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**Psychological Legitimization -Views of the Israeli  
Occupation by Jews in Israel: Data and Implications.**

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## **Views of the Israeli Occupation by Jews in Israel: Data and Implications.**

When the 1948 war ended with the signed armistice agreement in 1949 it was hard to predict that 18 years later there will be another war in which within 6 days Israel will conquer the whole Sinai, Gaza Strip, West Bank and the Golan Height. It was even harder to imagine that in 2012 Israel will still occupy the West Bank, and Golan Heights as well as control to a large extent almost all spheres of life in Gaza Strip, in spite of the unilateral disengagement from this area in 2005. This prolonged occupation not only reflects a military and political situation with heavy economic, societal, cultural and religious implications for the state of Israel, but it also necessarily affects the socio-psychological and political repertoire of its Jewish society (Bar-Tal, Halperin & Oren, 2010). The results of the 1967 War, and especially the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, constituted a determinative turning point in the views of the Israeli Jews. Until the 1967 war, most of the Israeli Jews accepted the green lines of the armistice set in 1949 as the final borders of the state of Israel and did not have aspirations for the conquest of additional territories<sup>1</sup>. The conquest of the territories in 1967 dramatically changed these views within a very short time, and raised the idea that these territories, and especially West Bank and Gaza Strip, are liberated because they are part of the deserved Jewish homeland and/or are needed to secure the existence of the state of Israel.

The objective of the present chapter is to elucidate the various orientations regarding the status of the occupied territories and the views about the Palestinian nation that have prevailed among Israeli Jews from 1967 until today. It focuses on

their reflection in the platforms of the political parties, in the expressed beliefs of the leaders and in the public opinion.

The basic assumption underlying this line of analysis is that the way leaders and society members view these two issues (i.e., the status of the territories and the image of the Palestinians) has important implications on their readiness to accept various general principles to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; to accept the specific proposed solutions for the peaceful settlement of this conflict; and to view and treat the Palestinians. But foremost, we specifically suggest that these views have had a profound effect on the readiness for terminating the occupation and for the political acts that have followed. First, however we will say a few sentences on the general meaning of occupation.

### **MEANING OF OCCUPATION**

Military conquests and instances of foreign rule of one nation over another have been widespread in human history. But in the present time they become very rare. We posit that at the beginning of the 21st century, prolonged occupation of one nation by another is viewed by the international community as an unacceptable act, negating international laws and immoral (see Roberts, 1990, for elaboration). Thus, from a psychological perspective, the term "occupation" *bears negative connotations: it indicates an inherent conflict of interest between occupier and occupied; it means that the context is characterized by violence; it reflects wrongdoing, injustice and immorality; it involves a large degree of empathy toward the occupied and a negative attitude towards the occupier, and finally, it conveys an expectation that the situation is temporary and will be terminated* (Halperin, Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Rosler & Raviv, 2009). Thus, a situation of occupation bears harsh implications for the occupier not

only because of the criticism and sanctions that the occupying societies encounter, but also because of the socio-psychological implications that the occupation connotes and denotes for this society (Rosler, Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Raviv, 2009).

We do however recognize that not all the cases of prolonged occupation bear negative implications. In some cases of foreign rule, the **occupied society** might consent with the situation, or even support continued foreign rule. Acquiescence might result from lack of national consciousness or as a result of deep feuds and divisions within the occupied society (e.g. Kashmir before 1989- (Puri, 1993). Support for continued foreign rule might result either from a need in support and/or deterrence against greater threat (e.g. Cyprus, Southern Ossetia- Oberling, 1982; Cornell, 2002), or from a desire to get rewards and privileges associated with the occupying nationality (e.g. Gibraltar, Guadeloupe and Martinique- Hills, 1974). Acceptance of foreign rule may also be supported because of cultural and religious affinity between the two societies (e.g. Cyprus, Southern Ossetia- Cornell, 2002). Also in some cases, long periods of foreign rule have been accepted by the international community, even though it has been resisted by the occupied society. Some instances of prolonged occupation have a long history, predating the colonialist period (e.g. Basque country, Corsica--Conversi, 2000; Gregory, 1985). These cases have been legitimated by the international norm of sovereignty and therefore the occupying societies needed to establish conditions that will satisfy the occupied society and alleviate resistance.

