Chapter Four

Between colonialism and ethnocracy: 'Creeping apartheid' in Israel/Palestine

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> *We have managed to create a national agreement about the concept of 'two states for two peoples'.*
>
> – Benjamin Netanyahu, 5 July 2009[1]

This statement made by Israel's prime minister in reviewing his government's achievements during its first hundred days should make most observers of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict rub their eyes in disbelief. Could it be that the hard-line leader of Likud and the Jewish state believes in a peaceful two-state solution?

This chapter sheds light on this putative policy shift by placing it within the changing political geography of Israel/Palestine, where two contradictory trends are evident. On the one hand, Zionist leaders are declaring their support for peace through Palestinian statehood accompanied by some incidents of Israeli territorial withdrawals. On the other hand, persisting colonial and oppressive practices are working to further Judaise contested space and deny Palestinians – on both sides of the Green Line – their legitimate rights.[2]

My main contention is that these seemingly contradictory movements are part of a new phase, framing a situation of 'neither two states nor one'. They generate a process I have termed 'creeping apartheid' – an undeclared yet structural process through which new, oppressive sets of political geographic relations are being institutionalised for Jews and Palestinians living under the Israeli regime between Jordan and the sea. This process illuminates the merging of the colonised West Bank, the besieged Gaza Strip and Israel proper into one system, ultimately controlled by the Jewish state, which increasingly appears to bear the characteristics of apartheid. Hence, repeated statements by Israeli leaders in support of Palestinian statehood have thus far functioned to legitimise this oppressive process, rather than lead towards the end of Zionist colonisation and a resolution of the conflict.

I have previously defined the Israeli regime as 'ethnocratic' – where the overall logic of 'ethnicisation' (that is, Judaisation) prevails in all regions, despite differences in their legal and political arrangements such as occupation, extra-sovereign settlement, siege or internal colonisation.[3] My argument here builds on this analysis to show how the contradictions of ethnocracy have led to a process that is deepening the 'separated and unequal' conditions that prevail in Israel/Palestine. Under these conditions, Jews enjoy relatively 'equal' and privileged political and legal positions, while Palestinians are divided into a series of protogroups, each enjoying different and inferior packages of rights and capabilities. Moreover, Palestinians are increasingly confined to the equivalent of 'black' and 'coloured' ghettoes while Jews reside in relatively open localities, in both Israel and the Judaised West Bank.

Israel's liberalising and globalising tendencies, which harboured some democratising potential, have actually exacerbated the 'different and unequal' status of Palestinians and Jews, positively influencing the mainly Jewish groups while generally excluding the Palestinians. The changes have, thus, further widened the gaps based on ethnicity ('race'), class and region.

Before delving further into the issues, let me define some key terms:

- 'Apartheid' means a regime in which groups are forcefully segregated and treated unequally (de jure and de facto) by state regulation on the basis of their collective identities. Apartheid, like other regime types such as democracies, theocracies or dictatorships, has become a generic term and may differ in detail (though not in principle) from the infamous South African model.[4]
- 'Ethnocracy' means a regime in which the state is appropriated by a dominant ethnonational group, and used to advance its own 'ethnicising' political and territorial agendas over contested space, resources and power structures. Most ethnocracies display several of the formal features of a democratic system of governance.
- 'Colonial' denotes a process of seizure in which a state or dominant group intrudes into the space and resources of other groups in order to exploit and subordinate them, while denying the indigenous people their right to self-determination and control over their resources.[5]
- Finally, my analysis of the Israeli regime in this chapter covers the whole Israel/Palestine area. This is for the simple reason that a genuine assessment of the nature of any regime necessitates the examination of the entire area under its control.

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A strategic shift?

Since 1995, a marked change has taken place in the discourse generated by Israeli leaders towards the management and resolution of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. This came after decades of intransigent denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination and statehood and support for Jewish expansionism in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Palestinian regions inside Israel.

The new discourse began with Yitzhak Rabin's willingness to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and 'Palestinian national political rights' as enshrined in the Oslo Accords, and by Ehud Barak's Camp David and Taba negotiations for a Palestinian state and withdrawal from Lebanon. The change became even more evident when supported by rightist nationalist leaders such as Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert and Binyamin Netanyahu, who had previously built their careers on advancing Zionist colonialism and violent aggression in an effort to achieve what Kimmerling aptly termed the 'politicide' of the Palestinians.[6] But, in the last decade or so, these leaders have conspicuously changed their rhetoric (if not always their actions). For example, during his reign as Israeli prime minister from 2006 to 2009, Olmert actively sought to negotiate a two-state agreement with Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority and, in a rare spurt of frankness, Olmert declared:

> The creation of a Palestinian state is a vital Israeli interest… failure to reach a peace agreement and create a viable Palestinian state could plunge Israel into a South African-style apartheid struggle… [This would mean] the state of Israel is finished.[7]

