the various groups, a task that will not be accomplished in this essay. Nevertheless, it is proper to describe some fundamental characteristics that may help to explain the significance of the new phenomenon and its status within Israeli politics. When the different aspects of the new phenomenon are weighed in the aggregate, it will become clear that the new collective action has difficulties in setting up an autonomous public sphere that is free of state control. In other words, the establishment of a public sphere that could be called a civil society, and which would lead one to describe the current state of Israeli politics as new, has yet to be fully achieved. In the following section, we will demonstrate, the way the new groups are characterized either by cultural production that is not followed by practical political action, or by practical political action that is not based on any new cultural infrastructure. In many cases, the new Israeli collective action essentially takes the organizational form, not necessarily of new social movements, but of associations. In other words, they often represent most closely a kind of interest group with ideology. Rather than making good on any claims for genuine social change, this jumble exposes a situation in which the new associations becomes a genuine part of the existing social order.[7]

## Identity Politics

The proliferation of groups and associations making strides toward the development of their own style in early-1990s Israel is, without a doubt, evidence of a new interpretation of reality, a claim for a separate identity – 'otherness'- that represents an effort to offset the monolithic 'truth' of the nation-state.[8] Some of the associations exhibit an impressive degree of broad ideological crystallization. They operate on a continuing basis and publish monthlies or quarterlies printed on recycled paper. They have a symbol or logo, as well as a slogan or fashionable catchphrase, and some even have a widely disseminated, comprehensive world view and counter-ideology. This, however, is quite often not translated into instrumental politics or influence. Instead, it takes the form of shutting itself off from its environment. One example of this is "Anonymous," an animal protection association that was set up in 1994 with a clear ideology that links animal rights with human rights and environmental quality. As stated in the movement's literature, "Animal

rights, human rights – One struggle" (*Anonymous,* no. 7 1997). This combination stands in contradistinction to "Let Animals Live," an association that is demonstratively apolitical, and which suffices with providing services to animals. Members of Anonymous consider themselves "political in a social fashion".[9] The movement, however, is small, its achievements few, it is shuttered up inside of its own style, and does not collaborate much with other associations. The movement bears similarities to hundreds and even thousands of other movements throughout the world, but unlike many of them, it has not succeeded in translating its separate consciousness into effective politics and influence.[10]

Greenpeace is another example of an organization with an alternate identity in Israel that compromises itself at the practical and instrumental levels. As an NGO, it has a clear and well-formulated world-view. Leaders of Greenpeace disseminate this ideology through information campaigns, lectures, video films, bulletins and newsletters. They have an obvious appreciation of the importance of marketing and media exposure. White fields of snow daubed with the red blood of slaughtered seals, vibrant colored blue skies and blue seas, Zodiac boats skimming swiftly toward supertankers that do harm to nature, brave young men suspended from London Bridge holding signs, blocking passage of ships in the river and resisting attempts by police to remove them, and everything swathed in the appropriate background music.[11] The Israeli Greenpeace, inspired by its older sister, mounts ostentatious, dramatic campaigns that call for a combination of technical sophistication, clandestine planning and bravado, and which are likely to pique the interest of young people (for example, *Kolbo,* October 2, 1998; December 11, 1998). Some events are orchestrated in tandem with reporters and TV cameras in the aim of creating a provocation that will resonate through the media. Nevertheless, the organization's effectiveness is open to question. The gimmicks are left to the back pages of the Israeli newspapers, and the media exposure is directed, if at all, to the gimmick, and not the issue it was intended to raise.

Greenpeace has no ideologues; it has public relations professionals. It has no ideological discussions; it has showy events. And what is most clearly evident is the fact that there is one subject that Israeli Greenpeace, as opposed to the mother organization, refuses to deal with at all – nuclear power and nuclear arms. On this issue, the stunts disappear from sight, journalists are not invited, confrontations do not take place. Greenpeace was established in order to fight nuclear tests, but in Israel someone made the decision that this issue would be disregarded. The Israeli Greenpeace thus becomes an example of an Israeli-style NGO, a softer, and more refined version of protest than in the West. Israel – whose nuclear capability is a well-known fact – is light years

away from the European anti-nuclear movements. As demonstrated, for example, by Flam (1994), these movements succeeded in combining the development of an alternate culture – one that proposes a nuclear-free world – with effective political strategies. They called public attention to undemocratic decision-making by small groups of experts and special interests, and their efforts netted widespread opposition to nuclear power, massive, effective pressure on decision-makers and, eventually, a change in policy. But the Israeli Greenpeace is willfully negligent when it comes to taking on the sacred cow of Israel's defense interests, taking part as a full partner in the state's non-declaratory nuclear strategy.[12]

The Israeli peace movements come across in a similar light. For the most part, they were conceived after the Lebanon War in the early 1980s, and reached maturity during the Intifada. In comparison to numerous Israeli associations, the peace movements in Israel are conspicuous for their unequivocal political messages and the general objection to the traditional security thinking that was part of the nation-in-arms. Nevertheless, their practices are moderate. For example, Peace Now, the main peace movement in Israel, was opposed to conscientious objection during the Lebanon War and the Intifada (Menuchin 1985; Reshef 1996: 96–9). Even the conscientious objectors themselves, during the Lebanon War, did not contest the principle of military service, only the idea of taking part in "a war of choice" (Helman 1997). Among peace movements in Europe and the United States, imprisonment often has a cathartic effect. This has not been the case in Israel, where peace protests have not crossed lines or directly confronted the establishment. "The Year 21", for example, a protest movement that was formed during the 1982 War in Lebanon, was dissolved immediately when some of the main activists were arrested for a couple of days (Sasson-Levi 1995).

As opposed to other countries, it is hard to imagine a scenario in Israel in which members of peace movements collaborate with members of the various green organizations. Even the green movements themselves do not always cooperate. Despite differences of opinion and varying points of view, members of environmental organizations in the West are able to bridge ideological gaps. In fact, the ideological arguments (for example, between ecologism and environmentalism) sometimes attract extra publicity for the Green viewpoint, further enhancing its effect (Dalton 1994; Dobson 1995). Meanwhile, in Israel ideological disagreement is nearly nil. In summary, the Israeli new associations can be characterized, at least in part, by a sticker here, a sticker there, some catchy slogans, and a few utopian ideas. Thus, these groups do not serve as carriers of ideological disputes or debates on fundamental issues. In this way, the road to instrumentalism is paved, a development whose significance will be elucidated in what follows.

## Instrumental Politics

The ability of social movements in liberal countries to transfer issues that are part of the private sphere into political ones constitutes one of the quintessential indicators of civil society. However, many Israeli associations, such as the Movement for Quality Government, claim – at times with great fervor – to be apolitical. It may be assumed that such a position is a backlash against the tendency of the collectivistic nation-state to make every issue political and every subject enlisted. In addition, the widespread public criticism that was leveled against party politics in the late 1980s encouraged associations to define themselves as apolitical, as if they were not afflicted with the 'system's' illnesses. Similar phenomena existed in Europe during the 1970s, but movement activists there soon realized that even if their objectives were not political in the narrow sense of the word, since they pertain to social and cultural issues, nevertheless "everything is political" and can only be realized in this manner (Dalton and Kuechler 1990: 10–16).

Whereas in Israel, The Society for Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the largest green organization in Israel, is ready to protect the environment beyond the Green Line (the boundary between pre-1967 Israel and the territories occupied in the Six-Day War), without any ostensible sensitivity to the political significance of such an act. In so doing, Green becomes 'above it all'. The SPNI does not hesitate to maintain field schools in the occupied territories, even in Ofra, a settlement that is considered a stronghold of the extreme right in the territories. Moreover, the SPNI sees nothing wrong with arranging tourist tours of these territories, which provide a large source of income to the organization.[13]

As part of this "apolitical" viewpoint, there is a strong tendency among many associations to make various subjects seem non-political by representing them as professional matters that must be handled exclusively by experts. Legal expertise ranks especially high in this category. Consider the case of Eliad Shraga, chairman of the Movement for Quality of Government. Is he a leader of a social movement or is he a private attorney? From his example, it seems that the two hats can be switched with dexterity, and the boundary between them is not always clear (*Ha'aretz*, August 20, 1999). Beyond questions concerning purity of ethics, such phenomena expose a tendency to restrict contention to a legal path. Whereas many of the new movements in the West came out against logocratic elements, and the conversion of knowledge into a resource – thereby removing the ordinary citizen from the decision-making process (Cohen and Arato 1995: Chapter 10) – the instrumental politics of many Israeli associations becomes problematic from a demo-

cratic perspective. The problem is revealed in the words of Shraga himself: "Once the first petition we submitted was accepted, we realized that hundreds of thousands of people demonstrating outside could not accomplish what one little High Court of Justice brief could" (*Ha'aretz*, August 20, 1999).

The Movement for Quality Government, like many other associations, submits countless court petitions. They represent primarily the petitioner, his or her attorney, and the movement that upholds the rights of the petitioner, but not necessarily the public. As regards these limitations of the legal channel, the activities of the Israel Union for Environmental Defense (IUED) are especially instructive. This association was established in 1991 and it successfully operates a law firm that engages in environmental affairs. In the opinion of Allon Tal, the founder of the movement, the environmental protection laws in Israel are adequate; they need only better enforcement. Therefore, Tal and his colleagues are predisposed to waging their struggles in the legal realm (*Ha'aretz*, February 14, 1992). Tal voices no sweeping disapproval against the system, and his association is not engaged in creating alternative culture. Although there is a great deal of political logic in approaching the courts in Israel, which in recent years have been characterized by a 'judicial activism' – according to which everything is 'judicable' – yet the association which is considered the law's watchdog on environmental issues is chained to the leash of legal thinking, and its influence is limited to agreements, compromises and concessions to the establishment.

In keeping with their status as professional organizations, associations such as Greenpeace and the IUED not only declare themselves apolitical, but often back up their politics in the guise of research and science. The SPNI even maintains a unit for conducting surveys. Serious though it may be, it is often evidence of instrumentalization of the research and fetishization of the methodology employed in these studies. The new social movements in Europe not only call attention to the dangers of technological production and development, but also protest against modern society's trust in the ethos of rationalism and modernity. They try to politicize knowledge and technology, and to make them a target for criticism (Piccolomini 1996). Meanwhile, leaders of the associations in Israel are made into "experts", and their associations often provide a fig leaf for instrumental rationality, which translates the desire to "understand" reality into bureaucratic techniques of organization, management, documentation, and even surveillance and control.

These activities project a narrow view of democracy. At the Israeli associations' conferences, reference is occasionally made to the formation of civil society, presumably because it is a pity not to use such a

popular buzzword. For example, the title of a conference held at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1999: "Self-Help As a Bridge Between Cultural Differences, and a Contribution to the Establishment of Civil Society." The convention was initiated by the "Israel Center for Self-Help" – an umbrella organization of some 500 groups and associations (*Ha'aretz*, June 17, 1999). An impressive figure, everyone would agree, but why do these organizations, most of which are affiliated in one way or another with the establishment, constitute a civil society?

The same holds true for the Movement for Quality Government. Although it is a movement of citizens who believe it is not enough to have the right to choose who runs the country on the election day, the movement makes no real attempt to expand the base of democracy in Israel. This fact becomes especially clear when one bears in mind that the individuals on whom the movement confers its annual "Knight of Quality in Government" titles – at impressive ceremonies – are exclusively dignified members of the establishment and the state administration. Notably, the latter was represented recently by Ami Ayalon, former head of the Security Services (*Ha'aretz*, April 24, 2000).

Instead of investing their efforts to create a cultural common denominator, and to form ad-hoc alliances that would seemingly serve their short-term goals, the environmental associations in Israel often choose to frustrate any opportunity of making genuine social change. For instance, in the public campaign against the Trans-Israel Highway, the IUED collaborated with a religious association to prevent desecration of graves; it would be difficult to describe this as contributing to the foundation of civil society in Israel. Meanwhile, Greenpeace, which is fighting to prevent the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea, collaborated with the fishermen of Haifa – not exactly the friendliest group to nature and living things. In the absence of organizational ability, the associations are also hard pressed to keep up with market forces whose influence has skyrocketed in Israel over the past decade. They have been unable to contend with construction of marinas along the Mediterranean coastline, residential towers under construction on the Carmel coast in Haifa, or hotels built on the waterline in Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv.

