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## Conclusion: The Occupied Territories as a Cornerstone in the Reconstruction of Israeli Society

Izhak Schnell and Daniel Bar-Tal

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a dispute between two national movements that lay claims to the same territory. It has been ongoing for over 100 years and has been going through different phases throughout the years. In this respect, the Six Day War signified the beginning of the new stage in managing the conflict, in which the occupied-occupier relations have come to play a formative role in the Israeli reality and have become a primary factor in constructing Israeli society (Ram, 1993). From 1967 to 1977, until the rise of the Likud party to power, one could still speak of the occupation as a temporary phenomenon.

Following the change of government, however, the nature of the occupation altered from the establishment of a limited number of military-backed settlements to a massive expropriation of lands, extended Jewish settlement even in the midst of Palestinian-populated areas, repression of the Palestinian population, and its extensive military control. This process resulted not only in the appropriation of the occupied territory but also in the construction of a new national identity. The chapters in this book have revealed how the initial control of the territories has gradually developed into an established norm of Palestinian domination by Jews in Israel, which, in turn, led to dramatic changes in the entire Israel society and the state.

The question of determining the borders of the State of Israel has surfaced from time to time, but no consensus has been achieved. Nevertheless, the discourse about the territories has touched not only upon the borders and the limits of Israeli control of the territories and the Palestinian residing in them, but also upon fundamental questions of identity in Israeli society and the structure of its regime, which have changed beyond recognition during the years of the occupation. This is a political discourse with both ideological and practical aspects. It expresses a variety of social forces, not all of which act openly. The chapters in this book have shed light on some of these forces that are activated in the prolonged situation of occupation, and on some that are even acting to entrench it. In identifying these forces, the different chapters

have considered the effect of the prolonged control of the territories on Israeli society, beginning with the spheres of law and politics, through the economy, psychology, media communications and linguistics, and up to the arts and morality.

To a large extent, most of the writers present the Israeli case as a particular one, and we have avoided any attempt to place it in the context of a priori theoretical generalizations such as those suggested by postcolonial theory. We agree with Memmi's (1985) introduction to his Hebrew translation of his book on relations between colonizers and colonized: the Israeli case differs significantly from colonial occupations. Although the scope of the discussion here is too narrow to enter this debate, we do believe that occupation and succession of territories are common to human history, and that all occupations share some basic commonalities that justify comparison to colonial occupations, as several of the chapters suggest.

The historian David Day (2008) argues that occupation and succession of civilizations by other civilizations is one of the most common practices in human history from antiquity to modern time. He states that some basic principles can be found in all of these cases. First, conquerors need to invent an ideological system to legitimize territorial claims and disseminate these beliefs in society at large to mobilize it into action. In addition, they have to gain control over the claimed territories. Then conquerors must use the lands and the resources effectively to empower their own economy. Settlement of the occupied territories is the main means for colonizing these territories. These steps cannot take place without suppressing the occupied society, either by expelling, marginalizing, or assimilating its members. Once the occupation has been achieved, the occupier has to invent a moral justification for the occupation.

The first example that comes to mind is the Irish one, which became the basic model for the British colonial occupation of its empire (Ferguson, 2002, pp. 46–49). Ferguson describes how Britain, since the mid-sixteenth century, defined Catholic Ireland as the vulnerable back door of England in its long struggle with Spain for the domination of Europe to justify the occupation of Ireland. The British initiated the practice of filling the desolated lands of Ireland with an English Protestant population that would bring progress and prosperity to the local inhabitants. They founded Protestant settlements in the occupied territories of Ireland, confiscating Irish lands for these settlements and hoping to gain the support of the occupied Irish, to whom they promised to bring prosperity. However, growing Irish revolts forced the British to increase their suppression of the occupied population, leading to a vicious circle of violence and aggression.

In the same line, one of the last colonial regimes, the one in Algeria, may be of interest, especially in terms of the vicious circle of aggression and suppression that characterized the occupation of Algeria after World War II, when colonial occupations lost international legitimacy and most national movements succeeded in gaining independence from colonial control (Roberts, 1990). Scholars like Memmi (1990) and Gallagner (2002), as well as many others, have extensively analyzed the dynamic of occupation and resistance that tragically lead to an unavoidable vicious circle of suppression and aggression until the interests of the settlers and the mother land diverge. Aron (in Mack, 2002) compared two types of colonial regimes: those that failed to impose their rule over the occupied and those that refused to integrate them into the occupying society. Under these conditions, the political, economic, and social costs of the occupation increased to a level that risked (undermining)? social stability. Mack (2002) asked whether the Israeli leadership has the vision and the power to draw the same conclusions that Charles De Gaulle did.

Our evidence shows that the time to answer this question has arrived. In this volume, Hever shows how the economic price of the occupation increased from a negligible level to one that puts a heavy burden on the Israeli economy. Several chapters, but mainly the one by Ezrahi, analyze the deteriorating quality of Israeli democracy in response to the occupation. Several chapters stress the impacts of the occupation on strengthening fragmenting forces in Israeli society. Lastly, Pedatzur's comparison with Algeria considers the increasing involvement of the French army in politics as well as moral corruption of the military that included the justification of torture and, through it, the corruption of the French courts (Gallagher, 2002; Menard, 1964; Sutton & Lawless, 1978). Horne states that these impacts on French society continued for several decades after the end of the occupation.

Most of the Israeli Prime Ministers apparently realized, during the last decade, the need to end the occupation, but they failed to bring the political system to act. The strongest example is the hawkish Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who was quoted as justifying the change in his political opinion of the occupation with the statement: "What I see from here [my position as Prime Minister] I could not see from there [before I was the Prime Minister]."

One lesson that can be learned from the post-World War II examples of occupations is that the delegitimization of occupation by the international community, though sweeping, occurs only when the occupying country loses control over the occupied society. This is the case of Israel. While the international community never legitimized the occupation, including that of Jerusalem, international pressure on Israel started only after the Palestinian uprisings, which led to increasing bloodshed. At the same time, the international

community does not put pressure on China or Turkey to end their occupations of Tibet and Cyprus.

Beyond the aforementioned similarities, the chapters in this book highlight many of the unique aspects of the Israeli occupation. However, our main concern is the impacts of the occupation on Israeli society itself. We believe that an occupation is part of the collective life of the occupying society, which creates a Gordian knot with the occupied society that can be eliminated only when the occupation ends. This knot is reflected in the reciprocal strong influences that both societies have on each other during the occupation. The occupying society affects every domain of life of the occupied society, but at the same time, the occupied society and the occupation itself affect the occupiers. These effects are destructive for both societies; thus, the occupation harms both societies in a prolonged process.

The strength and the extent of these reciprocal effects depend on a number of factors. Among the most salient ones are the physical distance between the occupied and occupying states; the extent to which the justifying ideology of the occupation assign formative power to the territories in constituting collective identities; the means used to oppress the occupied society and the determination of the occupied to resist; the political culture of the occupier; and the position of the international community—pressure and sensitivity. Israel's difficulties in ending its occupation stem, first of all, from the historic ties of the people of Israel to the territories of the biblical land as the cradle of Israeli national and religious identity. The proximity of the occupied territories to the State of Israel—especially along the narrow boundaries with the West Bank, which poses a high risk to Israel security—strengthens the resistance of Israeli society to any territorial concession. In the situation of conflict with the Arab world, for many Israelis, the control of the occupied territories is essential for the state's survival. Nevertheless, Israel maintains its democratic system and an active civil society that leaves room for open public debate over the occupation, including peace and human rights movements that act to mobilize the society to end the occupation and to restrain violence.

