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

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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 settle-ment 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 tradi-tions, 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 atti-tudes 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 mobiliza-tion 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
27 Hatzor
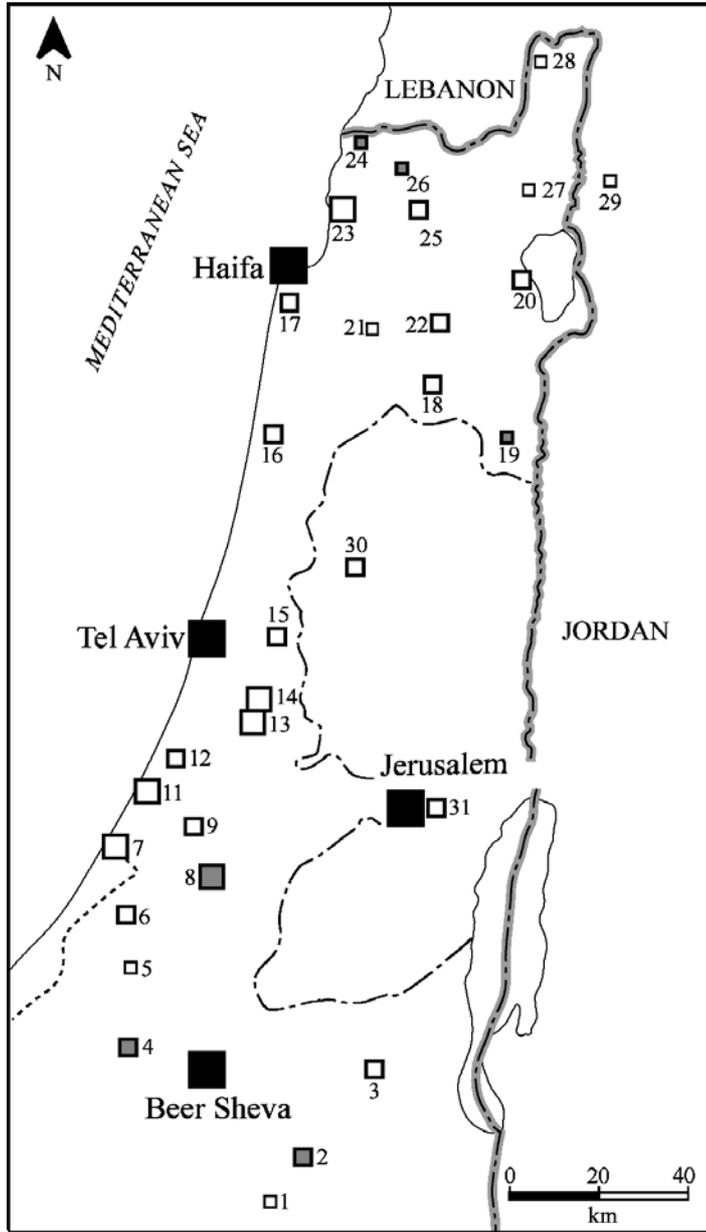28 Kiryat Shmona
29 Katzerin
30 Ariel
31 Ma'ale Edomim

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 in person 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 marginality and centrality are ceaselessly constituted, maintained, and transformed through cultural, political and economic practices, and the accompa-nying 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-tive memory of forced settlement has become central to peripheral