The 'tyranny of the market' continues to grow more intense in Israel and the associations themselves are often funded by firms that represent the market forces. Some others are supported by international organizations that have their own interests, or wealthy benefactors who are not residents of Israel, but who try to impose their 'truth' through contributions.[14] There are also associations that earn profits by exploiting distressing situations. The differences of opinion and the internal struggles between them (for instance between three men's rights associations) exemplify pure profit motives (*Tel Aviv*, July 5, 1996).

In the final analysis, the phenomenon of associations in Israel is a new one, albeit one that mostly offers opportunities for 'negative freedom'. People want to prevent pollution, abate noise, protect their animals, homes, neighborhoods, environment, etc. This is how they define their world, and defending that world seems sufficient. In light of the collectivistic past of Israeli society, it is no wonder that Israeli associations are seeking a private domain in which they can be relieved. It is no wonder, then, that they have adopted an across-the-board posture of self-defense. However, the concept of civil society and the possibility that the associations will spawn a new politics, are, in fact, dependent on a search for "positive freedom" – a transition from preference to ability, from (legal) right to practical implementation, from being on the defensive to taking the initiative.

This shift of direction would apply to the entire gamut of social and political issues, with the intent of making Israel a diverse multicultural society with the "demos" and not necessarily the "ethnos" at its center.[15] Such perspective – can we call it a sociological insight? -does not hold true for most of the Israeli associations. One has the impression that the long shadow of the "Constitution for Israel" still hovers above them, and their behavior correlates with the claim put forth by Snow and Benford (1988) that a movement which develops at the beginning of a cycle of protest may act as a progenitor of master frames, and serve as an ideological and interpretive anchor of sorts for subsequent movements in the cycle. Furthermore, the movements that ensue are liable to find that these master frames in fact limit their perception of reality, even their ability to act.

To conclude this section, the Israeli associations have a difficult time contending with the two main threats facing them: withdrawal to a romantic, communal utopia that offers no opportunity to be translated into real political influence; and a narrow practical orientation, focused on the individual and his rights, but lacking any pretension for substantive social and cultural change. These two threats are, in fact, related to a third one, which will now be described.

## The State's 'Bear Hug'

State institutions have various ways of dealing with grassroots politics. Practically, the representatives of the 'old' politics essentially made no attempt to negate the existence of the new associations in Israel; on the contrary, they accepted them with open arms. However, even if this contained a measure of openness, it was also an indication of a state structure that is flexible enough to absorb and institutionalize the new phenomenon. As such, it could prevent the new associations from

developing an out-and-out anti-statist orientation and becoming a device for general social change.[16]

The November 1998 elections to the local councils and municipalities were 'Greener' than ever before. Green factions achieved success in Haifa, Tel Aviv and in numerous local councils. Following this success, some observers spoke of "the Green revolution on the municipal level" (Eitan Gdali, *Bama* March 12, 1999). Though such statements were surely exaggerated, still the results may be considered a change, particularly in view of the fact that in the previous elections, in 1993 and before, Green did not exist as an issue whatsoever. Nevertheless, at least in some instances, the candidates who achieved success in 1998 were not Green "freaks" but free riders. In Haifa, the Greens were closer to the color of whitewash. Their electoral list was headed by an architect and urban planner who earns his livelihood from . . . construction. In reaction to the success of his list, he explained: "We are a unique model of Greens. Not fanatic Greens who eat carrots and onions. Greens that want to see Haifa with development and construction, but in accordance with enlightened and environmental principles" (*Ma'ariv*, November 12, 1998). How can these sort of patrons of the environment present a Green opposition against a coalition of politicians, contractors and political machines? Is it merely coincidental that in both Haifa and Tel Aviv, the new lists rushed to join the ruling coalitions soon after winning their seats?

The new social movements in Europe are conflicted about whether they should forge relationships with the state and its institutions, and they often decide in favor of doing so. The Greens in Germany, for instance, have become a full-fledged political party. They have been partners in ruling government coalitions, and their influence has increased to unparalleled levels. The Greens in Scandinavia have also found new channels of influence, establishing contacts of different types with the government (Yearly 1991; Poguntke 1993; Rohrschneider 1993). Unlike Israel, all European Greens did not cultivate developed relations with the establishment before creating an independent and autonomous cultural infrastructure. The connection with the establishment was intended to influence it; whereas in Israel, the connection often seems like the product of the establishment's influence on the associations. "Our strength lies in our being part of the consensus," explained the spokesperson of the SPNI (in an interview held on October 4, 1999). And when associations reveal an ambivalent attitude toward the political order – opposition to it combined with cooperation with it – they often hold themselves back from taking effective, all-out action. In other words, they essentially prevent the development of genuine separation between civil ideology and the state. This phenomenon has been revealed in various forms in the relationship between the Ministry of the

Environment and the green associations. Quite often, Senior ministry officials realized that cooperation with the Greens, or even the semblance of cooperation, is an effective co-optative technique (an interview with Roni Armon, Green Action spokesperson, November 24, 1998).

Many of the associations receive government assistance due to their definition as non-profit institutions. This has implications on their activities and on their ability to criticize government policy. In essence, this constitutes a very formal expression of the inherent risks of the state's 'bear hug'. Yishai (1998: 153–4) notes that Israel's Associations Law, enacted in 1981, requires every associated group to register and to observe several organizational rules that are required by the Ministry of the Interior. The registration requirement allows the state to refuse associations the right to exist, not only if they violate the laws of the state, but also if they adversely affect public morality or endanger state security– criteria that can, of course, be broadly interpreted. In any case, these barriers grant a great deal of power to state officials on whose say-so associations can rise or fall. In this way, the state intervenes, making use of the classic practices of inclusion and exclusion.[17]

Two main reasons have brought about a situation in which the new associations are well-integrated in the neo-liberal ideology that is becoming increasingly more entrenched in Israel. One reason is political: the "stinking scheme" and the ensuing protest it triggered, the primaries that were instituted by various political parties and the Direct Elections for Prime Minister Law, all testify, inter alia, to the diminished ability of political parties in Israel to act as a mediators between the public and the leadership. The decline in their strength resulted in the establishment of direct contact – of a populist nature – between the leader and the led (Shapiro 1996; Filc 1996). It also prompted many politicians to work harder, directly appealing to their constituency in an effort to gain added support for themselves and their objectives. As for the other reason, Israel is facing liberalization, which is essentially leading to the emergence of new economic forces belonging to the private sector. True, privatization breaks up the monopolistic statist economy, but the free market can also produce influential magnates whose activities are difficult to supervise. This danger has become more tangible in Israel over the past decade, with a few dozen families controlling the major economic sectors, and already gaining considerable political influence (Shtressler, "The End of Socialism," *Ha'aretz*, March 5, 1998).The new associations dovetail nicely with the new reality of economic and political privatization, they even give it their seal of approval: one, they do not come out against it, and this in itself is a form of collaboration and acceptance; two, through their actions and declarations they create the illusion that they constitute an exemplary model of democracy and participation.

This becomes evident when one considers the reciprocal relationship between the associations and the political establishment. It develops that the associations regularly refer their requests and desires to the various members of Knesset. For their part, the Knesset members are in contact with the associations, listening to what they say and issuing promises. This is how the associations succeeded in influencing Knesset members to legislate laws on animal abuse; this is the technique adopted by the associations that rallied in support of Carmela Buchbut, who killed the husband who had been abusing her for years. The reciprocal relationship that developed since the relative decline of party machines should come as no surprise. But make no mistake. It is not pressure that is exerted by voters, only pressure that comes from associations. Then the politicians propose legislative bills. Hundreds if not thousands of such legislative bills are tabled in the Knesset – most of which, of course, are not passed. But the impression is that the Knesset member is working, that the 'public' demands and also receives, and that its problems are being solved. However, in the liberal paradise that raises rights to a sanctified level, it is not social problems that are solved, but rather the problems of associations.

Moreover, many associations typically lay emphasis on local rather than nationwide activism. In a society that had a strong collectivistic ethos, local affairs were not considered at all of primary importance. The associations introduced grassroots politics on environmental issues relevant to specific regions or cities in a manner that is well suited to their post-material approach. However, one gets the impression that they have had a difficult time freeing themselves from the millstone of localism. Instead of these local organizations serving as a source and a basis for effective countrywide organizing efforts, as a sort of coalition of coalitions, they have actually contributed to the erection of a partition between local and national interests, and their membership often sets up its own hierarchy of importance between the two levels, such that the marginal status of the regional issues is raised up to a higher rank. This was illustrated, for instance, in a letter sent by the SPNI to candidates in the local and municipal elections in July 1993: "Dear candidate . . . We consider you the significant factor for moving ahead on environmental issues. As for the future of the occupied territories and the economy – the government will decide. As for the resident's quality of life, you decide" (SPNI, a letter, July 11, 1993, Secretary 505).

The politics of separation between the local and the national is problematic since it is devoid of any overall pretension of influence and change. This is similar to the findings of Herzog (1999) in regard to advances made by women in Israeli politics. This progress is attributed first and foremost to the local government, which serves as a channel of separation between women and national politics. What is more, there is

a strong tendency in this local channel to view women as public and communal servants rather than "real" politicians.

That being the case, even if the politics of the associations every so often result in genuine achievements at the level of rights and legislation, we are still not witnessing the formation of a civil society or the creation of a new politics. A civil society and a new politics that are, by definition, supposed to strive for expansion of the public sphere by attempting to transfer important issues from the confines of the state decision-making apparatus into the public. The Israeli new associations lack an adequate perspective on what constitutes the 'common good'. They don't even argue over what that may be; the associations retain their fragmented, pluralistic positions. But pluralism can easily serve as a mechanism for control on the basis of compartmentalization, whereas the outlining of problems in legal and judicial lines can stifle alternate definitions and other solutions to social problems. How can legislation, or even enforcement, be of any help on the issue of violence against women – and this is, of course, but an example – if the overall normative and institutional structure, on which the political or the legal institutions are themselves built, continues to support male superiority and the "sanctity" of the family? Carmela Buchbut's eldest son put it this way: "That was the reality. There are a lot of battered women in Israel. We never saw any way out. There was nothing to complain about – it was the reality that we accepted at home and we thought that that was how people acted. Nobody showed us anything else" (*Davar* [daily], October 4, 1994).

## Conclusion

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, significant political changes have swept through Israel, which has become a more liberal, open and individualist society than in the past, with a more central role played by market mechanisms and with increasingly less state control. The associations are indicative of the new situation. However, the politics of the associations, and their reciprocal relationship with the state institutions, can tell us something about the true nature of the changes now underway in Israel.

The concept of civil society is seen as an attempt to save civilian life from administrative and regulative invasions by the state – capitalistic and socialistic alike – through the establishment of a new post-materialist realm of identity, style, and action. When these become fundamental elements of politics, it may be characterized as "new." From this perspective, the Israeli associations do not quite pass the test. Most of them have not developed any consciousness of a social order

confronting the state system, of the "real" as opposed to the "legal." In essence, one could say that Israel is being transformed from a political society not to a civil society, but to a society of civilians. In a similar vein, consider the parable that appeared in an issue of the "Anonymous" bulletin about a man walking along the beach and throwing starfish back into the sea. A bystander mocks him, saying that there are millions of starfish, and that the man can't possibly believe he is changing anything. To which the man, while picking up another starfish and throwing it into the water, says, "It makes a difference . . . to this one" (*Anonimus*, 5, March 1996).