Our attempt to generalize the academic debate presented in this volume focused on three main impacts of the occupation on Israeli society. These issues are raised, either directly or indirectly, in the various chapters:

1. The first issue is the fundamental question of the essence of Israeli society. Specifically, it concerns the identity and structure of the regime in Israel that evolved as a consequence of the occupation of the territories, the attitudes and treatment of the Palestinian inhabitants, and the establishment of Jewish settlements in these territories. It is our contention

that the Israeli model of prolonged occupation has been characterized especially by a policy of creeping annexation, that is, a long-term process of Judaization, with the purpose of changing the ethnic character of the occupied territories. In fact, we suggest that during this process, the territories have become a central component in the reconstruction of Jewish identity and of the Israeli regime.

2. The second issue relates to the particular domains in the State of Israel and Israeli society that have been affected by the occupation. We realize that it is difficult to uncover the entire spectrum of effects and to prove beyond doubt the extent to which the occupation has played an exclusive or central role in affecting the different social processes in Israeli society. Nonetheless, in this book, we have attempted to identify a number of general processes that have been influenced by the reality of the prolonged occupation.
3. The third issue is the establishment of mechanisms that manage and contribute to the policy of creeping annexation. The chapters in this book have revealed at least three complementary mechanisms: the consolidation of a specific worldview among the leaders of the elite sector of society following the Six Day War; an institutionalized and complex governmental structure that hinders any change of direction or policy aimed at ending the occupation; and bureaucratic mechanisms that have vested interests in continuing the creeping annexation. These mechanisms maintain creeping annexation through bureaucratic decisions accepted by various levels of authority, including the government itself, regardless of the context in which the annexation was created.

We begin the analysis with the first issue.

## IDENTITY AND REGIME

### *Reconstruction of the Jewish-Israeli Identity*

The contention that identity and territory are interwoven is the basis of nationalist ideology (Anderson, 1991). In the process of constructing their identity, people fashion the aesthetic space in a way that converts it into a territory representing their national identity; at the same time, this identity is transmitted to the imagined community through the power of its concrete material presence (David & Bar-Tal, 2009; Redfield, 2003; Relp, 1976). The territories, in possessing a mythic significance as the cradle of Jewish culture and a future promise to the Jewish people, became an incubator of "Jewish" identity that replaced the "Hebrew" identity that traditional Zionism had attempted to

establish. From the very beginning of the state, Israeli identity was characterized by a tension between an ethnic nationalism that sought to create a homogeneous nationalist society and a democratic society that confers equal rights on all of its citizens, as set out in the Declaration of Independence. The Jewish component is mentioned in the Declaration in connection with "freedom, justice and peace according to the vision of the Prophets of Israel," and the paragraph goes on to stress the equal rights of all of its citizens regardless of religion, sex, or nationality. Thus, the Declaration, like Ben-Gurion's legacy, emphasizes the prophetic legacy of universal morality that the Jewish people had bestowed upon Western culture, and not the particularistic aspects of Judaism found in the religious commandments and rituals. The Declaration begins with reference to the link with the land, but this is phrased in a general way, without demanding ownership of the land within any specific borders. The hegemonic elite of the Labor movement gave practical expression to these principles in the socialist-democratic vision that it sought to apply to Israeli society. According to this view, the territory, rebuilt and organized as part of the daily lives of its citizens, was supposed to engender the New Human, with a renewed Hebrew culture. This was a culture that sought to disconnect itself from the particularistic Judaism of the commandments and rituals that had consolidated in the Diaspora. From the rebuilt territory, it aspired to engender the New Jew—the *tsabar*—whose secular Hebrew culture would be expressed in Israeli art and literature and celebration of the Israeli festivals as they were practiced in the collective Jewish labor settlements (Almog, 1990). Even though not all sectors of Israeli society were partners to this vision, and not always was it translated into practice, this vision was nonetheless accepted as a social consensus through the power of the hegemonic Labor movement. In reality, Israeli society produced a stratified citizenship that formally conferred basic rights upon all of its citizens, but with privileged rights to Jews, and among Jews mainly to the veteran Ashkenazi population (Shafir & Peled, 2002).

An upheaval in reestablishing the Jewish component in the Israeli identity could already be seen in the 1960s among members of the Bnei Akiva youth movement, who despised the marginal and servile stance of the national-religious Zionist leaders in confronting the leaders of the Labor movement. However, this trend remained on the fringes until the occupation of the biblical Land of Israel in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 that symbolized the weakening of the Labor movement's hegemony (Peleg, 1997). Gush Emunim, with its messianic vision, led the camp that swept along with it a broader social and political spectrum, including all the religious-Zionist sectors and the ultra-Orthodox public, the Greater Israel group—which established activism in the Labor movement—and the secular right wing (Schnell, 2009). The

occupation of territories belonging to the biblical Land of Israel, with their mythic significance, provided the young religious Zionists with the opportunity to free themselves from what they saw as the flawed reality of a Jewish society controlled by the secular hegemony. Instead, they strived to establish an Israeli society that included a national renewal focused on the messianic premises announced by Rabbi Abraham Itzhak Hacohen Kook—that of uniting the Land of Israel, the Torah of Israel, with the people of Israel (Don-Yehiya, 1987; Newman, 1985; Rubinstein, 1984).

The Neo-Zionist vision was accompanied by the adoption of a pantheistic worldview that sanctified the land through the power of the divine presence in the very nature of the land. According to this vision, nourished by the teachings of the Ramban and differing from the teachings of the Rambam (according to which the sacred is not a given for the land itself), every single clod of earth of the land enjoys sanctity. Thus, it is a *mitzva* (holy commandment) for every Jew to settle every clod of earth in the Promised Land, and it is forbidden to relinquish control of any territory within it (Naor, 2001; Sheleg, 2000). The territory is thus perceived as filled with sacred places, which become the focus of Jewish ritual in which the "priestly" Jewish commandments and rituals are practiced, with the intention of fulfilling the messianic promise. This alternative vision emphasizes the particularistic foundations of the Jewish identity, focused upon the holy commandment to return to the land, and a willingness at the same time to enter into conflict with broad sectors of Israel society and the international community over the issue of settlement.

The territories thereby became not only an objective for territorial expansion under Israeli control, but also the cradle of a new settlement attempt to establish the new Jewish identity under the guidance of the national-religious sector, based on a particularistic Jewish identity (Don-Yehiya, 1987; Gurevitch, 2007). Those with this objective were willing to restrict the rights of the Palestinian residents who threatened the creation of a homogeneous Jewish territory in a space entirely under Jewish control. This was actually a return to the priestly Judaism established in the Diaspora, along with recognition of the importance of political and military power in achieving nationalist-religious goals. This belligerent awareness had developed at the very beginning of Zionism (Shapira, 1992), and it became less restrained with the progressive dehumanization of the Palestinians and the presentation of the Jewish people in Israel as victims throughout the years of struggle between the Jewish and Palestinian national movements (Bar-Tal, 1998, 2007). The effects of these processes were primarily expressed in expansion of the territories under control of the state, but also in two additional ways: the legacy of the territories was converted into the construction of a Jewish identity that differed from that of

early Zionism; and the uncompromising territorial conflict intensified with both the Palestinians who lived inside the state and those in the territories, all in the name of particularistic national-religious values.

The 1980s were characterized by an erosion of the traditional Zionist discourse and competition between the post-Zionist and neo-Zionist discourses, as described previously. While the post-Zionist discourse consolidated around "Shenkin Street" in the inner zone of Tel Aviv as a focus of mingling in a Soho-type place for many young secular Jews, the neo-Zionist discourse consolidated around the settlement project in the territories. The settler became a symbol of Israeli rootedness that reawakened the youthful power of the *palmachnik* (the early pioneering fighter); he who had tired of the struggle in the "wilderness," the sandals-and-khaki-shorts-wearing youth, forelock blowing in the wind, but this time also wearing a skullcap and ritual fringed garment. For the settler—the new pioneer—the term "Shenkin-ite" became a derogatory concept, referring to those who betrayed the particularistic Jewish heritage for the sake of integrating into the globalized world and who stressed values of individualism, universality, creativity, and self-expression (Newman, 2001; Schnell, 2001). Intensification of the armed struggle and the sense of existential threat in the third millennium led to the victory of the neo-Zionist identity, which acquired a consensus among the majority of the Israeli public.