Source: field survey
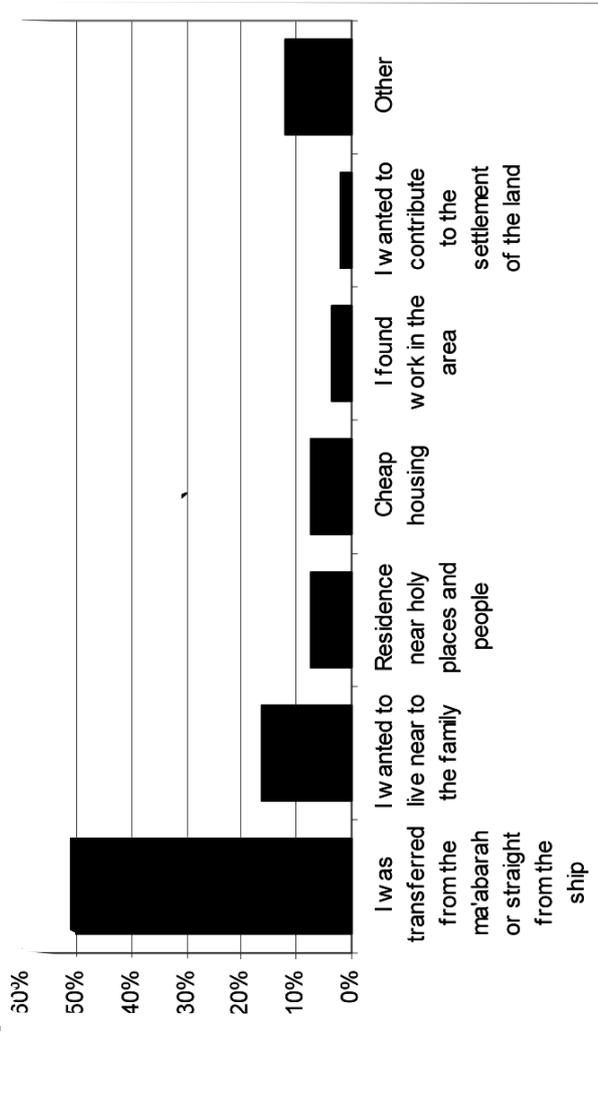
Mizrahi identity formation.

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 stigma-

tized 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 (most close) and –7 (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 – "Describe Closeness/Distance towards the following Groups"

The sentiments of closeness/distance displayed in figure 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-
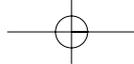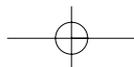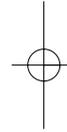
Figure   11.4   –   "Which   (one)   definition   best   describes
you?"

Figure 11.5: "Which of the following affiliation (one only) is most suit-
able for you?"

pl. prepare these two figs so that they fit on one page.

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 back-wardness, 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 prefer-ences, 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 frame-works 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 rightwing 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 inter-nally within the rightist camp, between the two main parties – Likud and Shas.

Several explanations have been advanced in the mainstream litera-ture 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 author-itative, 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
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
The Arabs will live in Israel as a national minority, recognized by the state, and enjoying proportional representation	16	23
The Arabs will live in Israel as a minority with equal civil rights	14	24
The state should make the Aravs live outside Israel	12	20
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 stigmatization 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
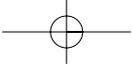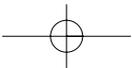
fig. 11.6 continued

Figure 11.6 – Cultural Preferences

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 develop-ment 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 musi-cians 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-genera-tional 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 public protest. 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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12 Absent Voices: Citizenship and Identity Narratives of Palestinian Women in Israel

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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 alienation, 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, all 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 1994; 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 step-mother 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 inter-

view 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 intro-duce 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 experi-ence, 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 citizen-
ship, 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 defi-
ance *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 citizen-
ship. 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

13

Over the last fifteen years, ˏpublic 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 slaughtered 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 command-
ments, 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 signifi-
cance 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 influ-
ence? 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 orga-
nizing 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 materi-
alism, 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 (for example, 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 life-styles.[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 move-

ments is that the classic political bodies, including the 'old' social move-ments, 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 bour-geois 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' 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 character 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 move-
ments that concern themselves – at times in disregard of the sovereignty
of nations and their territorial boundaries – with issues such as envi-
ronmental 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 govern-
ment 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 femi-
nists. The Counceling Center for Women is just one example. There are
associations, like KlAF, 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. Witness, 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 in the election day, the movement makes no real attempt to expand the base of democracy in Israel. This fact become 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

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14

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: 400–01). 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 repro-duction 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 polit-ical 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 popula-tions 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 orga-
nization 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 nego-
tiation 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 polit-
ical 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 adjust-
ment 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 work-place 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); 4) 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 commu-

nity 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 humanitarian 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 mobilization 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 generalized 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 identity 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 transcend 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 estimates 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 concentrated 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

Uri Ram

15

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 identification and commit-

ment, both above the nation-state and below it (Axford 1995; Waters 1995: 96–123; Crook 1992: 79–105; Castells 1997: 243–308; Held 1995).

Scheme No. 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 .

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 intensities;
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:

Place figure 15.2 here

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 counter-move 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).

fig. 15.3

Legend:
Political Parties: *1. Labor 2. Likud 3. Mafdal 4. Kach 5. Mertz 6. Shas 7. Agudat Israel*
D = Democratic   J = Jewish

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 congru-ence 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 inter-national, 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 move-
ment 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 two 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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