Various investigators have in recent years pointed out the social change underway in Israel, as well as the crisis that follows it – the legitimacy crisis, or the 'Zionist crisis' – that is rooted in the transition from a reality of consensus or hegemony to a situation of fracture or schism. Some observers view the situation as a chronic crisis imprinted with the contrasting world view of other groups living side by side in Israel (Yona 1998). Others claim that it stems from the state's inability to respond to various social pressures (Horowitz and Lissak 1989). Still others emphasize the changes that took place in Israel – including demographic changes related to the waves of immigration from the Soviet Union – that were not attended by any ideology that might have furnished legitimization for the cultural differences between the different groups (Kimmerling 1998). There are those who relate the 'problem' to the fact that there is no attitude of respect in Israel for 'the other', nor any real dialogue with him (Mautner et al. 1998: p. 79). Some observers, adopting a less pessimistic and more realistic view, argue that Israel is captive between two contradictory trends, one global and one local, and that the future holds two possible scenarios, one post-Zionist and one neo-Zionist (Ram 2000). And there are also those with an optimistic perspective, such as Peled and Shafir (1996), who refuse to accept the claim that Israel is captive to paralysis-inducing internal contradictions, arguing that it is actually undergoing a significant change from frontier society with mechanisms of exclusion to neo-liberal civil society with mechanisms of inclusion. In the final analysis – which this paper has not engaged in at all until now – there is room to wonder how much Israel has freed itself from its collectivistic past, and whether the current "crises" are not in fact all that significant. In any case, the new phenomenon of the associations, as described here, indicates that change is underway in Israel, albeit with considerable limitations and restraints which have been described in terms of the inability of the new associations to constitute a civil society and a genuine new politics in Israel that can confront both the nation-state and the market. As such, the associations are working together to make Israel more liberal, but not necessarily more free. Overall, it is an elitist

phenomenon, composed mainly of highly educated Ashkenazim (Jews from Eastern European origin) coming from upper middle class families. Israeli Arabs and Mizrachim (Jews from Middle East and North African origin) are conspicuously under-represented in their ranks. Thus, the associations fail almost completely in promoting non-ethnic bases of mobilization as a key to democratization. In the final analysis, whether they are captive to their narrow, limited, local, apolitical, legalistic and interest-driven world, or they wallow in an unrealistic utopianism, they seem to be confirming the Tocquevillian statement made by Alain Touraine: "Big Brother does not pose a danger to the social movements, but egoism does."

## Notes

1   The Associations Law was enacted in 1980. Only by registering as an association can a group qualify for tax-exempt status, accumulate assets or receive the right to appear in court as a public body.

2   Among the prodigious amount of literature on new social movements, most of which is based on Offe (1985); Touraine (1985) and Melucci (1985), we will cite only few: Dalton and Kuechler (1990); Elder (1990); Scott (1990); Eyerman and Jamison (1991); Rucht (1991); Johnston and Klandermans (1995); Kriesi et al. (1995); Piccolomini (1996).

3   Inglehart (1977; 1990) maintains that adolescent socialization in the West, under conditions of economic and physical security, has led to a lasting shift in political value orientation. From the need for physical and material security to post-materialist values like self-actualization, belonging, participation, and the like. See also De Graff (1996).

4   Tarrow (1994: 153) use the phrase cycle of protest to refer to a phase of heightened conflict and contention across the social system that includes: a rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors, a quickened pace of innovation in the forms of contention, new or transformed collective action frames, a combination of organized and unorganized participation, and sequences of intensified interaction between challengers and authorities which can end in reform, repression and sometimes revolution.

5   The term repertoire of contention, following Tilly (1986) is based on the assumption that in every society there is a stock of familiar forms of action that are known to everybody and becomes habitual aspects of interaction.

6   On the connection between the rise of movements concentrated on post-materialist issues and the relative decline in the importance of security issues in the post Cold-War Israel, see Ben-Eliezer (2003).

7   Regarding interest groups and the difference between them and social movements see, for example, Useem and Zald (1987). Some scholars consider integration of instrumental politics with identity politics to be the formula for the success of the new social movements in the West. See, for example, Dalton (1994), who regards "ideologically determined organiza-

tion" and "organizationally determined ideology" as a key for success. As is shown in this article, the Israeli case is altogether different.

8   For more on this general trend, see Melucci (1989) (1996).
9   A discussion with Galit, one of Anonymous activists, June, 1998.
10  Regarding other movements, see Groves (1992); Ryder (1996).
11  Regarding the world organization of Greenpeace, see Wapner (1995).
12  On nuclear power as a non-issue in Israel, see in Newman and Ein Gil (1996).
13  On these issues, see the SPNI's various bulletins (Shomrei Hasviva, Bama, etc.).
14  KLAF, a feminist and lesbian association is supported by The New Israeli Fund; Mama Cash from the Netherlands; Astraea – New York; Global Fund for Women; and US/Israel Women to Women. "A Line To the Worker," is supported by The New Israeli Fund; Bread of the World from Germany; AGIR – Ensemble pour les Droits de L'Home, France; US Ford Foundation; Christian Aid – Britain; ICJ – Sweden; ICCO – the Netherlands; Heinrich Bool Founations – Germany; Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk and SIVMO from the Netherdlands. We will not go into more details regarding the connection between Israeli associations and international foundations and organizations. In any case, many of the associations are supported by the New Israel Fund, which transfers contributions from American and Canadian Jews directly to dozens of associations engaged in civil rights and social problems, thereby circumventing state bureaucratic mechanisms of money allocation. The New Israel Fund is subject to American influence and is distinguished by a liberal orientation.
15  On the issue of ethnos versus the demos in Israel, see Smooha, (1997), and Yiftachel (1999).
16  On the relations between states and social movements in general, see Kriesi (1995), Della Porta (1995).
17  On the complex relations between state's inclusion/exclusion and democracy, see Dryzek (1996).

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# Claim Making and the Emergence of New Minorities: Black African Migrant Workers in Israel

**14**

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During the last two decades, the political dimension of transnational migration has become the focus of social research. Until the 1980s, the common assumption among scholars of migration was that migration was apolitical and therefore, that its consequences related only to social and economic spheres (IMR 1985: 400–1). Unsurprisingly, it was in Western Europe where literature on the political and legal aspects of immigration began to emerge as a consequence of a matured system of massive labor recruitment and the concomitant settlement of labor migrants (Schmitter Heisler 1992). This new sociopolitical perspective recognizes the emergence of de-facto multicultural societies and the emergence of new ethnic minorities among migrant workers that challenge the endogenous nature of the nation state and its traditional definitions of membership and boundaries. The fact that, despite restrictionist state policies, former 'temporary workers' have become 'alien permanent residents' has thrown into question many assumptions about the rights of citizenship, the nature of nationality and the viability of a multicultural society (Jenkins and Sofos 1996; Castles 1994; Brubaker 1989).

This chapter deals with the emergence of new minorities among undocumented (non-Jewish and non-Palestinian) migrant workers in Israel. We center on the black African community that has recently developed in the Tel Aviv area comprising approximately 15 percent of the country's undocumented migrant population (Ministry of Interior Affairs 1996).[1] Our main focus is on the strategies of social and political participation developed by African migrants in order to cope with their illegality and on their attempts at redrawing the limits of membership in Israeli society and polity.[2]

Our emphasis is on the undocumented migrant community itself as

political actor, rather than on state migration policy. It should be noted from the outset that by emphasizing migrant workers' participatory practices we do not wish to imply that they have free options or unlimited choices. On the contrary, the manifestly Jewish ethno-national character of the nation-state renders migrants' present or future incorporation highly difficult if not altogether unlikely. We rather suggest that despite a context full of constraints and obstacles,[3] the significant political fact is that migrants still find a way to organize and raise their claims onto the host society. We argue that the very fact that migrants manage to organize in autonomous associations in order to protect their interests, and have both the ability to mobilize support over issues of concern and to raise claims before political authorities unwilling to accord them recognition, is politically significant regardless of how well they succeed. For these facts attest to the process whereby migrant workers become political actors and through which membership in contemporary nation states is negotiated (Miller 1989; Layton-Henry 1990a; Rex and Drury 1994; Soysal 1997).

The chapter proceeds as follows: after offering a brief description of the Israeli setting as an ethno-national state of immigration (section 2), we present the theoretical background (section 3). In section 4, we depict the social organization of the black African migrant community in Israel. Then, we follow the community's attempt to politically mobilize their members, and analyze the articulation of legitimating principles and claims raised before the political public sphere of the host society (section 5). Lastly, we raise some brief concluding remarks on the dynamics between labor migration and the limits of membership in an ethno-national state such as Israel.

## The Israeli Setting

Israel has been defined as an immigrant-settler society based on an ethno-nationalist structure, both ideologically and institutionally (Kimmerling 1983; Shafir 1989; Smooha 1990; Yiftachel 1997). While state and quasi-state agencies actively encourage immigration of Jews and are committed to their successful absorption, they strongly restrict non-Jewish immigration. The Israeli Law of Nationality, which came into force in 1952 and the Law of Return from 1950 constitute the legal platform upon which the Jewish character of the state is premised. The latter law, based on the *jus sanguinis* principle, confers on Jews, and only Jews, everywhere the right of immigration, while the former gives them Israeli nationality, virtually automatically. At the same time, Israel is an ethnically divided society composed of approximately 83 percent Jews and 17 percent of Palestinian citizens. Although Palestinian citizens of

Israel are considered equal before the law, they in fact constitute a subordinate social, political and national minority (Smooha 1990).

After the 1967 war, the government gradually began recruiting non-citizen Palestinian workers from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to perform mostly menial, low status, manual jobs in the Israeli labor market (Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 1987). They matched the definition of 'daily labor commuters' who entered the country in the daytime and left at night. The number of non-citizen Palestinians increased dramatically over the next 20 years from 20,600 in 1970 to 94,700 in 1986, thus comprising 7 percent of the Israeli labor force.

The breakout of the Palestinian uprising (*intifada*) in 1987 engendered a labor scarcity in low status positions occupied by Palestinian daily commuters. Periodical strikes organized by the Palestinian leadership and closures imposed by Israeli authorities created a labor shortage in the construction and agriculture sectors where Palestinian workers were concentrated. The 1987 events set the initial stage for organized recruitment of foreign blue-collar workers. However, it was not until the Israeli government decided upon the hermetic closure of the border with the occupied territories at the beginning of 1993 that recruitment of large numbers of overseas workers began, primarily from Rumania (construction sector); Thailand (agriculture sector) and the Philippines (geriatric care, nursing and domestic services) (Bartram 1998; Bar Zuri 1996; State Comptroller 1996).[4]

A combination of structural and political pressures determined that overseas migrant labor suited both the state's and the employers' interests.[5] By 1987, the number of permits accorded by the Israeli Ministry of Labor was 2,500 and it gradually increased to 9,600 in 1993. The qualitative change happened between 1993 and 1994, when the number of permits tripled. In 1996, the total number of valid work permits was estimated at about 103,000 (see Bartram 1998: table 3). Of these workers, 72 percent were in the construction industry, 16 percent in agriculture, 7 percent in nursing and geriatric care, and 5 percent in light industry and the hotel and catering industry (*Industries, Operation and Maintenance Engineering Supplement* 1996).

Much like other labor importing countries, official Israeli figures do not reflect the real number of labor migrants in society. In Israel, the number of undocumented labor migrants, which has dramatically increased during the last years, augments these figures considerably. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics' estimates, the total number of overseas migrant workers in 2000 amounted to 240,000, and sixty percent of them were undocumented (CBS Press Release October 30, 2001).[6] For the time being, the number of foreign workers remains a matter of controversy and speculation.[7]

Whatever the sources for calculation may be, non-Jewish labor

migrants (documented and undocumented) have become a salient feature in Israeli society, amounting in 2000 to close to 9 percent (12 percent including Palestinian non-citizen workers) of the Israeli labor force, a figure that places Israel among the five top labor importing advanced economies (see Sassen 1999, table 7, pp. 166–7). They have ceased to be 'invisible.' Their presence is increasingly felt, as they seem to be changing not only the labor market composition in specific sectors, but the ethnic fabric of the Israeli population as well. In contrast to Palestinian commuters, whose daily work in Israel did not involve a change in place of residence, overseas migrant workers' participation is not limited to the Israeli labor market but extends to other spheres of life. That they must reside within the host society implies the creation of a new category of foreign residents, with all of its implications. It means that the host society not only benefits from their participation in the production process; it must also take responsibility for their reproduction costs.