The particularistic Jewish identity—which sees the Jewish nation as having the sole right to the promised land, the very heart of which lies in Judea and Samaria—along with the intensified Palestinian resistance over the last two decades began to produce a pragmatic decision to maintain continued control of the territories. This decision was strengthened by the prediction that the Palestinians would in the very near future constitute a majority in the territory. This demographic forecast was considered an existential threat to Israel by Bistrov and Sofer (2007), who concluded that Israel needs to entrench behind closed borders in restricted areas in which the Jewish majority could remain secure for the long term. There is reason to believe that the perception of a demographic existential threat to Israel's future was a factor affecting the increasing demonization of the Palestinians, but was also a factor that led to compromising political decisions such as establishing the separation wall and withdrawing unilaterally from the Gaza Strip, as well as the planning for further withdrawal from additional territories in the West Bank (Kartin & Schnell 2008). In addition, the sense of an existential threat to a Jewish presence in the Land of Israel nourished the myth of "the people that shall dwell alone," persecuted by a world hostile to Judaism, and of the exclusive nature of the Jewish identity, as well as a lack of consideration for the rights of any social or

political group that might threaten the vision of a Greater Israel (Bar-Tal, 2007; Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992).

This perception has far-reaching moral ramifications. Dascal, in his chapter in this book, has revealed the shift in Israeli society from an identity emphasizing universal values, based on the legacy of the prophets and of Jewish principles such as "Love thy neighbor as thyself" and "Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you"—declarations that had become a cornerstone in the modern philosophy of universal morality—to an identity reflecting a relative and extremist ethnocentric morality. Neo-Zionism barricades itself behind moral-historical and religious justifications of the exclusive right to the land while ignoring similar claims by the Palestinians. Consequently, the standpoints have become fixed and the claims of the other side have become delegitimized. It is only a short step from there to dehumanization of the Palestinians and pseudorationalization of the injuries inflicted on them (Halperin, Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Rosler, & Raviv, 2010). Statements made by nationalist leaders, mainly among former high-ranking military officers, such as "I don't care about what's good for the Palestinians but only what's good for the Israeli people," are the result of establishing a particularistic identity—which refuses to recognize the legitimacy of some of the claims of the other side and leads to the disregard of universal general moral values.

### *Reconstruction of the Regime*

Regarding the structure of the regime, it appears that Israel has avoided an unequivocal decision concerning the legal and political status of the territories. On the one hand, officially with the exception of Jerusalem, the State of Israel has avoided annexing the territories to Israel proper. On the other hand, in many ways the state has acted as if they are Israeli territories. Beyond this, Israel has declared that, in its approach to the Palestinians, it accepts the international protocols pertaining to occupied territories. The status of occupied territory was confirmed in a series of decisions by the High Court, as revealed in the chapter by Krezmer. The reservations expressed by Justice Meir Shamgar, in his ruling in the 1970s, firmly establish this, noting that Israel is a signatory to the Fourth Geneva Convention, which determines the permitted patterns of activity in occupied territories, and thus also with regard to the Palestinian population. According to Gold and Gerstenfeld (2002), even the attempts by right-wing groups to define the territories as under dispute are based on the assumption that Israel is obligated to treat the Palestinians as an occupied population. This definition, however, has failed to obtain international recognition.

At the same time, the state has established various practices that define the territories as a product of Jewish-Zionist nationalism and as an integral part of Israeli territory. First and foremost has been the policy of taking control of over half of the lands of the West Bank and transferring them to the authority of the intensive Jewish settlement process, contradicting the state's obligation to treat the territories and their population as occupied (Sivel, 2009). In addition, the territories have been defined in public discourse and consciousness as an integral part of the Jewish national state. In order to understand these practices, it is important to know that their purpose was to provide the time needed to change the status of the territory to one of active annexation. After that happened, the political elite hoped that the legitimacy of Israeli control would become recognized by the international community. This hope was expressed in 2009 by Robbie Sivel (2009), a legal counsellor of the Foreign Ministry. He claimed that the international conventions do not ignore existing realities in the field, including occupied territories, and it was reasonable to assume that Israel would not be required, in the name of these conventions, to evacuate hundreds of thousands of settlers in order to turn back the clock.

An analysis of this process reveals the separation in thinking between two entities: the territories that have been accepted as a new part of Israel for development and settlement, and the Palestinian residents of these territories, who have not been recognized in the public discourse in Israel but instead have been defined by the regime as being occupied. In the process of settling the occupied territories, the Jewish settlers have preserved their civil status as Israelis, while the Palestinians in these territories have been deprived of civil rights and subjected to the occupation regime. The duality of this situation—referring, on the one hand, to the territories as a “wilderness” awaiting settlement, and to the Palestinian people as subject to a temporary occupation, and on the other hand, referring to the settlers in the territories as full citizens of the state and to the Palestinians as lacking citizenship—has created a unique political regime for the State of Israel, a regime that is difficult to define as democratic but is also difficult to define as not undemocratic, as Azulai and Ophir (2008) effectively characterize it. Defining the regime as undemocratic derives from the denial of civil rights to the Palestinians in the territories; but such a definition is simplistic and ignores the reality in many democratic societies. Even modern democratic countries have a “backyard” containing many large groups who have no civil rights and who are not allowed to run their own lives. A current example of this situation is that of the millions of migrant workers found in many democratic countries (Azoulai & Ophir, 2008). The existence of millions of individuals with no rights in the backyards of such countries as the United

States, Switzerland, and the Netherlands does not prevent us from referring to these countries as democratic. However, it is the indigenous status of the Palestinian population deprived of rights, in contrast to the migrant populations in the other countries, and the ideology that justifies this practice, that differentiates between Israel and those other countries.

An analysis of the regime is important. The nature of a regime is expressed by more than the structure of the various authorities, their interrelations, the nature of their activities, and their electoral procedures or decision-making processes. First and foremost, the nature of a regime is expressed in the relationship between the majority and minority groups, and in general also in the extent to which democratic values are internalized in the political culture of the country and by its various authorities. In evaluating the democratic status of Israel up to 1967, there is broad agreement that it was far from a liberal democracy. Severe restrictions were imposed on the Arab minority, who were citizens of the State of Israel, and on freedom of expression, as part of the political culture of the state, in addition to other phenomena that impacted democracy and were common in the first two decades of Israel's existence (Hoffnung, 1991; Smoocha 2000). Nonetheless, prior to the 1967 war, there was a trend toward reinforcing democratic values and equality among all sectors of the Israeli population. In the second half of the 1960s, under Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, processes of democratization were underway in Israeli society. The most prominent step in this direction was the ending of military rule over Israeli-Arab citizens. In addition, the right-wing Herut and Communist Maki parties were legitimized and included within the political system. This was achieved both by symbolic steps, such as the transfer to Israel of Ze'ev Jabotinsky's bones, and also by more concrete means such as Herut's joining the national unity government on the eve of the Six Day War, as well as the halt of security surveillance of Mapam and Maki Marxist members of the Knesset.

With these changes, occupation of the territories in 1967 created a new reality that left its stamp on the nature of the Israeli regime. In the early years after 1967 it had been possible to consider the occupation as a temporary reality that responded to the requirements of the Fourth Geneva Convention; forty-three years later this is no longer valid. The increasing Palestinian resistance against the occupation has stirred the international community to act firmly to end it and establish a Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel, according to the United Nations decisions taken in 1947. As a consequence, the hope for a post facto recognition by the international community of the creeping annexation of the territories has been fading. By contrast, the isolation of the State of Israel from the international community has been intensifying.