Olmert was supported by his Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, who later became the leader of Israel's largest party, Kadima, and whose campaign for the 2009 elections was heavily focused on the two-state horizon. Since then, as noted, even Netanyahu – for years a hard-line rejectionist – has made an about face and agreed to the establishment of a (demilitarised) Palestinian state.[8]

This transformation was also starkly evident during the (2001 to 2005) reign of Ariel Sharon – 'father' of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine and a ruthless military leader bent on destroying Palestinian nationhood and rights. Note, for example, the following two statements:

> Under my leadership there will be no empty concessions to the Pal-
> estinians… the fate of Netzarim and Kfar Darom [the most isolated
> Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip] is the same as Tel Aviv. (Ariel
> Sharon, 11 December 2002)
>
> *It is* impossible to continue keeping 3.5 million Palestinians under
> occupation – yes it is occupation, and it is bad for Israel… Control-
> ling 3.5 million Palestinians cannot go on forever. (Ariel Sharon, 26
> December 2003)[9]

These two statements – made within the space of just twelve months –
voice diametrically opposing views on Israel's intentions regarding the
Occupied Territory. Moreover – unlike most other Israeli leaders – Sharon
turned his intentions into concrete action by leading a unilateral mili-
tary withdrawal and evacuation from twenty-five Jewish settlements in the
Gaza Strip and northern West Bank. This was the first time that Israel
voluntarily evacuated settlements from areas it considered to be part of
the Jewish homeland.

How can we account for this transformation? Do these moves by a
string of rightist Israeli prime ministers herald the long-awaited crossing
of the peace Rubicon? Are we heading towards the end of Israeli colonialism
as part of a two-state solution?

My answer is no. The transformation is significant, as it clearly exposes
the existence of a new political geographic phase and highlights the demise
of the 'Greater Israel' agenda. However, this change is unlikely to lead to
the establishment of a viable Palestinian state in the foreseeable future,
nor to a single democratic state between Jordan and the sea. Instead, it is
likely to deepen the institutionalisation and legitimisation of an apartheid
reality.

A Palestinian state may possibly be created as a result of international
pressure led by the Obama administration. Yet if such a state does not
enjoy full sovereignty or contiguity (and it is generally proposed in Israeli
and international circles that it should not enjoy either), it is unlikely to
resolve the Zionist-Palestinian conflict and may simply become a modified
'bantustan'.

This is not inevitable, however. A viable and sovereign Palestinian
state, and the implementation of international law and Palestinian rights
(without sacrificing legitimate Israeli rights), could stabilise the region.
Yet, such a peaceful trajectory would require both Jews and Palestinians,

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and especially the former, to deal with the core issues shaping the conflict, such as the consequences of the Nakba,[10] the plight of Palestinian refugees, Jerusalem, the land regime and the future of Palestinians inside Israel. It appears unlikely that any of the existing political forces, including Israel's imperial American patron or the hesitant European and Arab states, have the power to make Israel engage with these issues and thus halt the slide into a geography of apartheid.

A new phase

The contours of the recent phase in the land's political geography are complex, including measured readjustments, some shrinking of the Zionist colonial territorial project and new forms of domination over Palestine and Palestinians. The new phase follows decades of unabated Zionist demographic and spatial expansionism characterised by Jewish-only immigration, tight military control, the construction of some eight hundred Jewish settlements inside Israel proper plus over two hundred settlements in the Occupied Territory, massive land confiscation and uncompromising attempts to Judaise the entire area of Israel/Palestine.

Transition to the new phase occurred gradually in response to a range of events that demonstrated the non-sustainability of the previous colonial impetus such as the two intifadas, suicide attacks on Israeli civilians, the rise of Hamas and its rocket campaign from Gaza and growing pressure on Israel's illegal colonialism in an increasingly antagonistic international environment. In this context, Israeli elites began to realise that further expansion and direct oppression would carry high security, economic and social costs as they run counter to the increasingly prevalent agendas of liberalisation and globalisation.

In the absence of a genuine move towards reconciliation, however, Israel sought to rearrange its control over Israel/Palestine so as to minimise violence and costs. The overall strategy was *unilateral and oppressive separation* which saw the creation of parallel geographies for Palestinians and Jews in the West Bank, the evacuation of Gaza and the maintenance of segregation inside Israel.[11]