The increasing flow of migrant workers and the emergence of new ethnic communities among some of them call for a problematization of the membership regime in Israeli society and polity. All the more so given the particular character of the nation state, which has been defined as an ethnic democracy characterized by the tension between two political commitments: one to the Jewish character of the state and the other to a democratic form of government (Smooha 1990: 391–5).[8] As in most Western European countries, migrant workers in Israel are perceived as an import of temporary workers, not as prospective citizens. Foreign workers (usually of distinct ethnicities) are considered outsiders in the cultural, social, and political spheres (Baldwin-Edwards and Schain 1994; Schnapper 1994; Weiner 1996). Even the term whereby they are referred to, *ovdim zarim* (foreign workers), with its biblical connotations of idolatry, exemplifies their status as 'margizens.' Taking all these political and structural constraints into account, our question is to what extent may the margizen situation of migrant workers become a source of political organization and empowerment? More specifically, to what extent are we witnessing the emergence of new claim-making populations among migrant workers that could challenge the boundaries of Israeli polity and society?

## Theoretical Background

The sociopolitical perspective on international migration has tended to concentrate on migrants' lack of political rights and resources in the receiving countries (Miller 1989). Broadly speaking, we can identify two approaches: *state-centered* and *society-centered*. The former emphasizes

the regimes of inclusion and exclusion employed by the political organization towards different groups (Brubaker 1989; Van Steenbergen 1994; Baubock 1994). The latter focuses on the differential modes of participation (social-political and economic) of various social groups.

The uneven "distribution of membership" in Western democracies (Walzer 1981) emphasized by the state-centered approach creates what Martiniello (1994) has called a triangular structure of membership that comprises three categories: citizens, denizens and margizens. While both citizenship and denizenship entail full or partial access to social, economic and political entitlements and recognition respectively,[9] the concept of margizens refers to a new category of people who, being denied of membership, remain excluded in legal, social, cultural and political terms (Martiniello 1994).

Martiniello's typology enhances our understanding of contemporary migration as it also includes undocumented migrant workers in the state's regime of membership distribution. Nevertheless, his state-centered approach neglects the dynamics of migrants' associational and participatory practices. Indeed, the overriding assumption shared by scholars dealing with post-war migration, is that migrants have no place in the public sphere except as subjects of exploitation, paternalism, advice and, at best, help. Because they are disenfranchised, alien migrants are assumed to be politically passive neglecting the everyday process whereby immigrants are made into subjects through the negotiation of membership within a particular polity and society. A reconsideration of migrants' agency entails a society-centered approach to membership, one that allows for a revindication of social and political actors and of their participatory strategies in the public sphere.

A central participatory strategy through which migrants become political actors in the public sphere of the host country is the creation of ethnic associations. These carry political significance particularly when dealing with undocumented migrants that are "disempowered" by state-centered approaches to membership (Ong 1996). Indeed, these organizations play an important role in the emergence and survival of new ethnic minorities in immigrant-receiving countries. The literature underscores three main functions of ethnic associations: first, the adjustment of migrants into the host society;[10] second, the reaffirmation or the transformation of migrants' ethnicity in the new environment[11] and third, the mediation between migrants and the home community in the sending countries.[12] Despite the important contribution of this large body of literature, few have considered the political significance of ethnic associations as they create new platforms for claim advancing in the host public sphere.

Taking a society-centered stand, Soysal (1997) has coined the concept of *claim-making-populations*, namely social actors who through their

collective and relational activities, mobilize and advance claims in the public sphere. The transformation of migrant communities into *claim making populations* entails a political process in at least two senses. First, by creating self-help organizations and social networks, migrant workers open new arenas for collective empowerment that may lead to potential collective action and mobilization (Gidron and Chesler, 1994:17). Second, by extending their claims from the private or communal sphere to the public arena, migrants engage in the "politicization of associational life," widely considered as the hallmark of participatory democratic praxis (Habermas 1992:424).

As the cases of Turks in Germany and Maghreb people in France clearly show, organized claims to recognition and social and civil entitlements advanced on behalf of migrant workers have enlarged the de facto limits of participation in the contemporary nation-state, providing new platforms for deliberation and public mobilization (Soysal 1997; Miller 1989; De Wenden 1994). However, migrant workers seem to be challenging the nation state not only at its 'contours' but also on the very grounds that allow alien communities to raise their claims before the host society. As convincingly argued by Soysal (1994) and Jacobson (1996), and as our own case study below corroborates, migrant workers enter the political public sphere to pursue their goals and advance their interests not through a state sovereignty discourse on membership, but through a 'globalized' discourse on human rights. Invoking universalized themes such as "human suffering," "human needs," and appealing to democratic values such as "freedom" and "equality," migrants increasingly participate in the host society in the name of a generic category of 'personhood,' and not as 'citizens.' As such, they derive their claims to various social and civil entitlements from international agreements and laws that transcend the embedded, state version of traditional conceptions of citizenship, thus contributing to the ongoing decoupling between 'rights' and 'national belonging.'

We devote the following analysis to the emergence of new claim making populations among black African migrant workers in Israel and to the participatory practices they have developed within the Israeli political public sphere.

## The Social Organization of the Black African Community in Israel[13]

The pattern of formal labor recruitment in Israel has created a peculiar situation for labor migrants. The issue of work permits to employers but not to employees transforms documented workers into a de facto "captive labor force" (Rozenhek 1998). While the state permits provide

a formal infrastructure of incorporation into the labor market, the workplace conditions resemble a kind of 'total institution,' so to speak, which leaves little or no room for migrant workers' associational initiatives. Indeed, except for the Filipino community, which comprises a mixed population of documented and undocumented migrants, documented migrant workers have not developed ethnic communities in Israel.

In contrast to their documented counterparts, black African undocumented migrants arrive haphazardly. Black African migrant workers began arriving in Israel during the late eighties from various countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), the Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Mauritius and South Africa. Although there have not been formal mechanisms for recruitment, the particular history of political and economic relationships between Israel and black African countries set the initial stage for informal patterns of recruitment. Several paths of entry can be discerned: (1) academic, technological and cultural exchange programs between Israel and African countries; (2) pilgrimage; (3) informal recruitment of domestic labor by Israelis working in African countries, either independently or as representatives of Israeli companies. While these informal mechanisms initiated the migration flows, social networks developed in Israel by migrants themselves contributed to the perpetuation of transnational movement.

Similarly to other undocumented migrants, Africans enter the country on a tourist visa valid for up to 90 days, which forbids them to work. They become undocumented by overstaying the tourist visa. Their being undocumented makes them 'invisible' in the eyes of state apparatuses in regard to social, political, and civil rights. The lack of legal status and work permits is apparently one, albeit not the only, catalyst for the development of informal patterns of organization in this unfriendly environment. Therefore, we suggest that the greater tendency of undocumented migrants' to organize and develop communities should be understood as a strategy of survival in the absence of state regimentation of their work and life conditions.

A brief description of the community and its members can be summarized as follows: (1) the great majority of the community members are undocumented; (2) the socio-economic and demographic profile of the group shows: a) a relatively high percentage of families with children; b) a relatively highly educated population (secondary and tertiary education); c) a great majority employed in the service sector (cleaning, restaurants and light industry); (3) well developed communitarian patterns of organization such as: self-help institutions, churches, formal and informal religious groups, sports clubs and social clubs (Lukumu 1997). This organizational infrastructure creates the conditions for

resource mobilization necessary for collective political action and for claim advancing in the Israeli political public sphere.

Black African migrant workers have created three main kinds of organizational networks: socio-cultural organizations such as (1) churches (Pentecostal Church, Methodist Church, Jehovah's Witnesses Church, among others), (2) soccer clubs; and (3) national and regional origin-based associations.[14] The organizational networks constitute social capital that helps migrants in all spheres of life providing information on and access to lodgings, work, health, and education.

Most associations fit the pattern of self-help institutions. These are mutual-aid associations that organize to solve social and personal problems, in the present case problems caused by the illegal status of migrants (Gidron and Chesler 1994). African patterns of self-help organizations are inspired by the village association in the home country. However, similar to migrant communities' experiences in other receiving countries (Light 1972; Massey et al. 1987), the significance of African self-help institutions is redefined within the context of the Israeli society. Self-help associations help migrants to cope with exclusion from the host society by providing information, employment connections, and financial and emotional support, thereby minimizing the costs and risks of migration.

In general, African self-help institutions display a high degree of bureaucratization evinced by their hierarchical structures (a chairperson, a general secretary and a recording secretary, sometimes a treasurer and an auditor), regulations and formal sanctions for those who do not comply with them, and fixed admission and monthly fees. A salient example of self-help institutions is the rotating credit associations, which meet the need for money and raising loans. The *Likelemba* is a case in point. A non-formal association, this formation is based on imported cultural patterns of mutual aid and trust. A group of ten people make a weekly or monthly contribution that is collected by a treasurer. This money is assigned by rotation to each of the members for different ends: marriage, funerals, arrest and deportation. In sum, African organizations provide institutional frameworks in which members can strive to meet their needs, pursue their interests and exert greater control over their lives both as individuals and as groups (see Gidron and Chesler 1994). As such, these institutions operate as a means of both individual and communal empowerment.

## Politicizing the Community and Claim Raising

The organizational infrastructure is critical for understanding the black African's ability to politicize their own community, namely to mobilize

people, resources and public opinion in order to translate the community activities and claims from the private-communal realm into the public sphere. As shown in the literature, the passage from the private-communal realm to the public realm entails, first, the creation of an organizational platform representing the common interests of the community, and second, intensive interaction between migrant community representatives and public agents of the host society, among others the media, political leaders, state and local authorities, and governmental and non-governmental organizations (Jaakola 1987; Werbner and Anwar 1991; Rex and Drury 1994). This transition also requires a series of organized political actions, both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, such as public demonstrations, lobbying, strikes and so forth (Miller 1989). While the political organization of the community does not automatically lead to access onto the public sphere, its absence jeopardizes any attempt to elicit public support and attention. Conversely, access to the political public sphere means opening new platforms on which the new migrant community can negotiate the conditions of participation and membership in the host society.

Which strategies have black African migrants adopted to assert themselves as actors on the political stage of a state unwilling to accord them any recognition? To answer this question, let us start by describing the steps initiated by the African community. Beyond national and regional level organizations, African migrants in Israel have organized at the pan-African level. A recent development in this level is the African Workers Union (AWU), founded in September 1997, which aims at "bringing all African workers in Israel under a common umbrella which will provide assistance and services" (in Lukumu 1997). This supra-ethnic organization uses the black African identity as a platform for recruitment and claim advancing in the Israeli public sphere.

The event that served as a catalyst to the politicization of the community and to the concomitant creation of the AWU was escalation in the deportation policy implemented by the Israeli authorities during 1997. In reaction, and with the mediation of an Israeli journalist committed to the cause of human rights, African migrant workers initiated a series of informal contacts with members of the Israeli Knesset. These led to a formal invitation, issued by a group of Knesset members from various political parties, to African representatives. During the meeting, the migrant community leaders raised issues concerning the plight of migrant workers in general consequent to the deportation policy, and of black African migrants in particular, as they are more easily targeted by authorities. The first meeting between African and Israeli representatives resulted in the submission of a policy proposal regarding the status of the migrant community in Israel, and more importantly, in the creation of the AWU.

The details on the birth of the AWU are worth mentioning for they reflect the interesting dynamics of labor migration, modes of participation, and the negotiation of membership within the public sphere of contemporary nation-states. The creation of the AWU was not only triggered by the demands articulated by the African community itself, but also by the encounter with Israeli representatives and activists who subscribe to a globalized human rights' discourse, and by their active sponsorship. These provide a channel of interaction with the state and its agencies, at both the local and the national level (Drury 1994: 21). The AWU was registered as a non-profit organization in September 1997 with the help and legal advice of a member of the Knesset. Next, the founding members called to a gathering of social clubs and church leaders to announce the foundation of AWU. Community leaders were asked to cooperate and involve their constituencies in the AWU's activities and future decisions. In their words: "The current immigration crisis can only be used to unify the Black Africans but should not be the only reason for our unification. We have a lot of challenges that threaten the existence of the black people which we all need to face with courage, strength and determination" (Lukumu 1997: 94). At a meeting on October 16, 1997, African community leaders gave full support to the newborn AWU, its elected leadership, and its policy proposal.