In evaluating the nature of the Israeli regime, one should take into account not only the prolonged occupation, with its slowly eroding effect on the areas beyond the Green Line and the increasing suppression of Palestinian resistance, but first and foremost the expanding settlement of Jews in the occupied territories. The settler Jewish population has increased in number, as has the political influence of their supporters on decisions regarding the nature of the state and their ideological influence on the social discourse concerning the identity of Israeli society. It is no longer possible to evaluate the regime in Israel by focusing on the borders of the Green Line; rather, it is now necessary to consider the entire territory controlled by Israel as a single entity. Furthermore, the relationships between Palestinians and Jews in this territory are shaped in a synergetic process in which one entity can be understood only with reference to the conflict in which it is engaged with the other entity (Portugali, 1996; Ram, 1993). The Israeli regime is primarily characterized by the differential relationship between the various governmental authorities, institutions, and security organizations, on the one hand, and the different populations that also enjoy different rights, on the other hand. It is very clear that within this regime the Jews enjoy greater rights, derived from their greater accessibility to power, prestige, and resources. To preserve these greater rights, they pass laws that discriminate against the Arab citizens within the Green Line, such as the law that refuses unification of non-Israeli Arabs with Israeli Arabs. Another form of discrimination consists of practices such as denying non-Jews access to certain resources and opportunities, such as preventing them from holding public service positions. The political process of exclusion, of denying access to economic resources and certain residential areas, has also become established in the attitudes and behaviors of broad sectors of the Israeli Jewish public. Consequently, five different populations have crystallized in the Israeli regime: (1) Jewish settlers who live in the occupied territories, with greater rights than Jews living within the Green Line; (2) Jews living within the Green Line with full civil rights; (3) Arab citizens of Israel with full civil rights but institutionalized discrimination, surveillance, and exclusion; (4) East-Jerusalem Arabs with restricted civil rights Being defined residence instead of citizens of the state of Israel; and (5) Palestinians in the occupied territories with no civil rights, under full surveillance and control, and legally discriminated against in comparison with the Jews living in those same territories who are defined full citizens of the state of Israel. This regime, characterized especially by different levels of rights conferred upon different populations, has relied on different rationales for rights—from rescinding the rights of Palestinians in the territories, under what was presented as a temporary occupation, through rights conferred according to the liberal rationale on

all citizens; preferential rights to specific communities according to the republican rationale; and privileged rights to the settlers along with restricted rights to Arab-Israeli citizens—all in the name of nationalist values (Azulai & Ophir, 2008; Benvenisti, 1988; Shafir & Peled, 2002).

Consequently, we propose characterizing the political reality created in Israel in the area between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea as a process of creeping annexation, effected by means of "ethnization" or "Judaization" the territories. The closest example of such a regime would seem to be the occupation of Tibet by China, although the Tibetan local population has received full civil rights. For Israel, annexation is a gradual process that seeks to marginalize the Palestinian population in the territories under a regime that denies them their rights while controlling their land under a one-sided legal system and, in many cases, even violating Israeli law. The regime subsidizes and privileges Jews in order to encourage large Jewish populations to migrate to the territories, while at the same time preserving the internationally defined status of occupied territory and declaring its readiness for peace and compromise, in order to attain international legitimacy for this creeping annexation. More precisely, this is a process of reinforcing the Jewish nature of the territories while employing means of control, exclusion, surveillance, separation, and discrimination against the Palestinian population. The process takes place in a territorial, political, economic, social, religious, and cultural space, differentiating between democratic procedures, including the mechanisms of control and discrimination between different populations inhabiting the same space. An imbalance is thus created between the Jewish and democratic characteristics that are supposed to define the essence of the State of Israel; and tension heightens between the national project of homogenizing the space and providing rights to all citizens. In this tension, the democratic component is overwhelmed by the national-religious component. The sense of an existential threat from the Palestinians, and the feeling of collective victimhood by the Jews, increase the legitimacy of denying rights to anyone who seems to resist the national-religious project of creeping annexation.

### THE RAMIFICATIONS OF TERRITORIAL CONTROL FOR ISRAELI SOCIETY

The second question examines the ramifications of constructing a Jewish identity in Israel and the structure of the regime. The relevant chapters have emphasized the issue in relation to several social domains, including the quality of Israeli democracy; depth of the social polarizations; adoption of a short-sighted security narrative in neglecting various social problems; harm to the

economy and public administration; mischief to national security; damage to the public's mental health; deterioration of social morality; and increased discrimination against Arab-Israeli citizens (see also *Israeli Sociology*, 2008). All of these consequences have a common background: the impact of the prolonged control of a Palestinian people deprived of their basic rights, the creeping annexation project, and the increasing Palestinian resistance to occupation. In the following sections, we briefly indicate just a few of the central effects.

### *The Quality of Israeli Democracy and the Deepening of Social Divides*

The first ramification can be seen in the weakening of Israeli democracy and the deepening of social divides. The greatest danger to Israeli democracy involves the increasing questioning of the legitimacy of Israel's control over a large and expanding population. The struggle over the territories seems to intensify the deepest divides in the state over questions of ideology and power, leading to an undermining of the state's authority. Yaron Ezrahi has identified a systematic deterioration in democratic values as a result of the occupation, which has led to the massive violation of Palestinians' civil rights, illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, and repressive acts of the security forces and the Jewish settlers against the Palestinians. In this reality, it is hard to arrive at a consensus on the democratic values intended to apply to the entire Israeli population. The deepening polarization, mainly between Right and Left, between religious and secular, and between Arab and Jewish citizens of the State of Israel around issues related to the occupation has undermined the solidarity of the society. According to Mautner (2008), the two deepest divides, on the national and religious issues, constitute the most basic polarizations, because they are accompanied by divisions regarding status, ideology, and territory (Smootha, 2000). Some sociologists are convinced that the conflict could lead to civil war in the absence of any cooperative ethics or a common past or future vision concerning these divisions (Kimmerling, 2004; Mautner, 2008; Ram, 2005).

Reflecting this analysis, a deep division between secular and religious Jews has emerged within Israel. This division has become great enough to arouse the extremists among them to question the legitimacy of the government's control of state institutions. The government's decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria severely tested the neo-Zionist veto stand in Israeli politics; on the other hand, the separation plan proposed by the Kadima government under Prime Minister Sharon tested the settlement rabbis, who questioned the legitimacy of the government in taking political decisions. From the rabbinical extremism in the political assassination of

Prime Minister Rabin, through the call to challenge the sovereignty of the state in deciding to withdraw from Gaza, to the organized mass rabbinical support of army officers who threatened to refuse to obey commands if ordered to evacuate settlements, the authority of certain state institutions to make political decisions has been undermined, and the argument between religious and secular sectors has become a struggle over the legitimacy of the democratic institutions of the state. This struggle also includes groups on the left who refuse to serve in the occupied territories, who challenge the government and the security forces with demonstrations against the wall of separation and/or Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem, and who challenge the right to create illegal settlements by building outposts and by extending existing Jewish settlements.