Within the overall thrust for consolidation and separation, Israel's moves were often confused and contradictory. On the one hand, they included aggressive policies such as the construction of new 'outpost' settlements to function as 'wedges' between Palestinian localities, the accelerated expansion of existing Jewish settlements, increased 'anti

terror' offensives using state terror against civilians, the construction of the massive illegal separation barrier in the West Bank; the three-year siege of Gaza and the highly destructive invasions of southern Lebanon and Gaza. These moves were echoed by the tightening of control over Palestinian citizens of Israel, who experienced a string of legislation and discriminatory policies that have shrunk their political and civil status within the Jewish state.[12] On the other hand, during the same period, Israel also made moves to partially acknowledge Palestinian rights: it recognised the Palestinian national movement and the PLO, allowed the Palestinian National Authority to establish itself and, as mentioned, declared its support for Palestinian statehood – which had been rejected by over ninety per cent of Israeli Jews only a decade earlier. Israel also retreated from the main Palestinian towns and cities, from southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, evacuated settlements, enshrined previously denied Palestinian rights to purchase Israeli state land and acknowledged ten (out of forty-five) previously 'unrecognised' Bedouin villages in the Naqab/Negev region. According to repeated surveys, a steady majority of Jews agrees that Palestinian citizens should have equal rights in Israel proper and that Israel should reach peace with a Palestinian state to be established on most of the land that constitutes the Occupied Territory.[13]

Yet, barring the imposition of massive international pressure, recent changes do not provide sufficient foundation for ending Israeli colonialism, because they are based on tactical and utilitarian calculations rather than on a drive for reconciliation. Zionism remains a deeply ethnocratic movement premised on a self-constructed narrative of a 'historic right' to the entire 'promised land' (Palestine/Eretz Israel) and on the associated othering and dispossession of the Palestinians who object to the exclusivity of that right. This makes most Jews unable to deal with the core issues of the conflict, such as Israel's role in the Nakba – which remains the Archimedean point on which the Israeli regime is constructed. Denial of the Nakba has become the cornerstone of Israeli ethnocracy. By justifying ethnic cleansing and the destruction of over four hundred Palestinian villages and towns, this denial has become a core Zionist value, fuelling the 'right' of Jews to continue to colonise Palestine.[14]

Under these political and psychological conditions, most Israeli Jews refrain from dealing, on a political or moral level, with key related issues such as the plight of Palestinian refugees, the future of East Jerusalem, legitimate state borders and the status of Palestinians inside Israel. In Zionist

discourse, this avoidance is wrapped in a continuous public invocation of (often genuine) communal fears in the face of anti-Jewish violence, and the growing counter-colonial – and at times antisemitic – discourse of Hamas and its allies. Often-invoked memories of the Holocaust and distorted representations of Palestinian and Arab intentions towards Israel prevent genuine ideological shifts. This fundamental denial stirred Israel to make historically significant unilateral moves towards Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line, using security measures rather than political means. These moves have simply amplified the uneven spatial and political dialectics that produce apartheid conditions.

Ethnocracy and 'democracy'

Apartheid-like relations always develop on the basis of existing political and cultural foundations. In Israel, conditions have always been suscepti-ble to this, given the state's long-standing ethnocratic regime and the rac-ist treatment meted out to Palestinians who stand in the way of the state's drive for Judaisation. On a more conceptual level, ethnocratic regimes are commonly found in contested territories in which a dominant ethnic na-tion appropriates the state apparatus to further its expansionist aspira-tions. Significantly though, these regimes tend to selectively apply some democratic procedures to groups under their control. This democratic self-portrayal is structurally significant as it legitimises the ethnocratic project in the eyes of the dominant group (and in some international cir-cles) and it allows the subordinate groups to mobilise politically and enjoy some important (if not equal) civil and political rights.

But within these thin (and often partial) democratic formalities, ethnocratic states such as Israel are typified by the ongoing (internal and external) colonial subjection and exploitation of weakened groups which invariably – and often violently – resist this order. This asymmetric dialectic tends to essentialise identities and polarise spatial and political systems. Examples of ethnocratic regimes include Serbia, Estonia, Latvia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey, apartheid South Africa and nineteenth-century Australia.[15]

Despite Israel's history of eviction, conflict, conquest and colonial occupation, most scholars, politicians and the public still perceive it as a democratic state. Even some critical scholars use the term 'Israeli democracy', adding further qualifying phrases such as 'imagined democracy', 'ethnic democracy' or 'deeply flawed democracy'.[16] This

tendency draws on the ongoing illusion that 'Israel' can be neatly defined as a regime that operates within the Green Line, even though the very same regime has settled hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Occupied Territory and separated them legally and spatially from local Arabs.

Israel proper does allow for significant democratic practices such as periodic (though neither universal nor free) elections and the protection of important civil (if not human) rights such as freedom of speech, movement and association, gender equality and gay rights; there is also a strong and relatively independent judiciary and the media is reasonably free. Furthermore, with greater exposure to privatisation and globalisation since the early 1990s and the associated international standards and influx of foreign investment, Israeli society has undergone significant liberalisation. This has allowed Israelis greater economic and cultural freedoms, and enabled them to portray their nation as western, free and progressive.[17]

However, the positive impact of these changes have mainly been confined to Jews who, in return, continue to provide the regime with vital legitimacy, while Palestinians remain either on the margins or locked out of the globalising economy, polity and culture. In addition, these 'democratising' changes have not modified the most oppressive facets of the Israeli regime, such as the ongoing Judaisation of land; the disenfranchisement of nearly four million Palestinians; the central role of the military and security forces; Jewish-only immigration policies and the structural marginalisation of 1.2 million Palestinian citizens.