The explicit objective of the policy proposal submitted by the AWU to the Israeli Knesset committee was: "[To] suggest to the Government of Israel to formulate a policy regarding the Africans' employment in Israel". The Union demanded the regulation of African workers status: a work visa for a 3–5 year which would allow them to open bank accounts, participation in welfare services such as social security (*Bituach Le'umi*) and national health insurance, free entry and exit to state territory, and protection by the police and other state institutions.

The question that arises is on what grounds does the black African migrant community negotiate its right to participate in the political public sphere of the host-state? Analysis of migrant workers' claims enables us to uncover the discursive strategies followed by community leaders in their attempt to gain political recognition within the context of the host society.[15] Among the arguments advanced by Africans we find two major themes explicitly aimed at mobilizing Israeli public opinion and support, and one main discursive strategy aimed at eliciting pan-African solidarity from members of the African community in Israel.

The first argument corresponds to what Soysal (1994) calls the "valorization of personhood" theme. It draws on a deterritorialized conception of rights that divorces rights from national membership. An abstract and universal notion of personhood has been invoked on various occasions and at different levels. For example, in a speech given

before the Knesset Committee on Migrant Workers, one of the black African community leaders argued that "It would be a horrible mistake for the whole world to design a law that everybody should live only in his own country of birth of origin, at a time when the world is becoming more interdependent than ever" (speech September 16, 1997 in Lukumu 1997:93).

A 'naturalized' version of personhood is usually invoked by community members when directly addressing Israeli public opinion. One such an occasion was a series of articles published in a local newspaper by the community members themselves under the symbolic title *"Is there such a thing as illegal human beings?"* In an obvious allusion to a well-known slogan of a German human rights' organization, the writer asked the audience to consider that "We are all legal citizens of Mother Earth, and we deserve just treatment as anybody else" (*Ha'ir*, December 19, 1997). The personhood theme therefore subsumes Mother Earth, Law of Nature (*Ha'ir*, January 8, 1998) and Basic Human Rights as legitimating claims for participation.

The recurrent usage of discursive categories such as human rights and personhood made by the African community in Israel is neither casual nor unique. It bears witness that African migrant workers in Israel share globalized expectations that proliferate among migrant workers around the world as to what can they claim and what they deserve. African leaders in Israel seem to be well aware that only through appealing to a generic concept of personhood might they claim a 'piece of the pie' from the host society and polity regardless of their formal status.

The other recurrent, and yet more prominent, argument invoked by the black African organized community is the "community of suffering" theme. As used by the community, this theme carries simultaneously two different and complementary connotations: one is a humanitarian and universalized sense of suffering, albeit attuned to cultural motifs resonant in the host society; the other refers to the particular history of hardships and exploitation suffered by black people alone.

Black African leaders invoke the suffering of black people and attempt to draw a parallel with the history of hardship of the Jewish people. Members of the community emphasize the common human lesson that should be learnt from both Jews and black people as they have been subjected to suffering and segregation throughout their history. This motif was invoked particularly following the first massive arrests carried out by the authorities against undocumented migrants. The scene of black people being led away to police vans in shackles outraged public opinion. To the community members, these violent scenes evoked the darkest chapters in human history: slavery and holocaust. "Do you know how many black Africans died during the slave trade journeys from Africa to Europe and America? Millions and

millions. This chapter [slavery] of human history symbolizes the first holocaust" (*Ha'ir*, December 19, 1997; see also *Ha'ir*, July 4, 1997).

Departing from the 'universalized suffering' theme presented above, and yet within the same discourse of 'suffering,' is the discourse that presents Israel as part of western imperialism and exploitation. Aware of the intensive bilateral relations that evolved between Black African countries and Israeli governments throughout the years, African migrants are pointing at the lack of symmetry whereby Israelis behave towards their former "hosts" and present "guests". "Do you know how many Israelis live in Africa?" asked one the community leaders. "Westerners cannot come and use our resources without taking responsibility for our people [ . . . ] Who do you think enabled Israel to become the first diamond exporter in the world that she boasts so much about? [ . . . ] Where do all those diamonds come from?"(*Ha'ir*, July 4, 1997). Israelis are asked for reciprocity on two grounds: as victims of suffering and as part of the western responsibility for Third World exploitation.

A nuanced version of the "community of suffering" theme is the African migrants' appeal to be recognized as political refugees. Although the State of Israel does not acknowledge the status of refugee, Black Africans again and again have raised their claim for asylum from political persecution and hunger. With the aid of different agents such as local journalists, diplomats and Knesset members, Black African migrants are introducing a new discursive category – refugee – with which Israeli authorities are being compelled to deal with. Israel's commitment to humanitarian goodwill was called on particularly following political and military events in Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigeria. In January 1997, the Nigerian ambassador in Israel intervened on behalf of thirteen Nigerian citizens who were about to be deported. They claimed that since they belonged to the rebel forces, their return to their country meant a death sentence. The Minister of Interior rejected their appeal, a decision that almost led to a diplomatic incident (*Ha'aretz* January 14, 1997). Later that same year, an appeal was submitted to the Israeli Supreme Court by Nigerian migrants who claimed that they had nowhere to return to in case of deportation. The court rejected the appeal on the grounds that it should have been submitted prior to their entrance to the country. However, the judges seemed to have forgotten that the State of Israel does not recognize the category of refugee as such (*Ha'ir*, January 10, 1997; *Ha'ir*, July 25, 1997; *Ha'ir*, January 16, 1998).

A landmark in the production of the refugee discourse by migrants was the campaign sponsored by the local weekly *Ha'ir*, on behalf of migrants from Sierra Leone doomed to deportation. Following a series of articles denouncing the massacres of civilians in Freetown, an amateur videotape smuggled by a migrant from Sierra Leone was broadcast on prime time national television in Israel and before the

Knesset Committee on Migrant Workers (*Ha'ir*, July 3, 1998). The chair-person of the Committee declared that the Israeli government should take a binding decision not to deport migrants to countries in a state of civil war or when imminent and tangible danger awaits them (*Ha'ir*, July 17, 1998).[16]

If a common history of suffering and reciprocity are used as human-itarian claims to obtain support from Israeli public opinion, the 'acting out' of blackness is a different kind of strategy since it is intended first and foremost to mobilize the Black African migrants themselves. Literature on ethnic mobilization deals with the way in which reified notions of race or ethnicity might hinder mobilization of migrant minorities (Neveu 1994). However, research has also shown that the use of black identity as a mobilizing practice and organizational asset is common among migrants coming to Europe from Black Africa and the Caribbean. The mobilization of black organizations and activists throughout the European continent has been particularly reinforced since 1992 as a result of the debate on the implications of the creation of the European Community onto equal opportunity for black migrant workers (Singh 1994: 78–86). In Britain, for instance, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, blackness became a prominent means of ethnic mobiliza-tion and policy formulation, overshadowing other ethnic and racial identities (Rex and Drury 1994).

Empirical evidence within the Israeli context also shows that far from being an obstacle to immigrants' mobilization, an abstract and general-ized category of blackness can become a political resource for community solidarity. Black African leaders in Israel seem to be consciously 'acting out' their race in order to achieve solidarity and unification within their community. The acting out of blackness is achieved through reference to the suffering of black people both in Africa and in Israel. The message is that becoming organized in Israel as black is a means of "symbolic solidarity to the thousands of starving people [in the homeland countries]. To relieve them from the punishing routine they are going through [ . . . ] should be the primary aim of our unification" (speech at a General Meeting of the AWU, September 16, 1997 in Lukumu, 1997: 92–94). It is no surprise, therefore, that the AWU motto is "Unity is Strength."

In sum, the analysis of both the institutional framework created by Black African migrant workers and their claim-making discourse clearly shows that their community functions as an ethnic interest group. The appeal to a supra-national identity, namely "Black African," made by migrant workers from a mosaic of countries and ethnic groups, should be understood not as reaffirmation of a primordial ethnic iden-tity as such, but as a search for a basis on which they act together in pursuit of political and social ends. Large-scale associations that tran-

scend the boundaries of particular national groups could become an asset when competing with other migrant workers for resources, public attention, and benefits in the host society. Leaders of the AWU have expressed their concern that raising claims on behalf of a generalized category of migrant workers, which would extend the boundaries of solidarity to include other migrant groups, may be counterproductive to their political aims. Acting out their blackness is therefore a conscious strategy employed by members of the AWU in order to differentiate themselves from a catchall category of "foreign workers".

## Conclusion

This essay has addressed the significance of migrant associations and of their participatory practices as an important vehicle by which migrant workers become political actors and negotiate membership in contemporary nation-states. Our focus has been on the political process itself and *not* on its actual impact on immigration policy making. Further research will certainly have to take into account both a state-centered and a society-centered approach for understanding the dynamics between emergent claim-making populations among migrant workers and the limits of participation in an ethno-national state such as Israel.

Even though we are aware of the hazards involved in writing about incipient phenomena, as the speed of events will always outpace our own judgements, some cautious observations can already be made.[17] First, the Israeli case displays similar dynamics to those shown by other labor importing societies. By confronting the state agencies with new dilemmas regarding the link between national membership and various social, civil, and even political rights and practices (among others, the right to education, health, security and police protection, and the right of association), migrant workers are already challenging, explicitly or implicitly, the limits of membership and participation in the modern nation state. Similarly to the European experience, this challenge is particularly felt at the local level, as municipal authorities are confronted with the need to "solve" immediate problems affecting the everyday life of those living under their jurisdiction. As a social worker from the Department of Welfare Services in the Tel Aviv municipality defined it succinctly: "The state does not have a 'problem' of migrant workers, we [local authorities] do".[18] Highly indicative of this point is the fact that the issue of migrant workers has become an inextricable part of the agenda during the last local elections in Tel Aviv, where according to estimations between 60,000 to 80,000 migrant workers live and develop their own communities, making up to 16 percent of the city's population within the municipal boundaries (for different esti-

mates see *Ha'ir*, September 18, 1998; *Ha'ir*, September 25, 1998; *Ha'ir*, October 16, 1998; Alexander 2001).[19] On the other hand, state agencies and bureaucrats cannot be completely oblivious to migrant communities. The fact that migrant workers are using their ethnic associations as political platforms for advancing claims and for raising issues of their concern in the name of a global discourse on human rights posits a new challenge before state representatives. This is exemplified by the fact that *illegal* migrants are not being denied the right to *legally* register their associations at the Registrar for Non-Profit Associations of the State of Israel, thereby being accorded the recognition of the state itself. Or yet another paradoxical situation whereby under the auspices of the Knesset Committee on Migrant Workers, meetings are being held between representatives from the Ministry of Interior and 'undocumented' representatives of 'undocumented' migrant communities with the purpose of negotiating the terms of their stay in Israel.

Finally, notwithstanding similarities, the Israeli case seems to be more problematic than its western counterparts regarding the integration prospects of non-Jewish migrants.[20] The ethnic nature of nationalism in Israel, and of its incorporation regime (Shafir and Peled 1998: 408–27), the embedded nature of membership in religious definitions of nationality that reinforces the absence of an egalitarian notion and practice of citizenship for the non-ethnics (Ghanem 1998: 428–48), and the highly restrictive character of its naturalization policy, all serve to make Israel a de facto multicultural society without prospects for multiculturalism.

## Notes

1　According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, in 1999, African and Asian migrant workers comprised 32% of the total of undocumented migrant workers in Israel (CBS October 30, 2001).

2　Primary research data are collected through extensive semi-structured questionnaires as well as through ethnographic fieldwork in various institutional sites of both migrant communities.