The challenging of the government's legitimacy has also intensified among the Arab-Palestinian elite in Israel following the occupation and discrimination against the native Palestinian population. In their chapter in this book, Amara and Mustafa have revealed that the Arabs in Israel have redefined the patterns of their political involvement in the state as well as their identity. The national component has become more central in their political platforms, and the struggle for equal civil rights is linked to the national struggle at a time when the government is justifying the denial of equal rights and of equality in economic development by the continuous Palestinian conflict with the prolonged occupation. The Palestinian civil uprisings in the territories have fired the imagination of young Arabs in Israel and reinforced their identification with their Palestinian identity (Schnell, 1994). Following the failure of the Camp David meeting in 2000 and the violent suppression of the Israeli-Arab demonstrations, the struggle for the national interests of Arab-Israeli citizens increased. Their documented platforms (called "visions") call for a change in the nature of the State of Israel from a Jewish state to a state for all of its citizens or the establishment of a binational state. At the same time, the Jewish public's trust in Arab citizens of Israel has eroded. Israeli Arabs are perceived as part of the Palestinian population in the territories and thus as deserving the same delegitimization applied to that population. This attitude was expressed in the violent events of October 2000, in which the struggle between the nationalist groups escalated while the minority group lost faith in the state institutions, a faith that is indispensable for any democratic regime. And just as the documented platform of the Arab elite in the state defined the Israeli regime as racist and sought to change its nature, Jewish political groups suggested restricting the rights of the Arabs, who are Israeli citizens. A proposal to transfer the areas settled by Arab citizens of Israel along the Green Line to the Palestinian Authority in exchange for transferring areas settled by Jews in the



territories to within the realm of the State of Israel further damaged Jewish-Arab relations in Israel.

The legitimacy of the authorities and the rule of law in the Israeli political system have been undermined most dramatically by one decision: the decision to assign the main task of controlling the territories to the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) as a function of their official status as occupied territories. In his chapter in this book, Pedatzur has shown how the army became a lead player in the political agenda in the territories, independent of government decisions and sometimes even in contradiction to them. The IDF became a central player in promoting the settlement process. In the early years of the occupation, the IDF was used as a settlement tool to prevent a flagrant breach of the ban on permanent civilian settlements in the occupied territories. On the basis of these acts, the army was forced to provide false claims in court cases that the settlements established as civilian settlements had been constructed for security considerations (Zertal & Eldar, 2007). Quite the opposite was true; the settlements impeded the army's strategic approach since, if the territories were empty of Jewish settlements, they would have given Israel more space for military maneuvers and eliminated the need to guard the Jewish settlements and the settlers.

Over the years, the settlers have become an influential political factor that has succeeded in biasing the judgment of military personnel in the field. The *Karp Report* (1982) revealed how the army justified the expropriation of land for security purposes despite the fact that these expropriations had no real security justification. The report also indicated soldiers' disregard of the repeated law-breaking by the Jewish settlers against Palestinians in the territories. Later, the *Sasson Report* (2005) revealed how the army supported dozens of illegal settlements and, instead of evacuating them, it sent soldiers to protect them. Pedatzur notes that officers up to the rank of general discovered that military promotion depended on recommendations by settler leaders, and they therefore preferred to ignore law-breaking by the settlers and even to support such acts. Over time, the settlers have been assigned to army units in the territories, effectively creating a militia of settler-soldiers that serves the settler leadership no less than it does the State of Israel. Many cases of settlers attacking the Palestinians or even the soldiers were not reported by the soldiers who identified with the settlement project.

In his chapter in this book, Ezrahi has contended that civic education has been harmed by the blurred messages of the Israeli democratic regime and the lack of consensus regarding basic questions such as state borders, civil rights, and others. Teachers have been wary of considering issues connected to the basic values and principles of Israeli society, and have tended to

avoid discussing questions reflecting deep polarization that pertain to civic education (Hofman, Alpert, & Schnell, 2007). Moreover, the human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories have systematically eroded, as reported by organizations such as B'tselem. Kaufman, in his chapter in this book, has perceived this trend as also filtering into areas within the Green Line. It is thus no wonder that, in this atmosphere, the discussion of human rights has been marginalized in the public discourse and the human rights organizations in Israel are frequently presented as traitors to the national interest.

The last right-wing coalition, established in 2009, started a new attempt by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and some of his supporters to limit the power of democratic institutions that criticize his aggressive policies toward the Palestinians. A group of Knesset members from the key parties in the coalition—Likud and Israel Beitenu—took the lead in promoting, in the name of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice, Jacob Ne'eman, a set of laws and steps against the Supreme Court of Israel, pro-peace and human rights nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and the media. To secure support for controversial settlements, they suggested changing the procedure for electing judges for the Supreme Court and forcing them to get the approval of the Knesset, steps that could have led to parliamentary control over the Supreme Court. Concerning the NGOs, they suggested prohibiting donations to leftist groups from foreign governments and avoiding public money from organizations that mention the *Nakba* day (the memorial day for the defeat of the Palestinians in the 1948 war, which led to the expulsion of about 700,000 Palestinians, who became refugees). Concerning the media, Netanyahu attempted to gain control over public television, and his supporters threatened a television channel with economic reprisal in response to their criticism of the Prime Minister. Fortunately, almost all of the initiatives failed due to the resistance of the opposition and some of the ministers from the Likud party itself. However, the challenge to democratic values by leading politicians from the center of the political spectrum are alarming.

Beyond these steps, two others ones stand out. The first was the attempt to rehabilitate illegal outposts in the occupied territories according to Israeli law and to avoid their evacuation in defiance of the Supreme Court's decision. The second was the introduction of controversial educational programs presenting the occupied territories as part of Israel, thus promoting uncritical patriotic emotions. Such programs include required field trips to Hebron and other biblical places in the occupied territories as well as tours that emphasize the neo-Zionist national religious ideology of the settlers.

### *Locating a Shortsighted Security Narrative at the Center of the Political Discourse*

Another effect of the occupation on Israeli society is that a short-sighted security narrative has been located at the center of the political discourse, as revealed in the chapter by Herzog. The enormous security challenge, deriving from the occupation and the Palestinian uprisings against it, has marginalized the public discourse on questions of security and prevented a broader understanding of this concept. The increasingly militaristic approach that took over the public discourse in Israel led to the neglect of questions of security, focusing instead on the crimes and internal violence occurring along the borders of the Green Line. Questions of social security were also marginalized, eroding Israel's welfare society and creating a culture of intolerance toward demands to widen social services. This worldview placed men of experience and knowledge in the field of security at the center of the public space. Women were relegated to the home, and discrimination and violence against women were ignored (see also Mayer, 1994). In Israel today there is a great economic gap between rich and poor, and women are generalized marginalized.

The occupation has also led to greater public violence. The chapter by Greenbaum and Elizur has shown how the violence carried by soldiers and settlers into the territories has left long-term scars on them that have continued to affect the quality of their lives and their behavior; and how the violence toward the Palestinians in the territories has permeated the State of Israel and the lives of its citizens. A correlation has been found between the waves of violent outbursts following the occupation and the rise in violence in Israeli society. This violence was not confronted by the state authorities due to the narrow definition of security by those in charge of public safety. In this situation such waves of violence have increased, mainly since the outbreak of the *intifadas*. The overall reasons for this trend may be more complex, but Greenbaum and Elizur have nonetheless shown that an occupation has a significant connection to increasing violence.

The occupation helps to impair the personal safety of citizens within the Green Line in three ways. First, the violence of the occupation has penetrated Israeli society itself, as demonstrated by Greenbaum and Elizur. Second, the narrow perception of security has weakened the law enforcement policy and public order, as revealed by Herzog. Third, the infiltration of terror or Palestinian resistance into areas inside Israel has made the Israeli citizen's life less secure. Dascal has emphasized the contribution of all these factors to the existence of a constant threat of terror: security guards posted at the entrances to every public building or site, increasingly aggressive security checks,

education of children to avoid trusting others, both Jews and non-Jews, and severe damage to both the fabric of society and moral assumptions—all of which are internalized by young Israelis as part of their overall worldview.