In these circumstances, how is it possible for scholars to present Israel as a democracy? Critical analysis identifies the key manipulative practices through which power has distorted academic discourse. For example:

- 'extracting' the Israeli state from history by ignoring the massive transformation that took place during the Nakba, which formed the basic foundation of the state that is now jealously protected by the current Israeli regime;
- 'extracting' the Israeli regime from geography by ignoring the fact that there are over four million disenfranchised Palestinians in Israel/Palestine while Jewish settlers in the same region receive full civil and political rights;
- overlooking the substantive colonial activities of the Israeli regime, a topic to which we now turn.

Colonial momentum

The historical colonial momentum of Israel's regime is particularly important for the formation of the apartheid-type relations that are now prevalent in the region. This requires some elaboration. Historically, Zionist colonisation developed in five main stages. The *first*, from the late nineteenth century until 1947, can be termed 'a colonialism of survival' during which most Jews fled to Palestine as refugees, before and after the Holocaust. In Palestine, under the banner of Zionism, they expanded their settled area through land purchases and the building of settlements (on just five per cent of the land), while building national institutions and armed forces, as the foundations of a future state.

The *second* stage occurred during the war of 1947 to 1949 and saw the establishment of the state of Israel, following Arab rejection of the UN partition plan and their attack on the nascent Israeli state. The war saw Palestine being conquered, separately, by Israel, Jordan and Egypt and the onset of the Nakba. As noted, this is arguably the most significant stage in terms of shaping the Israeli regime which has since been built to protect the military and demographic 'achievements' of that war such as the seizure of Palestinian territory beyond the UN allocation and the driving out of the Arab majority that lived there. During this period, Israel was accepted as a member of the UN, thus ensuring its international legitimacy. At the same time, the Palestinians became a fragmented and defeated nation. They lost control of most of their land inside Israel proper and became a nation of refugees dispersed between six other states, powerless to contest the Judaisation of their homeland.

The *third* phase, from 1949 to 1967, was typified by internal colonialism during which most Arab localities within Israel were destroyed and their lands thoroughly Judaised. The return of refugees was prohibited and they became dispersed into camps located in foreign lands.[18] At the same time, massive Jewish immigration, mainly of refugees or forced migrants from Europe and the Arab world, created hundreds of new Jewish settlements on land previously owned by Arabs. Jewish settlement was not only aimed at deArabising Palestine, but also at Zionist nation-building through centralised, modernised, national planning. During this period, Israel established a formal democracy, although its Palestinian citizens were concentrated in ghettoised enclaves and placed under military administration until 1966.

The *fourth* phase, from 1967 to 1993, followed the Israeli conquest of Gaza and the West Bank and saw the implementation of a massive state-sponsored colonisation project. Over one hundred Jewish settlements, hosting nearly half a million Jews, were built in breach of international law. This included settlement building in occupied Arab Jerusalem which had been partially and illegally annexed to Israel. During this period, religious narratives became central to the spatial imagination of both nations and to the justification of the escalating violence. Accordingly, much of the Jewish settlement of Palestinian territory was driven by the religious narrative of 'a return to sacred sites'. Palestinian resistance, on the other hand, increasingly used Islamic rhetoric to defend its land and resources. Judaisation continued mainly through the construction of dozens of semi-suburban Jewish settlements in predominantly Arab areas as Israel maintained tight control over Arab construction and access to land.

The *fifth* stage, from 1993 to the present, effectively marks the end of Zionist expansionism through a process of 'oppressive consolidation'. The geography of this stage is characterised by an overall stalemate with minor adjustments. This is critical to understanding the gradual introduction of apartheid-style mechanisms that attempted to 'restrain' the resisting population under unacceptable geographical and political conditions. This also gives rise to polarising and radicalising dynamics such as the victory of Hamas in the 2006 Palestinian elections and its violent takeover of Gaza in 2007, as well as the rise of the two hard-line Likud governments, the first in 2001 and the second in 2009.