3　Most noticeable, migrant workers' already vulnerable situation has increasingly deteriorated since 1996 as the Israeli government began implementing a deportation policy. Deportation efforts have further increased since the establishment of the Migration Police in October, 2002.

4　The decreasing number of non-citizen Palestinians in the Israeli labor market is concomitant to the increasing number of foreign workers concen-

trated in specific occupational niches. For example, in 1992 there were 85,900 Palestinians working in the construction industry while in 1994 their number was reduced to half of that figure (42,100 Palestinians). At the same time, the number of work permits given to foreign workers in construction and agriculture increased from 1,730 in January 1993 to 64,230 in February 1995 (State Comptroller's Report 1996: 479).

5 For a detailed analysis of the political configuration that led to the decision on massive recruitment of foreign workers, see Bartram 1998.

6 For a thorough analysis of the statistical trends in migrant workers waves – with permits and without permits – in Israel all through the 1990s, see Kemp and Raijman 2003.

7 The exact number of migrant workers has become typically a highly controversial and politicized matter, especially in light of recent years' high rates of unemployment and economic recession. See, for example, the Social Security Office researcher, Condor 1997.

8 For a debate on the nature of the Israeli "regime of incorporation" regarding different social groups, see Smooha 1993, Peled 1992 and Yiftachel 1997.

9 Citizenship entails full civil, political and social rights accorded to groups that are considered 'full members' of the polity and society. Denizenship is an 'in between' category that refers to foreigners who have been recognized as permanent residents and enjoy relatively secure rights of residence, entitlements to family reunification, and equal rights in systems of social security, but, on the other hand, lack full political rights (Hammar 1994: 187–98).

10 See for example Jenkins 1988; Schoeneberg 1985; Schmitter-Heisler 1986; Kasinitz 1992 and Basch 1987.

11 See among others Sassen-Koob 1979; Jenkins 1988; Gitmez and Wilpert 1987 and Verdok et al. 1987.

12 Schmitter 1980; Basch 1987; Jaakkola 1987; Campani et al. 1987 and Kasinitz 1992

13 For reasons of confidentiality, we deliberately refrain from giving the full names of individuals and institutions in the community.

14 African associations are mostly organized along national and regional affiliation lines. At the national level, among the oldest (started 10 years ago) and best organized are the Ghanaian communities. The most salient national-based migrant association is one that nucleates a federation of various social clubs. Other examples of associations organized around national lines are those of migrants from Mauritius Island, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. An interesting case of both regional and tribal organization is the association of the Manding people.

15 The analysis of claim-raising is based on various sources: the policy proposal submitted by the Black African leaders to the Israeli Knesset in August 1997; the AWU registration petition as a non-profit association submitted to the Registrar of Associations in the Ministry of Interior; speeches given by Black African leaders at the Knesset in August 1997, at the founding meeting of the AWU in September 1997, at the general assembly of the AWU and Black African community leaders in October

1997, and interviews given by members of the Black African and Latin communities with local newspapers.

16　It should be noted that the State of Israel has consistently refused to accord recognition to the refugee status on the grounds that it might provide a legal precedent for Palestinians' plight to return to their lands as refugees.

17　As we mentioned at the beginning, this chapter is based on fieldwork between the years 1998–2000. Since then, the situation of undocumented labor migrants has further deteriorated. Since the creation of the Migration Police in October 2002, massive deportation campaigns have instilled terror among undocumented migrants. Notwithstanding, the AWU continues operating.

18　Personal interview.

19　On the urban incorporation policy towards labor migrants in Tel Aviv see Kemp and Raijman (forthcoming).

20　Even Germany – who is presented as a paradigmatic case of a highly exclusionary model of citizenship, based on *jus sanginis* – seems to be reviewing its immigration policy according to its demographic-social-cultural-political reality. This comprises a 'minority' population of up to 10% of migrants who until today have been denied full citizenship (*Ha'aretz* October 16, 1998*)*.

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# The State of the Nation: Contemporary Challenges to Zionism in Israel

**15**

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Observers are struck by the turmoil Israeli society has evinced during the 1990s and since. This study proposes a new perspective for the analysis of Israel, based on a 'glocal' model, in which global and local trends struggle to re-shape Israeli cultural identity and social structure. The study lays out this new conceptual model in three steps: (1) It outlines the concepts of "post-nationalism" and "neo-nationalism"; (2) It applies these concepts schematically to the case of Israel; and (3) It explores in particular the two polar nodes of the new terrain of identity within the dominant group in Israel: neo-Zionism and post-Zionism.

## On the Concepts of Post-Nationalism and Neo-Nationalism

Broadly speaking, post-nationalism is a phenomenon typical of the end of the 20th century, just as nationalism was a phenomenon typical of the end of the 19th century. In order to elaborate the concept of post-nationalism, two pairs of seminal terminologies may be of use: the one, Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, taken from the theoretical arsenal of the end of the 19th century; the other taken from the theoretical arsenal of our own times, the Local and the Global (these are obviously ideal typical poles in a conceptual continuum; 'reality' exposes many mixed and blurred combinations.)

The founders of sociology grappled with the Big Transformation associated with processes of industrialization, commodification, 'statization' and 'imperialization,' as well as with secularization, differentiation and rationalization, all eventually falling under the umbrella of modernization. Their deliberations are condensed in the conceptual pair of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. This seminal terminology came, of course, from the pen of Tonnies, but Marx, Durkheim

and Weber, each in his own specific terms and specific accent, shared the agenda. The *Gemeinschaft–Gesellschaft* conceptualization underlies the overarching dichotomies of classical sociology: Marx's feudalism vs. capitalism, Durkheim's mechanic vs. organic solidarity, and Weber's traditional vs. rational legitimizations. In a likewise manner, the collective sociological wisdom concerning the Big Transformation which is underway today, the one associated with economic post-industrialization and cultural post-modernization, may be condensed under the overarching conceptualization of the Local vs. the Global, or what Benjamin Barber discerns as Jihad vs. McWorld (Barber 1995).

These two pairs of concepts frame the historical trajectory of nationalism between the end of the 19th century and the end of the 20th century. To put it bluntly, in the late 19th century, nationalism functioned *vis-à-vis* 'minor' *Gemeinschaft*-like collective identities as a 'grand' *Gesellschaft*-like collective identity. Today, in the late 20th century, nationalism had come to function itself as a 'minor' Local-like collective identity *vis-à-vis* the even more 'grand' Global-like collective forces.

For the world of the 19th century, speaking in large generalities, nationalism represented emerging tendencies, tendencies of modernization marching under the lead of the bourgeois class and the state regime (Gellner 1983; Tilly 1990). By the end of the 20th century, the relative place of nationalism in social processes has radically altered: today it represents declining tendencies, tendencies resistant to economic globalization and cultural post-modernization. Hence, just as in the past, nationalism was associated with processes of industrial and statist modernization; today post-nationalism is associated with processes of post-industrial and post-modern globalization, while nationalism had become associated with localist parochialism or objectionism to capitalist progression.

Thus the 'nation' can be thought of as a construct standing midway between the processes of modernization and globalization. As said above, the nation has changed roles. It has turned from the *Gesellschaft* of yesterday to the Local of today. Schematically, and obviously in a too-linear way, it may be presented as follows (in figure 15.1):

The 'nation-state' used to be a major carrier of modernization. It consolidated territories, integrated populations, and standardized cultures (Gellner 1983; Geertz 1963). For better or worst, nation-states were the large sub-units of the world capitalist system (Wallerstein 1974). The transition from communities to societies was to a large extent a process of nation-state building (Breuilly 1993). Nowadays, one of the consequences of the transformation of the world capitalist system from an industrial to a post-industrial phase, and from a Fordist to a post-Fordist mode of accumulation (Harvey 1989), is the relative diminution of the autonomy of the nation-state, the decline of

its sovereignty, and the entailed emergence of new social foci of iden-
tification and commitment, both above the nation-state and below it
(Axford 1995; Waters 1995: 96–123; Crook 1992: 79–105; Castells 1997:
243–308; Held 1995).
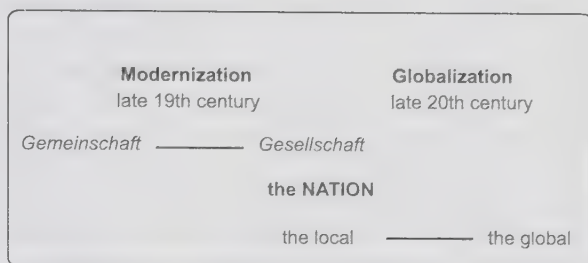


**Figure 15.1**    The Nation between Modernization and Globalization

The nation, which in the process of its own consolidation depresses
regional, religious, and communal affiliations of all kinds, is today on
the decline and faces threatening, rising supra-national and infra-
national tendencies. Yesteryear, the nation conducted an offensive
against 'localities.' Today, however, it has become itself 'the local,' and
is being put on the defensive. To sum up, just as nationalism used to be
the political culture of emergent modern statism, so post-nationalism is
the political culture of an emerging post-modern globalism. All this
means, in a nutshell, that states are less sovereign, governments less
autonomous, markets less regulated, individuals less obedient, and
national identities less attractive than they once were (but for a different
view see Smith, 1995).

Yet, as there are no zero-sum games in history, nation-states do not,
and will not, disappear overnight. They endure around, but alongside
with some new players. In a very schematic way, the historical dynamic
of modernization-globalization presented above (figure 15. 1) generates
four major ideal-typical contenders over collective identities in the
contemporary era, as shown in figure 15.2 below:

> *(classical) nationalism (1–A)*, which is strongly anchored in state
> structures;
> *pre-nationalism (2–B)*, which lingers in various forms and intensi-
> ties;
> *post-nationalism (2–A)*, which is generated by globalization, and
> appears in a variety of forms, from liberalism to multiculturalism;
> and
> *neo-nationalism (1–B)*, defensive nationalism, which is reactive to

the threat on national identities, and appears in many cases as ethno-, or ethno-religious, nationalism.

By the 1950s, liberal western societies passed their high tide of nationalism, struggling against, or re-modeling, pre-nationalism. Some post-colonial societies under-passed this stage during the1950s, and post-Soviet societies under-passed it in the early 1990s (with some cases lingering on) (Hobsbawm 1990). Yet this stage of modernization nationalism belongs to the past. The current scene is rather marked by a novel type of tension: that between evolving post-nationalism and reactive neo-nationalism. While the former tension is generated by modernization, the latter is generated by globalization. These two axes of tension and the four polar foci of identity, are depicted in figure 15.2 below:



| | **1**<br>National<br>Identities | **2**<br>Non-National<br>Identities |
|---|---|---|
| **A**<br>*Gesellschaft*<br>Identities | **Nationalism** | **Post-Nationalism** |
| **B**<br>*Gemeinschaft*<br>Identities | **Neo-Nationalism** | **Pre-Nationalism** |
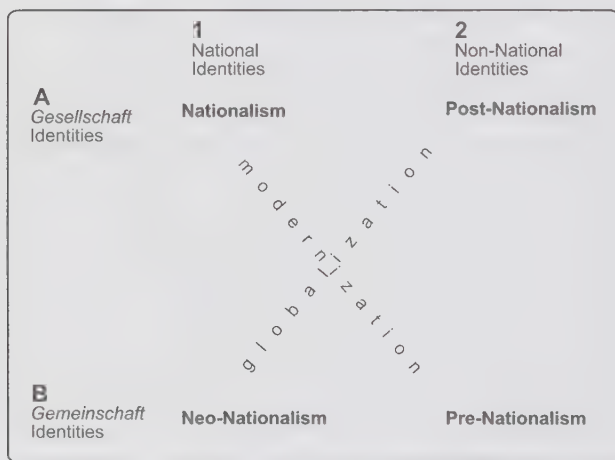
**Figure 15.2**  Competing Types of Collective Identity in Modernization and Globalization Contexts

To sum up, 'post-nationalism' signals the transformation of collective identities from the *Gesellschaft* of yesteryear (nationalism), to the *Gesellschaft* of today (globalism). 'Neo-nationalism' signals the countermove of the adherence to an old or invented Gemeinschaft, which may appear in reactive, revivalist, invigorationist, ethno-religious, or fundamentalist guise.