### *Economics of the Occupation*

The economic costs of control of the territories are twofold, greatly burdening the Israeli economy and indirectly causing deterioration in public services. The settler project and control of the Palestinians has become the largest and most important national project of the State of Israel. Vast economic resources are invested in it, raising an important question: how significant is this project for economic growth and for the deepening economic inequality in Israel? Hever's chapter has revealed that the cost of the occupation was negligible in the early years, when little military force was required for control and the economic advantages of creating Palestinian markets for Israeli products and exploiting a cheap work force were significant. However, the cost of occupation and settlement has greatly increased. As a rough estimate, Israel spent about 380 billion shekels on the occupation by the end of 2008 and 440 billion shekels by the end of 2010. This sum has grown annually, reflecting the increase in the number of settlers who benefit from subsidies and the increased investment in ensuring the security of these settlers. On average, the State of Israel invests about 26 billion shekels, or 7 billion dollars, each year in the settlements, a sum that has grown exponentially since the 1980s. The cost of a settler in the territories is two times higher than the cost of an Israeli citizen in central Israel and is even higher for settlers on the periphery (see also Swirski, 2008).

The cost of the occupation will be even higher if we assume that, in a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at least some of the settlements will be dismantled and the evacuated settlers will be dispersed by the state, following the pattern of the evacuation from Gaza and northern Samaria. Compensation of about 1 million shekels per household, and the loss of the infrastructure created for it in the territories, will significantly increase the cost of occupation. The evacuation of 100,000 settlers or 20,000 households could reach a cost of 30 billion shekels, constituting a dead-end trap. With the constant rise in the cost of occupation, its continuation for one year will cost the same as the immediate evacuation of about 100,000 settlers in 2010. These sums are an increasing burden on the Israeli economy and may lead to a significant reduction in economic growth.

Beyond the effect of the occupation on potential economic growth there is also a social cost. Because of the burden of the security budget and the cost of the occupation, the government must allot many resources to security. To

compensate for these increasing costs, the government systematically and constantly reduces the wages of those in the public services, who have become among the lowest-paid workers in the developed world. The consequence is a decline in public services, including the educational, welfare, and personal security systems. Israel also spends far less money on environmental protection than other developed countries. In addition, the settlement project, which demands a vastly greater economic investment today than in 1967, reduces the possibility of investing in alternative development projects, such as developing the periphery in the Negev and Galilee. A public debate in the media held in early 2010, following the enactment of a Knesset law to encourage investment in the country, clearly presents the contrast between national support for developing the periphery and support for the settlements.

### *The Cost of Security*

The occupation also exerts a significant cost on security, as explained by Pedatzur. The IDF had become increasingly mired in the attempt to suppress the escalating uprising of the Palestinians in the territories, to the extent of neglecting its preparedness for regular war. The Chief of Staff found that the mass acts of terrorism in the second *intifada* could have a potentially strategic outcome; consequently, the majority of resources and military personnel should be assigned to the fight against terrorism. As a result, according to Pedatzur, the army's preparedness to fight an all-out regular war declined, a situation that came back to haunt the military during the Second Lebanon War. Pedatzur noted, furthermore, that the IDF, bogged down in its role of military government in the territories, in the war on terror, and in the support of the settlements, had difficulty consolidating a new security strategy for Israel.

### *Israel's Status in the World*

The change in Israel's international status following the occupation was dramatic. In the early years after the 1967 war, when the occupation led to no significant Palestinian resistance, support for Israel rose among the European countries and in North America as a small, vulnerable state that had proved its ability to survive in the face of a severe external threat. The Six Day War was particularly effective in firing the Jewish imagination in regard to the centrality of the State of Israel to the Jewish people, as well as awareness of the need to encourage the immigration of Soviet Russian Jews to Israel. As time passed and the occupation continued, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) developed and Palestinian resistance increased. In addition, the international legitimization of the occupation eroded, and delegitimization of the

occupation began to be extended to delegitimization of the Israeli regime. The prolonged occupation undoubtedly influences the attitude of many countries toward the State of Israel. Furthermore, the occupation affects Israel's image in the world media and, consequently, public opinion in many states. Added to this is the criticism by various international and national organizations created to improve or supervise the status of human rights in the world; this includes certain progressive Jewish sectors worldwide that have begun to distance themselves from the State of Israel. Israel is mired in the national project of creeping annexation while slowly but surely disregarding the discourse on human rights. It finds itself in a situation that is hard to explain to the international community in the face of its actions in the territories concerning the Jewish settlements and its attitude toward the occupied Palestinian population.

## **MECHANISMS OF THE POLICY OF CREEPING ANNEXATION**

The policy of creeping annexation, with all of its consequences, has been enabled by three mechanisms that act in parallel and support each other. The first is the establishment of broad public support for the belief that the occupied territories are part of the Jewish homeland, deeply interwoven with the Jewish-Zionist identity, and/or are a security asset without which the State of Israel would not continue to exist. Therefore, continued control of the territories is of central national security interest to the state (see also Bar-Tal, Halperin, & Oren, 2010). This idea has produced support for the political parties and institutions that have acted to continue the policy of creeping annexation. The second mechanism is the political system and its dependence on the right-wing parties for a coalition. The third mechanism is the institutionalization of those interests and means of control that function within the bureaucracy and possess their own inertia.

### *The Mechanism of Creating Public Opinion*

The operations of the first mechanism during the prolonged occupation, together with the policy of creeping annexation and increasing Palestinian resistance, have deeply influenced the political discourse in Israel. Over time, the public discourse has come to support, to various degrees, the continuation of this creeping annexation (Oren, 2005, 2009; see also the chapter by Magal and his colleagues in this book). It has become a discourse on the image of the State of Israel and Israeli society, with control of the territories located at its center. In order to understand the mechanism behind the creation of public

support, it is necessary to return to the first weeks following the Six Day War. Within the shortest possible time nearly all the political leadership, with the help of the media, had reframed reality: "liberating the territories and return to the homeland" (Segev, 2007). This was achieved by speeches by the leaders, articles in newspapers, news reports, songs, victory albums, and, of course, educational activities in the schools, the army, and other institutions (see, e.g., Sheffi, 2009). Furthermore, the various Israeli governments managed an active policy of erasing the Green Line from public consciousness by means of education, map-drawing, archaeological research, and "Judaization" of the area, as described in Schnell's chapter. Even the language adopted a jargon appropriating the new areas into the national territory, as noted in Tsur's chapter. The majority of Israelis, who before the 1967 war had come to terms with the nation's sovereignty over only part of the land, accepted and internalized the new reality after this war in response to the massive reframing. It is important to note that this reframing of reality is deeply rooted in the Jewish heritage, in which Judea and Samaria constitute the cradle of the ancient Jewish identity. Moreover, in the 1950s and 1960s, there were political groups on the Right (the Herut party) and Left (e.g., among the Ahdut Avoda circles) that openly dreamed of expanding Israel's borders in order to incorporate those parts of the Land of Israel that had remained outside the state borders (Naor, 2001).

The reframing process was successful; by the 1990s, the Green Line had been erased from the spatial awareness of younger Israelis (Portugali, 1996). Almost every major Israeli leader, including Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Ehud Barak from the Labor party, considered the occupied territories as the homeland of Israel, as shown in the chapter by Magal and colleagues. In order to understand this mechanism, one must also include in the analysis the construction of the Palestinian image. Palestinians were defined as a strategic threat to the existence of the State of Israel; Therefore, the territories, or part of them, had to be retained in order to prevent the existential danger, as noted by Magal et al. The Palestinians' continuing violence has undoubtedly reinforced this perception (see also Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007).