'Creeping apartheid'

Why do apartheid-style relations seem to have become more conspicuous in recent years? Why have they entered political and legal discourses about Israel/Palestine? Why have international reports and key commentators such as John Dugard, Desmond Tutu and Jimmy Carter described the Israeli regime as one that is 'sliding towards apartheid'? This timing is not accidental. It corresponds to the fifth phase of Jewish colonisation described above. In more conceptual terms, apartheid aims to institutionalise and stabilise ethnic/racial relations based on domination and exploitation. This is particularly 'necessary' for the ruling power in situations where the colonial momentum slows down, as is the case with Israel. At this point, when the dominant group attempts to reduce the cost of control while maintaining political and military superiority, apartheid-type

practices are introduced. Over time, a growing number of such practices become 'necessary' to fend off the struggle of the marginalised for equality and rights. Hence, we see the current political-geographic phase in which Israeli expansion is checked and reversed without a change in state ideology, giving rise instead to the gradual institutionalisation of 'separate and unequal' relations, regulations and practices.

However, the definition of 'the Israeli regime' is complicated by several factors, not the least of which is the mismatch between the territory controlled by the regime and the state's internationally recognised borders. 'Apartheid' in Israel/Palestine is therefore more of a process than a neatly defined system of government. Under the prevailing conditions, the occupation of Palestine (and the associated discrimination against the Palestinians) is considered by Israel, and to some extent by international law, as 'temporary' and is often justified by the security rationale of the military occupier. Clearly, the 'temporariness' of the occupation, and Israel's self-defined 'security needs', are manipulations of international law. While they are still used in public discourse by Israeli elites and their apologists, their legal and political power is waning.

Furthermore, even according to Jewish discourses, Jewish settlements in the West Bank, that is, beyond the state's recognised sovereign territory, have been built as both civilian and permanent. This makes it impossible to understand their existence, as claimed by Israel, as part of a temporary military occupation. Given the massive civilian settlement and Israeli military control, anyone can observe that the Palestinians have been unwillingly and unwittingly incorporated by the regime as third-class subjects. At the same time, Israel has an interest in perpetually representing this situation as 'temporary', thereby circumventing the need to endow Palestinians with full civil rights.

Ongoing Judaisation also polarises relations inside Israel as it creeps and encroaches into Israel proper, albeit with lesser severity. For example, a series of controlling regulations restricting the movements, personal freedom, employment, land and political rights of Palestinian citizens inside Israel have been implemented since 2002. This has been accompanied by an openly racist political discourse laden with threats to strip Palestinians of their Israeli citizenship.[19]

The 'creeping' effect is most severely felt among Bedouin Palestinians in the Naqab/Negev region, who struggle against constant threats to their ancestral land. As part of denying their land and residency rights, the state

denies the Bedouins basic services such as water, electricity, roads and schooling. State violence is also frequently used against the Bedouins, with 604 unauthorised homes demolished between 2001 and 2008.[20] In some important respects, the insecurity and poor conditions suffered by Bedouins in the unrecognised villages are worse than those endured by their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza. Their conditions provide a stark reminder of the encroachment of apartheid-like practices on both sides of the Green Line.

The vagueness invoked by the adjective 'creeping' alludes to another definitional difficulty, namely the existence of legal and political differences between the various Arab areas under Israeli control. Accordingly, the West Bank is officially designated as existing under 'belligerent occupation' and the Gaza Strip as 'hostile territory', while Israel proper is commonly (and problematically) defined as a formal democracy where Palestinians have de jure equal individual (though not collective) sets of rights.

However, as is widely known, Israel itself ruptured the boundaries between these areas and thus undermined any 'neat' distinction between their legal-political statuses. Israeli law and de facto annexation have been imposed over all Jewish settlements and its jurisdiction now covers forty-four per cent of the West Bank. Israel continues to control nearly all the key components of sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza, such as immigration, population registration, imports and exports, water management, transport infrastructure, land and planning policies, foreign relations and investment. Simultaneously, Arab citizenship inside Israel has been reduced de facto and de jure to second-class status.

Given these conditions, it is no longer possible to distinguish between different regimes in Israel/Palestine as one central power – the Jewish state – effectively controls the entire land. Hence, to better understand the nature of the current regime, we may examine the gradations in rights and capabilities between Jews and Palestinians and among various groups of Palestinians. In so doing, we can distinguish between varying depths of Israeli oppression and between the different 'bundles of rights' each group can exercise according to the changing geographies and their legal and institutional settings.

Using this perspective, the apartheid process becomes clearer as Israel officially 'ranks' Palestinian groups and awards them different statuses according to a combination of ethnicity and location, while Jews remain equal in their full civil status throughout the entire area.[21] Palestinians

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are separated into the following main groups: the Druze;[22] Palestinians in Galilee and the towns and villages in the 'triangle region' adjacent to the West Bank border; Palestinians in Jerusalem; Bedouins in the Naqab; other Palestinians in the West bank; Gazans and refugees currently located outside of Israel's control and whose claims to residency and property rights are denied by the regime.