Having briefly and schematically identified post-nationalism and its mirror image of neo-nationalism, let us now turn to the case of Israel.

## Jewish Nationalism and its Transformation in Israel

The Zionist Movement, the generator of modern Jewish nationalism, emerged in the late 19th century in Russia and East Europe. The first national Jewish settlers appeared in Palestine in the 1880s. They lived there under Ottoman rule and established close to 50 villages (*moshavot*). By the beginning of World War I the Jews in Palestine numbered around 85,000 persons, about two thirds of them new immigrants. Towards the end of the war, Palestine was conquered by Britain. Immigration to Palestine continued, though with restriction, under the British Mandate, and in face of growing Arab rejection, and by end of World war II the Jewish community (*Yishuv*) numbered close to half a million persons. In 1948, the community gained independence and the State of Israel was established. Today the population numbers six million; it is heterogeneous ethnically (Ashkenazim-Mizrachim,[1] about 50% each of the Jewish sector), culturally (religious and secular; roughly 30% and 70% respectively, of the Jewish sector) and nationally (Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs; about 79% and 21% each group respectively).[2] When established, Israel was an impoverished agricultural society; today it lags just behind the club of the richest 20 industrialized societies in the world, with a GDP per capita of close to $17,000, which is 65% of that of the USA (CBS 1998: 11–12). It also belongs to the club of stable parliamentarian democracies. The most enduring experience of Israel throughout its history, and the single most important determinant of its policies, is the state of conflict between it and the Palestinians, and the Arab states surrounding it (Kimmerling 1993; Ehrlich 1987; Yiftachel 1997; Ram 1993; Ben-Eliezer 1995).

The case of Jewish-Israeli nationhood is one of a hundred years of a nationalist movement and a national ideology, and fifty years of an independent nation-state. Jewish-Israeli nationalism emerged in the context of East European nationalism, it materialized in a West European colonization context in the Middle East, and it continued in the framework of a modern independent state. Let us now apply the conceptualization outlined in the former section to the case at hand. Broadly speaking, our thesis can be condensed as follows: in the past Israeli collective-identity emerged along the axis of 'modernization' – i.e., it moved in the direction leading from pre-national 'peoplehood,' of local and religious dispersed communities, to a secular territorial nation-state, with all the tensions and conflicts involved (colonialism, etatism, capitalism and the rest.) This stage reached its peak around the 1970s. Since then new dimensions had been added to the field old Israeli collective identities and it is impregnated with the tensions and conflicts

along the axis of globalization. The newly added dimensions are a post-national civic liberalism, and a neo-national ethno-religious fundamentalism. Since previous foci of identity and the groups that carry them have not disappeared, the field of collective identity in Israel is encased by four polar foci of identity: pre-national, pro-national, neo-national and post-national, as depicted in figure 15.3. below. Since the common label of contemporary Jewish nationalism is Zionism, in the labels below, 'Zionism' replaces the generic nationalism. In the transition from the generic to the case we also replace the *"Gesellschaft"* with 'secular' and the "Gemeinschaft" with 'religious' (being aware that the conceptual fit is not utterly perfect). In figure 15.3, the diagonal 2B – 1A represents the older, modernization axis of development and tension; while the diagonal 1B – 2A represents the current, glocal, axis of development and change.

Further aspects and graphic symbols depicted in the scheme are further explicated in the balance of the text.

Figure 15.3 depicts several other major aspects of the contemporary scene of collective identity in Israel. First are *class positions*. The scheme indicates variations in the collective-identity foci along class lines. Class positions are depicted by the fractured horizontal lines. 'High' above the lines and 'low' below it, represent the socio-economic divisions in Israeli society, divisions that, to a great extent, correlate with other variables, such as education, religiosity and ethnicity. This depiction, though obviously too schematic, may facilitate a further analysis of class variations of the identity categories. Thus, in the Zionist category (square 1A), there is both an upper-class version, politically articulated by the Labor Movement, and a lower class version, politically articulated by the *Likud* party. Likewise, there are in the non/anti-Zionist category (square 2B) an upper-class version of the Ashkenazi Orthodoxy, politically articulated by *Agudat Yisrael*, and a lower-class version of the Oriental traditionalists, politically articulated by *Shas*. The same goes for neo-Zionism (square 1B), where there is an upper-class version of the Ashkenazim, politically articulated by the National-Religious Party, and a lower-class version of Mizrachim, politically articulated by the extreme religious-nationalist right, such as the Meir Kahana *Kach* gang and ideologically similar groups. The post-Zionist category (square 2B) is unique in this regard, as here there is an upper-class civic version, politically articulated in part by the *Meretz* party as well as other civil society and human rights associations, but there is no lower class Jewish occupancy of the same slot. This explains the public and electoral weakness of this category (for further discussion see Ram 2000).
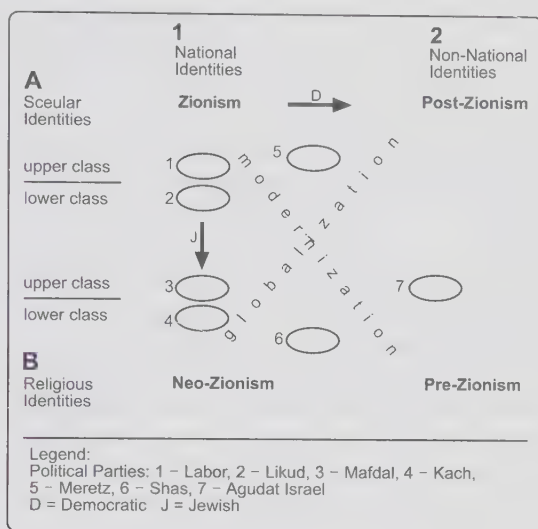
**Figure 15.3**    Competing Types of Collective Identity in Contemporary Israel

The second dimension of the scheme is *historical transformation and dynamics*. The scheme depicts the historical transformation and dynamics of the field of identity in Israel. This is expressed graphically by the two arrows: arrow 'D', which stands for 'democracy,' and arrow 'J', which stands for 'Judaism.' The common point of departure of the two is the concept of a 'Jewish and democratic state.' This is the self-declared identity of Israel, one that once was hegemonic, at least within Jewish-Israeli population. This concept of the possibility of a congruence between the democratic and the Jewish dimensions of the state, or between the 'liberal' and 'republican' levels of Israeli citizenship (Peled 1993) was typical to the rhetoric of nation-building and state-formation in Israel. It has always been a pretension, shrouded by only a thin layer of equal judicial rights on the individual level, while collective rights of the Arab population were grossly impaired. Since the 1970s, the combination of 'Jewish *and* democratic' is becoming more and more abstruse and difficult to maintain. This is because of intra-Jewish antagonism between the requirements of a liberal-type civil law and the *Halachic* Jewish code, as well as because of international, Jewish–Arab, encounters over fundamental constitutional rights. The growth of both sectors, religious Jews, on the one hand, and Arab citizens, on the other, has shuttered the ability of the national 'center' to define itself as universal while at the same time maintaining an unequal and even an oppressive social structure and governmental

policies. Obviously, the demands of these two groups, while both pressing the state, contradict each other fundamentally, as religious Jews constantly press for the thickening of the 'Jewish nature' of the state, while Arab citizens have a vested interest in the democratization of the state. Secular Jews are trapped in-between: some of the liberal-left strive towards a consolidation of a democratic state – the general direction described here as post-Zionism (though usually without crossing explicitly the red-line of national allegiance), while some of the liberal-national right propounds a Jewish state, while being concerned with the religious implications of that. Thus the two arrows mark the move away from the 'democratic *and* Jewish' discourse, and the growing gulf between the two wings, a 'D' arrow (democratic) pointing towards a civic equality (post-Zionist) focus of identity, and a 'J' arrow (Jewish) pointing towards a national-religious (neo-Zionist) focus of identity.

A *third* aspect which scheme no. 3 depicts relates to *agents of change*. Change is carried by a broad array of movements, organizations and individuals, and in different societal levels; we shall use here political parties only as familiar pointers of the larger trends in question. Two political parties are singled out in the scheme as standing mid-way between its left side column of "national identities", and the right side column of "non-national identities," *Meretz* and *Shas. Meretz,* however belongs with the upper row, of secular focus of identity, and *Shas* belongs with the lower row, of religious focus of identity. In addition, *Meretz* belongs with the "upper class" sub-category of its location and *Shas* belongs with the "lower class" sub-category of its location. The position of these two parties, each in the said different location, signifies their role as agents of change. *Meretz* is a civil rights party and yet it is a national (Zionist) party. It serves as an agent of change in the elite circles, which facilitate their transition – though only halfway so far – from the national to the civic focus of identity. *Shas* is a party of non-national religious orthodoxy, yet it is also a party of Israelis very much integrated with mundane life in all social spheres (unlike the Ashkenazi separatist ultra Orthodox sector.) Thus it serves as an agent of change for lower class masses in the transition from parochial traditionalism to the neo-national focus of identity.

All in all, the scheme depicts the underlying structure of field of identity in contemporary Israel. The field is broadly divided to four squares, and the diagonals represent the major axis of the political culture: the older "modernization" axis, and the current "postmodernization" axis. It is the transition from the former to the latter, and the struggle between the two poles of the latter to determine the new core of Israeli social structure and identity, which gives the sense of urgency and turbulence to the Israeli polity in the 1990s. Let

us now focus upon the two polar nodes of the present struggle: neo-Zionism and post-Zionism.

## Neo-Zionism and Post-Zionism

We shall focus now upon the two new poles of collective identity in the dominant group in Israel: neo-Zionism (1B in figure 15.3) and post-Zionism (2A in figure 15.3). The high tide of nationalist identity came in the wake of the establishment of the state in 1948. In the pre-state Jewish community national identity was primarily expressed through the "pioneering" "civil religion" of the Labor movement. In the era of the state the ethos of "pioneering" (*haluziyut*) was transmuted into that of "statism" (*mamlachtiut*). Throughout, there persisted also secondary versions of the national identity: the religious-national, the liberal-civic, and the rightist-nationalist (Liebman and Don Yehiye 1983). In the second half of the 1960s nationalist identification subsided somewhat, but a chain of unpredictable turns, which started with the 1967 War, mixed the cards again and again.

The occupation of the West Bank and other territories in that war re-animated the old creed (predominantly of the right-wing) of the Greater Israel; a new social stratum, hitherto marginalized, of religious-national *Yeshiva* graduates, mobilized since 1974 by the Block of Faithful (*Gush Emunim*) exploited the opportunity to appropriate and renew the early century's pioneering ethos (only now in a Judaic, rather than a 'Hebrew,' version.) In addition, this territorial expansion spurred unprecedented economic growth and with it the emergence of newly acquired riches; simultaneously, however, this development incited the outburst of a protest of the second generation of the impoverished *Mizrachi* population. Back in the 1970s the protest was stirred by a handful of Black Panthers, but by and large it channeled mass support for the Likud party. Here were implanted the seeds of the future fall of the Labor Movement and its ethos. The fall came ten years after the 1967 war and after another war, the 1973 October War. In that war Israel barely survived a massive Egyptian-Syrian surprise attack. The governing Labor party suffered widespread denunciation and in 1977, it lost in the elections, for the first time in decades (Ram 1998).

The rise to power of the right-wing Likud party in 1977 had accelerated the three processes mentioned above: the expansion and deepening of the Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, or the general strengthening of religious-national influence upon Israeli political culture; augmentation of the *Mizrachi* protest and elevation of the status of *Mizrachi* culture and its symbols; and the expansion of the range of activity of business corporations and of neo-Liberal market-oriented

stratum of entrepreneurs and managers. The year 1979 marked a big boost for the Likud government, and its leader Menachem Begin, following the first peace treaty signed between Israel and an Arab state – Egypt. In 1981, Likud won the elections again, in one of the most malicious ethnic electoral campaigns in Israel's history. Yet the 1980s proceeded in a different tune. In the first half of the 1980s Israel was soaked to its knees in a triple digit inflation generated by uncontrollable monetary liberalization, and in a life-costly entanglement in Lebanon (following its 1982 invasion there). This war bears an extraordinary importance in the development of Israeli political culture. It was the first deeply contested war in Israeli public opinion. All previous wars were widely perceived as a 'no choice,' defensive wars. This one was openly declared by the prime minister as a "war of choice," i.e., a war initiated by Israel to reach a political end (the destruction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, than seated in southern Lebanon). The opposition to it marks the genesis of an autonomous civil society in Israel, where state and society had usually been intimately meshed (Helman 1993; Barzilai 1996).