The noted cases are special instances because the occupied societies have accepted the occupation either from its beginning, seeing it as benefitting situation, or with time when the satisfactory conditions were granted. But in other cases of occupation, members of the occupying group find themselves often using force and

violence, and at times performing acts that contradict moral norms because in the great majority of the cases at least segments of the occupied society resist occupation in different nonviolent and violent ways (see recent examples in Iraq, Afghanistan or Chechnya). In addition, significant reference groups in the international community express criticisms of acts performed by the occupying forces as part of the occupation. Such processes pose threats to the basic need of maintaining positive self-esteem of the individual members and the collective, as well as the reputation of the occupying state in the world. That is especially true if the society wishes to adhere to the international norms and be accepted to the enlightened part of the international community. Hence, central psychological challenge of an occupying society is resolving the discrepancies between the motivation to maintain positive self-esteem and the negative implications of the state of occupation (see elaboration in Halperin et al., 2009). Obviously one way to resolve this troubling discrepancy is to end the occupation. Thus, it appears that willingness on the part of the occupying society to recognize the situation as occupation may be a necessary (albeit not sufficient) condition for termination of the occupation.

We, then, suggest that for an occupation that is resisted to take place and persist, the occupying society must be driven by significant motives to initiate it and then to maintain it through the years. Thus members of such a society have to construct convincing rationale for the act of occupation or to deny its existence. As we review the different rationales for performing occupation we find various possible reasons for this act. Sometimes members of the occupying society believe that the occupation serves important super-ordinate goal of many other nations and it is a necessity in order to prevent a higher level disaster and/or to achieve highly valued goal (for example occupation of Iraq by Americans). In other cases members of the occupying

society believe that the occupation is a necessary step to assure own imperative goals and interests or even goals of existential nature, without which they believe their society cannot survive (for example occupation of Manchuria by Japan or of Chechnya by Russia). Sometimes, members of the occupying society believe that there is need to punish the other nation for its wrongdoing (for example occupation of Afghanistan by Americans). In still other situations, occupying societies may refuse to accept the definition of their reality as a state of occupation and define it as “liberation” or another, more acceptable terms (for example occupation of certain regions of Georgia by the Russians or occupation of Tibet by China).

We suggest that in the present era all the occupying societies that encounter resistance from the occupied society have to construct a well developed rational and justification first of all for the members of the ingroup and then for the international community which tries to impose moral codes of international conduct. Within this framework we will now examine the case of the Israeli society that carries a lasting occupation of the Palestinian land with the resistance of this society.

### **THE ISRAELI CASE OF OCCUPATION**

The beginning of our analysis regarding the Israeli case has to refer to the discussion between Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin and Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan that had taken place about six weeks after the end of the 1967 war (for the complete story, see Segev, 2005). The original notes referred to one of the topics on the agenda as "occurrences in the occupied territories". A few days later, "an invisible hand" amended the protocol in handwriting, and replaced the term "occupied territories" with the term "liberated territories" - the latter term of course has acceptable social-political connotations and therefore was used even at the early stage of the occupation.

The conquest of the territories beyond the green lines in 1967 war caused to a profound change in the views of many of the Jews in Israel who within a very short time changed their fundamental beliefs about them. The conquest of the territories dramatically increased the view that these territories - especially the West Bank and Gaza Strip – should be part of the Jewish state. Thus a consensus emerged that these territories were liberated, and that the Jews have returned to their homeland. This idea became hegemonic among the dominant part of the Israeli Jews after 1967 war. It was expressed by almost all the leaders, by the media, by the political parties, by many of the political and cultural elite and by the society members (Naor, 2001). With this idea also emerged an accompanying conviction that Israel cannot withdraw from the occupied territories. This conviction was based on arguments from religious, national, historical, cultural, political and military domains.