The logic of Judaisation underpins Israeli policies towards all these groups, although they appear to merge into two main Arab statuses – non-citizen residents in the Occupied Territory and marginalised citizens within Israel proper. Although both groups are subject to Judaisation policies, the variation in their legal standing and their varied exposure to oppression and violence does make a significant difference to their life chances, their economic status and their ability to exercise their rights. These structural differences must be incorporated into an understanding of the 'separate and unequal' regime.

By employing the language of apartheid South Africa, Israel appears to have created three 'master types' of civil status in the areas under its control: 'white' (Jewish), 'coloured' (Palestinian with Israeli citizenship) and 'black' (Palestinians in the colonised/occupied territories). This is a vivid manifestation of 'creeping apartheid'. The differences are political, legal and material and they are conspicuous in many fields of life.

Two brief examples will illustrate the point. First, in terms of socioeconomic status: Jewish GDP per capita in 2006 was ten times higher than that of people in the Occupied Territory, and twice as high as that of Palestinians in Israel. Unemployment figures reveal a similar trend: in the Occupied Territory, unemployment in 2006 reached fifty to sixty per cent, while hovering around twelve to fifteen per cent among Palestinians in Israel and around half that figure among Jews. Around forty-five per cent of Palestinians in the Occupied Territory live in poverty, while in Israel some fifty-eight per cent of Palestinians and seventeen per cent of Jews are considered poor.[23]

Second, in terms of construction and demolitions, the gradations of civil status are similarly obvious. In the West Bank's Area C, only one of 149 Palestinian localities had an approved plan by 2008, without which new buildings cannot legally be constructed. Consequently, 1 626 houses were demolished in the area between 2000 and 2008, and a further 4 820 received demolition orders. Similarly, though less severely, about half of the Palestinian communities in Israel suffer a lack of approved plans

and are constantly subjected to planning conflicts, de-development and widespread house demolitions. In 2000 alone, there were 22 000 unauthorised buildings in the Palestinian parts of Israel's central and northern regions, and 16 000 in Jewish settlements. In this context, Arabs had suffered over eight hundred demolitions in the preceding decade, while Jewish areas saw just twenty-four demolitions.[24] This disparity was demonstrated again by sixty-two 'family farms' built by Jewish Israelis in the Negev region without planning approval. Despite appeals by several human-rights and environmental groups against their establishment, all were retrospectively legalised by a law enacted in 2009. Meanwhile 604 Bedouin homes built on ancestral land were demolished in the same area between 2000 and 2008.[25]

Ghettoised geography

Geography is vital because creeping apartheid relies heavily on spatial policies and practices entailing a range of skewed settlement, land, development and boundary demarcation policies and regulations. Palestinians make up forty-eight per cent of the population that lives between Jordan and the sea, but they control only fifteen per cent of the land. Jewish groups and authorities control the other eighty-five per cent, including most of the public amenities and natural resources. Inside the Green Line, the inequalities are even more stark: Palestinians make up eighteen per cent of the population but control less than three per cent of the land (see map on page 109). Looking back to 1947, Jewish individuals and institutions controlled only five per cent of historic Palestine – just seven per cent of the land that later became Israel.

As a result, the areas inhabited by Palestinians turned into a set of ghettoised enclaves all but frozen in size since 1948. On the other hand, Jewish areas have expanded greatly in terms of living space and Jews enjoy freedom of habitation, settlement and travel throughout the vast majority of the land. Here too, the geography of Israel/Palestine has become characterised by three types of ethnic environments that can be seen as the equivalent of 'black', 'coloured' and 'white' in apartheid terms. 'Black' ghettoes, mainly in Gaza and the West Bank, are harshly and violently controlled and their residents are confined by severe restrictions on movement and development. 'Black' ghettoes are also internally divided by a series of externally imposed restrictions typically corresponding to the 'needs' of Jewish settlements and security.