The status of the territories as part of Israel's national territory, and the delegitimization of the Palestinians' rights to the territories was thus reframed. It was then necessary to preserve a positive self-image while managing the conflict linked to the policy of creeping annexation. This has become an additional mechanism of institutionalizing the state's new identity and regime (Halperin et al., 2010). Magal et al. systematically surveyed the beliefs and understandings that justified the occupation and creeping annexation among the leadership and the broad public, which remained dominant for several decades. In discussing this mechanism, which was socially constructed in

order to preserve Israelis' positive self-image in managing the dispute with the Palestinians, it is necessary to understand how the mechanism functioned to block out information on the problems connected with the occupation and creeping annexation (Bar-Tal et al., 2010). This has involved selective, biased, and distorted information processing that prevented Israelis from knowing the costs to both the Palestinian and Israeli societies. This reframing of reality also functioned as a defense mechanism that made the problems connected with the occupation appear to be less serious than they actually were. This was achieved by repression, avoidance, pseudointellectualism, transference, or pseudorationalism, all of which helped to reinforce the collective positive self-image (Halperin et al., 2010). Finally, mainstream Israeli-Jewish society rejected any criticism of the occupation and creeping annexation, seeing it as an expression of lack of patriotism and/or self-hatred. The system was thus set in to motion to delegitimize any information or sources of information that displayed criticism within Israel or abroad. Many of the established Jewish communities worldwide also joined the cause to block any criticism of Israel's policy of occupation and annexation.

Nonetheless, despite the widespread belief that the territories were part of the homeland, by the second half of the 1970s an alternative concept was beginning to develop: the need to make peace in return for withdrawal from the territories. Within this discourse, a small minority pointed out the moral cost that Israel was paying for the continued occupation. The peace dialogue intensified in the 1980s and in the first half of 1990s (with the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993), dominating the discourse until 2000. This happened because the public had accepted the new idea that the existential threat to Israel had lessened as a result of the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and the Oslo Accords signed with the Palestinian Authority. This belief, however, weakened once more due to the increased terror activities against Israel that followed the failure of the Camp David meeting and the withdrawal from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, which led to the intensification of terror and renewal of the existential threat to Israel by Iran. In this connection, Tsur has stressed the lack of agreement among the main segments of Israeli society with regard to a common language. Tsur concurs with Kimmerling's (2004) observation regarding the lost possibility of achieving an Israeli society in which different worldviews could be openly discussed. Both Magal et al. and Tsur point to the change in viewpoints that took place nonetheless in the public discourse, and they have drawn a picture of the pragmatic change in ideology among the political elite as well as the broad public. In other words, since the intensification of Palestinian resistance against the occupation at the end of the 1980s, and mainly since the Oslo Accords, the pragmatic approach has

located Israel's security needs at the center of the discourse, with the threat of a demographic imbalance perceived as a danger to a Jewish and democratic state. This threat has increasingly been seen as an internal one, undermining the essence of the state, and not as an external threat to control of the occupied territories. As a result, there has been increasing agreement on territorial compromise. Tsar defines four phases in the dominant discourse, each lasting for about a decade: a religious-messianic phase, a phase emphasizing the historical-national rights of the Jews, a phase of conciliation and compromise, and a separation phase. He suggests that Israel is currently in the fourth phase: ready to separate from the Palestinians without separating from the territories or, alternatively, annexing Area C and conferring less status than that of an independent state on Areas A and B. Neither of these solutions provides a basis for any reasonable agreement on territorial compromise with the Palestinians (see also Bar-Tal et al., 2010; Ben-Meir, 2009).

The critical artistic discourse on the occupation, reflecting the pragmatic approach, emerged at the beginning of the 1980s. Art and literature represent a particular perception of reality and engage in a sensitive dialogue with it. On the one hand, they are fed by the public discourse; on the other hand, they themselves become active in shaping this discourse (Hooks, 1995). With the end of the war in 1967, art, together with other social agents, became actively engaged in a dialogue of liberation and redemption with the broad public. In the 1970s, however, a discourse presenting an alternative perception of the occupation—a negative one—began to appear, and by the 1980s this discourse had broadened. The chapter by Urian has described the changes in Israeli playwriting that have taken place between the 1970s and the new millennium. This trend, like the one involving the use of language and academic criticism of the occupation, should be perceived as an expression of the pragmatic approach to the occupation by at least part of the public. Although this artistic criticism stressed mainly the moral aspects of the occupation, its major effect on the public was in the utilitarian-practical aspects; criticism of the moral implications of the occupation was restricted to the narrowest social circles. There is at least one bright spot in this scenario: although Israelis tend to block critics by claiming that they are unpatriotic, Israel has succeeded in holding a democratic and open cultural discourse on the society's existential questions.

#### *Mechanism of Dependence on the Right-Wing Parties*

The second mechanism of the policy of creeping annexation is connected to the composition of every Israeli government since the political change in 1977, which included right-wing parties and sometimes even those of the extreme right. During most of these years the government was headed by the Likud

party, which, despite its pragmatic approach, still adhered to the right-wing ideology that supported creeping annexation, with all the consequences of the occupation. The coalitions since 1977 were based either on right-wing parties or on a national unity government including these parties. The exceptional governments headed by Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak, leaders of the Labor party that governed for six years in the 1990s, were forced to participate in a coalition with such right-wing parties as Shas. Thus, despite the contention of Doron and Rosenthal in their chapter that the political representation of the settlers was marginal, the right-wing parties that have been in power, backed by strong public support for continuing the Israeli occupation of the territories, acted to intensify the control and creeping annexation and to prevent any attempt to end the occupation. It was under the Labor government, however, that the settlement project gained momentum, along with attempts to promote peace plans with the Palestinians. In this setting, it is helpful to understand how the lobby represented by the small extremist right-wing parties and the Judea and Samaria Council, by supporting the pragmatic right-wing party (Likud), succeeded in forcing the entire political system to promote the policy of creeping annexation (Gorenberg, 2006; Zertal & Eldar, 2007).

Determined and committed groups sometimes succeed in diverting government policy in the face of political and public apathy, a phenomenon familiar in other democratic regimes (Freeman 1995) and as shown by Doron and Rosenthal. But in our view, in the case of Israel, the government policy of creeping annexation gained broad public support by the pragmatic majority. For this group, the Jewish settlement of the occupied territories was not the main issue due to the prevailing belief that peace was in any case not possible.

#### *The Mechanism of Bureaucratic Inertia*

The third mechanism in the policy of creeping annexation involves the inertia within the state bureaucracy. There, as indicated by Doron and Rosenthal, institutionalized department and interests strive to maintain the policy regardless of any decisions taken by the government. These departments include government offices such as the Ministry of Justice, which permitted the expropriation of land in the territories; the Ministry of the Interior, which authorized the construction and development plan; the Ministry of Public Works, which built the Jewish settlements beyond the Green Line; the Ministry of Transport, which built the many roads there (some for the sole use of Jews); and the Ministries of Welfare and Education, which supported the local authorities established beyond the Green Line. One should also mention the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund, which supported the settlement activities, and the law

courts, which in the majority of cases permitted the expropriations or construction of the settlements, at no small cost to the Palestinian population in the territories. Finally, one should note the IDF's unfounded support of the settlements in its readiness to divert valuable resources to their construction, to protect them from the authority of the law, guard them, and overlook the law-breaking of the settlers. Two examples in the book have demonstrated the institutionalization of these mechanisms: the use of the IDF to control the territories and the behavior of the Israeli media. As we have already noted, an example of the bureaucratic activity was analyzed by Pedatzur, who showed how the military became a central agent of the policy of creeping annexation and how the settler leadership established a powerful influence over the army commanders and soldiers irrespective of the various governments' policies (see also Zertal & Eldar, 2007). He has shown how the army, certain that its control of the territories was important for state security, supported the settlements in order to ensure that the territories would not come under foreign sovereignty within the framework of political agreements. In addition, it is necessary to point out that the Judea and Samaria Council more than once pushed the state into accepting settlements unauthorized by the government, in contradiction to government policy but with the aid of the army and some of the ministries. These factors helped to promote the settlement project independently of the government leadership, but with the support of public opinion and in the face of governments that sometimes supported the settlement project and sometimes were so divided and weakened that they were unable to halt the process of creeping annexation.