Following the 1984 elections, the entry of Labor into a 'national unity government' facilitated the curb of inflation and the withdrawal of the troops from Lebanon (though a 'security zone' and an Israeli sponsored local militia were left behind). In the socio-economic arena, the liberalization policy continued to intensify with every successive government. Since the mid-1980s, Israel has witnessed its first 'bourgeois revolution,' in which the collectivist institutions founded by the Labor movement crumbled like a house of cards, and the privatization ethos led by a now robust bourgeois class took total precedence. This process reached a symbolic peak in 1994, when the Labor movement lost its historical command over the *Histadrut*, the large Federation of Labor. In 1987, another deeply contested war began, this time a Palestinian popular resistance to the Israeli occupation. The breakout of the *Intifada* (Palestinian uprising) augmented the "Vietnam effect" of the Lebanese war by fracturing Israeli society. In 1991 the Israeli self-confidence was dealt another blow, when its civil rear was exposed to ballistic threat, and its dependency on the US clearly underscored. In 1992, Labor won the elections (by a meager majority), and in September 1993, the Oslo accord was signed between Israel and the PLO. A peace treaty with Jordan was signed later, and negotiations with Syria were conducted.

In November 1995, the prime minister of Israel, Yitzchak Rabin, was assassinated. His murderer, a student at Bar Ilan, a religious-nationalist University, was a neo-Zionist zealot. This event consummated two decades of growing malevolence between the two major identity blocks that had emerged in Israel since the 1970s.

Though almost the entire population of Jewish descent in Israel confesses allegiance to Zionism, the boundaries of Zionist discourse have been significantly transgressed between the 1970s and the 1990s. They were transgressed from both the right and left. 'Neo-Zionism' and 'post-Zionism' are the labels, respectively, of the right wing and left-wing transgressions of classical Zionism. Arguably, while neither one is a majoritarian trend, both redefine the contours of Israeli collective identity in a very significant way.

*Neo-Zionism* emerged in the 1970s. Its constituency consists largely of the Jewish settlers in the territories and their many supporters in the so-called 'national camp' throughout the country. It is represented by a variety of extreme right-wing parties, including core parts of the national-religious party (Mafdal) and the Likud party (Sprinzak 1991; Peri 1989). This trend regards the 'Biblical Land of Israel' (identified with all areas under Israeli military control) as more fundamental to Israeli identity then the state of Israel (a smaller territory identified with the 1948 'green-line' borders). The motherland is conceived as a superior end, the state as an instrument for its control. The culture of neo-Zionism is an admixture of Zionist and Jewish ingredients, where instead of the discord between the two, which characterized classical Zionism, secular nationalism is conceived as a stage in an immanent religious revival (Ravitsky 1996). The political allegiance of neo-Zionism is to an ostensible Jewish people,' conceived as a unique spiritual-ethnic community, rather than to Israeli nationality, in its down-to-earth senses of a political community defined by common citizenship. Legal (and practical) affiliation in the collectivity is considered secondary to the ostensible ascriptive national brotherhood. Neo-Zionism is thus an exclusionary, nationalist and even racist and anti-democratic political-cultural trend, striving to heighten the fence encasing Israeli identity. It is fed by, and in turn feeds, a high level of regional conflict and a low level of global integration (except for global Jewish integration.)

In the 1990s, neo-Zionism has passed through a major change. Since its inception, neo-Zionism has revolved around three pillars: the Land of Israel, the People of Israel and the Torah of Israel. Within the "original" cast of the religious-nationalist neo-Zionist camp (Mafdal, Gush Emunim etc.) the first pillar became paramount, as was manifested in its major project – the Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. Due to political setbacks to this camp, associated with the Intifada and with the Oslo Accords (as well as with its self-destructive leadership in the figure of Netanyahu) during the 1990s the neo-Zionist camp went through a crisis and its power diminished significantly. A major part of the mass support of neo-Zionism has passed from the Mafdal and the Likud to the new party Shas. Here the three pillars of neo-Zionism

are re-arranged: the Land of Israel loses its prominence, and now the Torah of Israel becomes the first pillar with the People of Israel following it. This means that during the 1990s, neo-Zionism became somewhat less militant in terms of territorial identity, but, on the other hand, it became even more militant in terms of ethno-religious identity. Once neo-Zionism is identified with the Torah and the People, rather then with territorial acquisition, it can mobilize the up-to-now non- or anti-Zionist Orthodox Jewry. And so Shas serves as a bridge across which a movement takes place from the non/anti Zionist Orthodox identity (square 2B) to the neo-Zionist identity (square 1B).

*Post-Zionism* started to emerge in the 1980s. Its constituency is composed mainly of the extensive "new" middle classes, typically concentrated in the country's coastal area, especially in the city of Tel Aviv and its vicinities (where a quarter of the population resides). This trend grants more esteem to individual rights than to collective glory. In blunt contrast to neo-Zionism, it considers the collectivity as a tool for the welfare of the individual. In its historical horizon, the present ('quality of life') is much more important than the past ('History'), and the near future (the children) is more meaningful than the remote past (ancestors). One political avant-garde of it is the *Yesh-Gvul* (literally: "there is a border/limit") movement, which surfaced in response to the 1982 war. It consists of reserve soldiers and officers who refuse to serve in the occupation forces in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, arguing that the role of the military is defense, not repression. Though the movement was rather small, the principles of civil disobedience it represents have gained recognition by a larger sector of the population, which is committed to civil rights, rather than to ethnic nationalism (Ram 1998; Pappe 1997). Post-Zionism is, then, a trend of libertarianism and openness, which strives to lower the boundaries of Israeli identity, and to include in it all relevant 'others.' It is fed by, and in turn it feeds, a lower level of regional conflict and a higher level of global integration of Israel. Conflict mobilizes nationalistic feelings, and thus disables it; global integration draws people to cosmopolitan consumerism, and thus is suitable to it.

During the 1990s, post-Zionism too has been transformed. Where it began as an undistinguishable trend of a civil society trying to push back the expansion of the collectivist state, in the 1990s it in fact evolved into two distinct sub-trends, which can be labeled radical post-Zionism and liberal post-Zionism. Radical post-Zionism expresses the emerging agendas of 'minority' groups, formerly oppressed or marginalized within the nation-state project (Palestinians, Mizrachim, homosexuals and lesbians, and more). Liberal post-Zionism expresses the emerging domination of the business corporations of the individualist-consumerist lifestyle they

promote for the middle classes. None of these post-Zionist sub-trends accepts the rules of the game of the old nation-state identity, though each transgresses it from a different orientation.

It should be emphasized that the traits of both neo-Zionism and post-Zionism are not entirely foreign to 'classical' Zionism. In fact, these are two diametrical accentuations of Zionist traits. Their novelty consists precisely in their one-sided accentuation. Neo-Zionism accentuates the messianic and particularistic dimensions of Zionism, while post-Zionism accentuates the normalizing and universalistic dimensions of it. In their opposing ways both trends indicate the transition towards a post-nationalist, Israeli collective identity. The nationalist stage was an imperative of the era of territorial colonization, nation-building and state formation. Tens of years later, a variety of internal and external pressures have worn nationalism and enhanced the emergence of post-national alternatives. Neo-Zionism and post-Zionism are labels for these dawning alternatives. Neo-Zionism elevates to an exclusive (and exclusionary) status the ethnic dimension of Israeli nationalism; post-Zionism elevates to an exclusive (and in this case inclusive) status the civic dimension of Israeli statehood.


## Conclusion

As it crosses the threshold of the 21st century, Israel is undergoing a radical change. Its sources are in the 19th-century East-European Jewish nationalist movement, which turned (part of) a 'people' of dispersed traditional communities into a modern nation-state. The nation-state has begun as a settler-colonial society in a Middle-Eastern setting, under the shelter of a British mandate government. In the war of 1948, the Jewish community turned itself into a fully-fledged nation-state. Its leading ethos has been the melting pot of an in-gathering of Jewish exiles. It has displaced a large number of Palestinians, turning most of them into refugees beyond its borders, and turning those remaining within its borders into a depressed minority. Since the 1970s, this original cast is being challenged. Both intra-Jewish, and inter-Jewish-Arab developments, has made the pretensions of a 'democratic *and* Jewish' state more and more difficult to sustain. Many Jews are less national, and rapidly give up a pioneering collectivism in turn for possessive individualism; Arabs have become a minority too large to be ignored or wished away; class and ethnic conflicts have dismantled the homogenous vision of one nation united; Orthodox Jews demand either separate institutions or the 'Judaization' of the public sphere; and religious-national Jews, scared by the erosion of the national ethos, revive it in a messianic guise.

While the "nation" loses its grip on collective imagination, and while a return to a pre-national collective existence is not a viable option, two alternative foci of identity crystallize as the major optional directions for future development: a post-Zionist, global-oriented trend, and a neo-Zionist, local-oriented trend. The former is geared towards the liberal concept of a society of individuals, or, in the multi-cultural version, a society of communities. The latter, conversely, is oriented towards the ethno-national concept of a society as an integral whole, with its particular culture and historical destiny.

Each of these major foci of identity has its own vision of 'Israel,' and its own formula of state-society relationships: Zionism intends Israel to be a state of Jews, while it imagines it as both 'Jewish *and* democratic;' Pre-Zionism does not recognize the secular state of Israel, but consents to it in practical terms; Neo-Zionism redefines Israel as a Jewish state (to be distinguished from a 'state of the Jews'); and, finally, post-Zionism conceives of Israel as a state of its citizens, in which various communities can subsist without claim for a wholesale hegemony.

Israel of the 21st century is bound to be a very different society from the nation-state it was envisioned as during the second half of the 20th century. Neo-Zionism and post-Zionism are struggling to shape its new form.

## Notes

1   Ashkenazim are Jews of Western origins, mostly European, and Mizrachim are Jews of Eastern origins, mostly from North African and Middle-Eastern societies.
2   This count does not include the Palestinian Arabs under Israeli military rule in the areas Israel occupied in the 1967 war, who do not enjoy the status of citizenship.

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# *Index*

Issues of identity and citizenship have become increasingly complex. Traditional boundaries linking place of residence with a single national identity have broken down. Boundaries have become permeable, with greater movement of people, goods and ideas. Intra-state, local and regional identities have come to the fore in tandem with global identities which traverse state boundaries. The result is greater social and cultural diversity within states as notions of multiculturalism and national identity take on new meanings.

Globalization and increased cultural heterogeneity have had a major impact on states whose identity has been defined in terms of a single, often socially constructed, allegiance to the state and a single hegemonic ideology. Nowhere are changing notions of identity more prevalent than in Israel, a country whose dominant (Western-Jewish) society has been subject to understanding their past and present in terms of a single ideology of state formation – Zionism. Recently this single form of identity has become fractured and weakened, as Israeli society has become increasingly heterogeneous while facing repeated Palestinian anti-colonial rebellions. This circumstance has increased awareness of the dilemma posed by a single notion of state identity for its marginalized groups.

This book on Citizenship and Identity in Contemporary Israel challenges some of the traditional analytical paradigms prevalent in Israeli social science for the past fifty years. Although the state continues to define itself in terms of a homogeneous political and cultural entity, as the voices and narratives of marginalized (especially Palestinian, Eastern-Jewish and women) groups come to the fore, agencies of state socialization are no longer able to impose an unchallenged state identity or hegemony. The deconstruction of a state-sponsored social identity, whose aim is social cohesion, is here investigated by critical scholars who develop an alternative understanding of this highly dynamic society.

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