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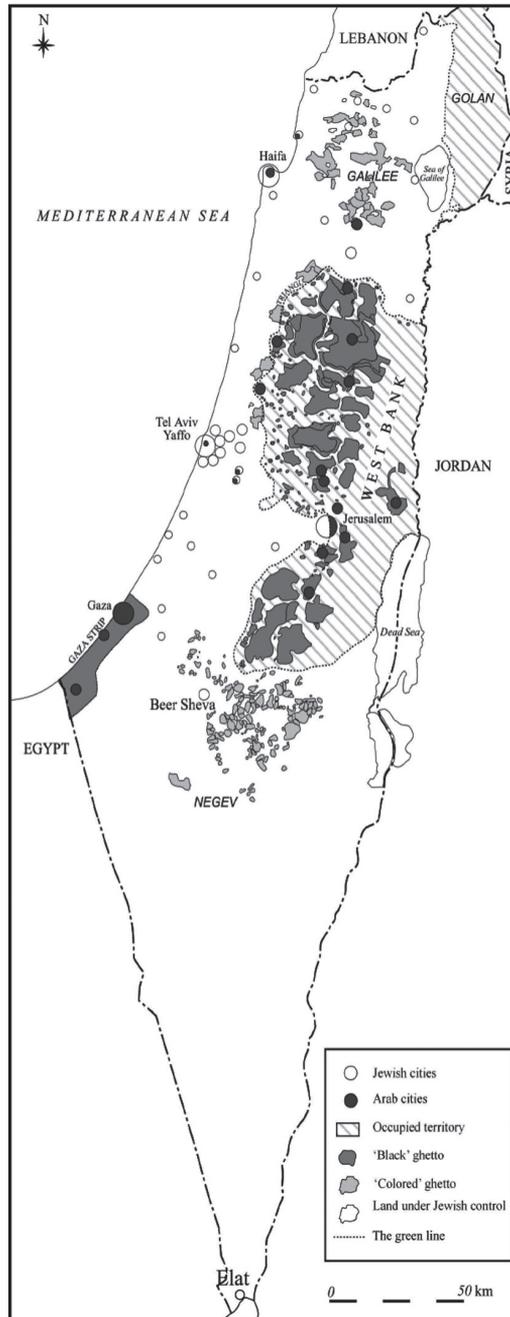
'Coloured' ghettoes, where most Palestinian citizens of Israel and East Jerusalem reside, have 'softer' boundaries but are also highly restrictive in terms of the land rights and development options available to their inhabitants. For example, Palestinians in Israel experience considerable difficulties in moving out of their ghettoised spaces due to restrictions on their ability to purchase land and the lack of educational, cultural and religious facilities in areas outside their enclaves. A key point in the ghettoisation of Arab areas is not only their inferior status in comparison to Jews, but also the prevention of movement between them. A notable example is the restriction on marriage between Palestinians from the Occupied Territory and Israeli Palestinians. Most boundaries, not least the Green Line, apply to Palestinians only, while Jews move freely across them.

In contrast, the 'white spaces' where most Jews reside exist in a variety of shapes and forms, the classification of which is beyond the scope of this chapter. Importantly, they are all situated within the relatively vast and contiguous Jewish territory (appearing as white spaces on the map) precisely because the state effectively Judaises all spaces where Jews settle. They enjoy freedom of movement and associated rights. The uniform legal and geographical status of Jewish space between Jordan and the sea effectively connects the variegated Arab spaces under the one regime. Jewish localities are relatively open, with boundaries generated from within mainly to prevent the entry of Palestinians and, in some cases, 'undesirable' Jews (such as members of 'lower' classes or those who are seen to have marginalised or 'threatening' identities, such as Russian Jews, Mizrahi and, especially, religious groups). The mobility of Jews to reside and purchase land throughout Israel/Palestine is protected by law, policy and practice.

To sum up then, 'creeping apartheid' has resulted in the creation of 'smooth spaces' for Jews in the vast majority of Israel/Palestine and beyond (through globalisation and development), whereas Palestinian spaces have become increasingly 'rough' through ghettoisation and fragmentation. While the roots of this system date back to the ethnic cleansing, settlement and land appropriations of the late 1940s, spatial oppression has tightened significantly precisely during the period when Israel declared its willingness to work towards peace and Palestinian statehood.

Beyond 'creeping apartheid'?

Changing political discourse in support of Palestinian statehood possesses some potential to move the political geography of Israel/Palestine towards

peace and reconciliation. However, a close examination of the political and geographical dynamics behind the verbal shift reveals that they have so far acted to legitimise a strategy of 'oppressive consolidation' during which Israel has readjusted its strategies and technologies for colonising and controlling the Palestinians. Jewish expansionism appears to be ending, but it is being transformed to a 'politics of ghettoisation' which continues to deny legitimate and equal rights to Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. As shown, an ensemble of policies, discourses and regulations have combined to create a political geography best described as 'creeping apartheid'. This is a highly oppressive and internationally illegal order, replete with suffering and occasional outbursts of violence.

It is important to better understand the transformation of colonial and ethnocratic regimes into apartheid-style states. For example, attention may be given to the legal and political potential and limitations of 'temporariness'. For how long will Israel be able to uphold the 'temporary' nature of its occupation without being declared an apartheid state by the international community? This is a key question, and should become a focus of future research on the subject.

Furthermore, scholars may want to investigate the various types of apartheid regimes, which deviate in detail but not in principle from the South African experience. In this vein, it appears the apartheid emerging in Israel/Palestine is based on ethnic, national and religious categories, rather than 'racial' categories based on skin colour. Does this entail any political and moral difference? Does Israel more closely resemble the Serbian model of apartheid than the South African one? And related to this, what difference does the existence of the state of Israel, with its legitimate UN standing, make to prospects for the resolution of the conflict?