The second institution that has aided the continued creeping annexation is the media, which play a central role in maintaining a consolidated public discourse. This discourse justified the Jewish settlements in the territories and presented Israeli society as a victim of the Palestinians—who in fact have been delegitimized—while ignoring the massive harm done to them. The chapter by Caspi and Rubenstein has shown how the media created an "information barrier" that neutralized the transfer of any information differing from the established narrative. The information barrier has both physical and cognitive components. In the early years, the physical barriers were more effective. They included blocking or disrupting anti-Israel media channels and firing journalists who raised issues concerning the territories. In this new era of globalization of information, however, it is mainly the cognitive mechanisms that function. Caspi and Rubenstein have presented the Israeli media as controlled by security sources and journalists, many of whom have a security background. These journalists view the Arab world and the Palestinians mainly through a narrative that defines them as a security threat and not as of

potential neighbors, with whom it is necessary to solve the dispute by peaceful means. The public too, interested in reinforcing its positive self-image, prefers to maintain the narrative that defines the Palestinian as a cruel enemy rather than a neighbor. The journalists who surveyed the Palestinian population in the territories have been marginalized, and many of those who maintained direct connections with the daily life of the Palestinians were neutralized by questioning their loyalty to the homeland. The Arab media, using a language unacceptable to the Jewish-Israeli public and focused on blind incitement, simply eased the work of constructing an information barrier to the Arab world. The Israeli media have thus formed an additional layer preventing an open and critical public discussion of the patriotic-security narrative that has dominated the public discourse and thereby have cleared the way for the settlers' lobby.

## AFTERWORD

The central claim of this book is that control over the territories and the Palestinian people, as a new phase in managing the conflict, has functioned as an accelerating factor, impelling social, political, economic, and cultural developments in Israeli society on both sides of the Green Line. These developments have become institutionalized in the political system, the bureaucracy, among the ruling powers, and in the public discourse to an extent that has led to a reconstruction of Israeli society. Control of the territories has affected developments in a variety of ways: the territories have been presented as new areas for control and as a "wilderness" that needs to be occupied; as an encounter with the sacred space of the cradle of the Jewish experience; as a liberated territory whose present residents use violence to resist the return of Jews to their homeland; and as a space that challenges the demographic majority of the Jewish people in the territories. These ideas have been expressed on both sides of the Green Line, converting the occupation of the territories and domination of the Palestinians into an internal and structural characteristic of Israeli Jewish society. All these factors together influenced Israeli-Jewish society to an extent that was not predicted by the Israeli leadership immediately following the Six Day War—a leadership that was unable to understand the full significance of the developments that accompany the domination of another nation against its will and unable to comprehend how the codes and mores of the international community would develop. We thus close the account begun in the introductory chapter to this book, where we contended that both the occupier and the occupied become engaged in an endless series of mutually disruptive acts and reprisals, and that the occupation fundamentally affects the occupying society



too. This effect, both direct and indirect, open and concealed, is extremely powerful, to the extent of having reconstructed Israeli-Jewish society.

Indeed, the occupation of the territories, their domination, and the national struggle with the Palestinians have reconstructed Israeli-Jewish society to the point where it has developed a new identity and regime. This new Jewish identity emphasizes the connection to the particularistic components of the Jewish identity alongside a nationalism that emphasizes the connection between the Jewish nation, the biblical Land of Israel, and the religion of Israel. This identity is replacing the Jewish-Hebrew identity rooted in the new practices of independent Jews in the new-old land that also emphasized universal values and strove to consolidate a Hebrew culture within the new reality in the country. In parallel, a regime has developed that undermines the law and order established by the Israeli regime prior to 1967, diverting the main national struggle to achieving a creeping domination of the territories while contravening the international obligations of a state that controls occupied territories. There is no agreed-upon interpretation of the laws pertaining to the status of land in the territories and the importance of the settlement project to Israel's security. As a result of this diversion of the national struggle, the balance among those who guide Israeli democracy has been disturbed. The progressive promise of basic rights to all has been eroded in favor of emphasizing the national perception that justifies privileging the "pioneering" communities that serve the policy of "ethnicizing" the territories and withholding rights from those minorities that threaten this policy. These processes have helped to weaken democracy, corrupt moral behaviour, and cripple the discourse on human rights in Israeli society. This is one of the reason the Jews in Israel do not comprehend the dominating discourse in the world, which demands observance of human rights, and monitors and criticizes their violations. Today, prolonged occupation is unacceptable.

Beyond the imbalance created between the Jewish state and democracy, several of the authors have noted the socioeconomic consequences of the occupation. These include the threat to Israel's economic growth; a decline in the standard of public services, personal security, and the social status of women; and neglect of the periphery and of minority groups. The structural changes in the Israeli identity and regime have become institutionalized in the political structure, in the public discourse, and in the mechanisms of control. This reveals that these changes are deeply ingrained and reflect strong sociopolitical inertia. This inertia has perpetuated the entrenchment of the Israeli mindset to successfully survive while managing the conflict, but at the same time it hinders the ability to achieve any compromise with the Palestinian people through a readiness to give up control of the territories. Our conclusion

is that Israeli society contains powerful institutionalized forces that drive the policy of creeping annexation. To exchange this policy for one of compromise with the Palestinian people would mean a deep social-political crisis together with a reconstruction of a new Israeli identity and a new regime that is more sensitive to democratic values. For a society that finds itself in "overload" and being constantly mobilized, this is a harsh challenge. In addition, raising public awareness of the issue merely reinforces support for the conservative forces, since society prefers to deal with difficulties stemming from the familiar reality rather than exchanging them for an unknown and deeply unacknowledged reality.

However, we observe some signs of hope for a critical transition of the kind De Gaulle initiated in France concerning the occupation of Algeria. At least three of the last four Prime Ministers of Israel, although they came from an activist background, understood the need to reach a political compromise with the Palestinians, even though they failed or did not try to mobilize sufficient political support to do so. The rise of pragmatic voices in the general public and of a moral debate among intellectuals are hopeful signs. Wishing to conclude the argument with some sense of optimism, we believe that Israel will be pushed to end the occupation, thus providing an opportunity to rebuild the Israeli identity, regime, state apparatus, and society. We hope that this process will begin as early as possible.

## NOTES

1. Theodor Miron, who served as legal adviser to the Israeli Foreign Ministry in 1967, in September 1967 presented an opinion at the request of the Israeli government, stating that the settlement of Israeli citizens in the territories contradicted international law (Gorenberg, 2006).
2. Following the Six Day War and the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, its inhabitants received the civil status of "permanent resident" of the State of Israel. The main right of a permanent resident is the right to live and work in Israel without requiring special permits. Moreover, permanent residents are entitled to social benefits according to the National Insurance and Health Insurance laws, and are allowed to vote in municipal elections but not in elections to the Knesset. Permanent residency, unlike citizenship, is transferable to the resident's children only under certain conditions. Residents married to someone who is not a resident or citizen of Israel need to apply for a family unification permit for their partner.
3. According to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Palestinians in the occupied territories live under an occupying regime and are denied their basic rights promised by a democratic regime. They are also denied partnership in those processes that affect their fate. Establishment of the Palestinian Authority

and the holding of elections did not essentially alter their civil status. In the West Bank the Palestinian Authority enjoys jurisdiction on very few issues and in very small enclaves. In the Gaza Strip, Israel has continued to control all matters crucial to the lives of the inhabitants, even after the disengagement.

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