In addition, the intersection of identity and class is critical, and scholars may wish to consider the connections between apartheid-style forced separation and the accelerating privatisation and globalisation of the economy in Israel/Palestine. What role do American and European economies play in this process? What are the consequences of the massive importation of foreign labour to replace Palestinian workers? How does the apartheid process feed on rapid accumulation of capital among small national elites? And, finally, is the ghettoisation of the Palestinians affecting a parallel economic and political ghettoisation of Israel itself in the Middle East?

Politically, several visions can be articulated to resolve the predicament. My approach calls for a serious re-examination of socially progressive

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binationalism as a possible peaceful order for the future of Israel/Palestine. Binationalism can be accommodated in various political settings, including urban and communal, as well as on a state and international scale. In my work, I find an Israeli-Palestinian confederation (possibly leading to a federation), with a joint economy, capital city and open borders, and with fair accommodation of the Palestinian refugees, to be the most appropriate. Discussions about these options have already begun in several intellectual and political arenas, and are likely to accelerate. They may sew the intellectual and political seeds for a genuine peaceful and just future for this torn land.

Notes

1. See: http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART1/912/102.html and http://www.israelpolicyforum.org/blog/israeli-reactions-netanyahus-bar-ilan-speech. To be sure, Netanyahu's speech added a series of near impossible conditions for the creation of a Palestinian state, such as demilitarisation, recognition of Israel as a Jewish State, denial of the Palestinian right of return, a 'united' Jewish Jerusalem and the establishment of 'defensible borders'. Most Palestinian commentators and officials rejected Netanyahu's offer from the outset.

2. Given space limitations, the current account is inevitably too brief although, at various points in the chapter, I refer willing readers to a range of more in-depth sources.

3. See Yiftachel (2006a and 2006b).

4. The apartheid analogy has been used increasingly to analytically define racist states around the world, such as the Serbian, Northern Irish, Sudanese and American regimes. See, for example, Richmond (2005).

5. For a full discussion on regime types, see Bealey (2008) and Gregory et al. (2009). For debates on ethnocracy, see Yiftachel & Ghanem (2004).

6. Kimmerling (2005); see also: Hilal, (2008); Lentin (2008); Weizman (2007); Yiftachel (2006a).

7. See: http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/11/29/world/main3552151.shtml.

8. See: http://www.israelpolicyforum.org/blog/israeli-reactions-netanyahus-bar-ilan-speech.

9. The first statement is from Ariel Sharon, *Maariv*, 11 December 2002; the second is from an address he made to fellow Likud members on 26 December 2003.

10. The Nakba (catastrophe) refers to the displacement and expulsion of Palestinians from their land after Israel's declaration of independence in 1948. Some two-thirds of Palestinians were driven out of their land in an act of ethnic cleansing.

11. See Gordon (2008).

12. On ethnocratic policies within Israel, see Yiftachel (2006b; 2009).

13. For the nature of this distorted discourse, see Grinberg (2009), LeVine (2009) and Meital (2005).

14 For data on public opinion regarding war and peace from both Palestinian and Israeli sources, see: http://www.palestine-pmc.com/details.asp?cat=3&id=512 and http://www.dispute.tau.ac.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=69&lang=en.

15. See Yiftachel and Ghanem (2004).

16. For extensive coverage of the debate over the nature of the Israeli 'democracy', see Grinberg (2009) and Chapter 4 of Yiftachel (2006a).

17. See Ram (2008).

18. There are approximately 4.7 million people in fifty-eight UN-recognised Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (see http://www.unrwa.org/).

19. For details of these policies, see the websites of Adalah, Mada al-Carmel and Mossawa: http://www.adalah.org/eng/; http://www.mada-research.org and http://www.mossawacenter.org.

20. For data on policies towards the Bedouins and their struggle, see the records of the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages at http://www.rcuv.net.

21. Jewish groups display important ethnic, class and religious differences that greatly affect their citizenship. For example, hundreds of thousands of 'ethnic Jews', mainly from the Soviet Union and Ethiopia, are defined religiously as 'non Jews', which has a negative impact on their civil status. However, in the main, Jewish citizenship is formally unified and equal.

22. The Druze are institutionally and economically privileged in comparison to other Arabs due to their service in the Israeli Defense Force and their acceptance of Zionism. Bedouins in the Naqab are denied rights to their ancestral lands; they are subject to harsh policies of control in dozens of 'unrecognised' villages and in seven planned 'concentration towns'; see Yiftachel (2006a: Chapter 9).

23. For more detail on the issues of GDP per capita, unemployment and poverty, see the annual reports of the Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality in Israel (Sikkuy): http://www.sikkuy.org.il/english/reports.html.

24. Gazit (2004).

25. For detailed data on the West Bank, see 'The Forbidden Zone', http://www.bimkom.org/publicationView.asp?publicationId=140; for data on Israel proper, see Gazit (2004); for data on Bedouin building and house demolitions, see: http://www.rcuv.net.

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