We would like to suggest that from the first moment of the occupation various views, which can be located on a continuum, emerged in Israel: Whereas on the one extreme pole were Jews (great majority) who viewed the occupation as liberation, on the other extreme of this continuum were Jews (very small minority) who objected to the occupation on moral grounds. An illustration of these polarized views can be found in two competing declarations, published incidentally on the same day shortly after the 1967 war. The first declaration, published by 57 renowned public figures from political, cultural, and military spheres in the Israeli society, stated:

*“The Land of Israel is now in the hands of the Jewish people. Just as we are not permitted to relinquish the State of Israel, so we are commanded to maintain what we have received from its hands: the Land of Israel. We are hereby loyally committed to the wholeness of our land, with respect both to the people's past and to its future, and no government in Israel is entitled to relinquish this wholeness.”* (September 27, 1967)

The second declaration, published by twelve relatively marginal Israeli intellectuals, claimed just the opposite:

*"Our right to defend ourselves against destruction does not confer on us the right to oppress others. Conquest brings in its wake foreign rule. Foreign rule brings in its wake resistance. Resistance brings in its wake oppression. Oppression brings in its wake terror and counter-terror. The victims of terror are usually innocent people. Keeping the occupied territories will convert us into a nation of murderers and murder victims. Let us leave the occupied territories immediately". (September 27, 1967)*

Looking from a long perspective of time, we suggest that it is possible to differentiate between Israeli Jews' political orientations towards the situation of occupation on the basis of two dimensions: *Value orientation* and *Nature of world view*. *Value orientation* dimension pertains to the type of values that underline the view of the situation. At the one end of this dimension we locate society members that are motivated by particular nationalistic-religious Jewish values, needs, set of beliefs and goals; as for example Jewish religious dogmas that focus on the God's promises to the Jewish people regarding the land; or on the exclusive rights of the Jews to the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. On the other end of this dimension, we detect society members who are driven by the universal-moral values of justice, freedom, equality and especially human rights and collective rights.

*Nature of world view* is another dimension that refers to the characterizing features of the views regarding the situation. While on the one end of this dimension are society members whose views of the situation are completely dominated by ideological consideration; on the other end are society members whose views are entirely dependent on the pragmatic evaluation of the situation. These two dimensional distinctions create a 2x2 typology of four basic orientations within the Israeli-Jewish society towards the occupied territories (see Figure 1). Nevertheless we recognize that these four basic orientations are not mutually exclusive, and in fact there is need, especially within the pragmatic orientation, to see the nationalistic-

universal distinction as being a continuum rather than dichotomy (see also Rynhold, 2001).

	<b>Ideological</b>	<b>Pragmatic</b>
<b>Nationalistic</b>	Nationalistic- ideological	Nationalistic- pragmatic
<b>Universal</b>	Universal- ideological	Universal- pragmatic

**Figure 1. Basic orientations within the Israeli-Jewish society towards the occupied territories**

Each of these orientations has a well defined implications, not only on the view of the situation of occupation, but also on the tolerance and acceptances of this situation, the implied beliefs about it, the emotions that accompany it and the behavioral tendencies that appear to terminate or continue this situation. We will now describe these four major orientations as prototypical types. However, as noted, in reality individuals of the two pragmatic orientations can hold complex views with different combinations of nationalistic and universal arguments.

**Nationalistic-Ideological orientation:** This category of society members views the territories as part of the Jewish homeland that belongs exclusively to the Jewish people. They base this view on the belief in God's promise of this land to the Jewish forefathers; on the fact that the roots of the Jewish nation are planted in the heartland of the occupied territories, which were part of the Jewish historical homeland, where the culture and heritage of the Jewish people were created; and then continued to constitute foundations for the Jewishness through all the generations up to the present times. Therefore, these society members deny the Palestinian claim to the territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, viewing them as liberated territories which should be annexed to the Jewish state. These society members face discrepancy in their views and experience distress when the state is raising the possibility of terminating occupation through withdrawal from the territories. They are proud of the situation when Israel is controlling the territories and engage in activities to prevent any withdrawal from them. In order to operationally define this category, we used the following criterion in assessing views of groups and individuals: Supporting **exclusive** rights of Jews to the whole of Eretz Israel; unwillingness to withdraw from these territories which are viewed as Jewish homeland; support for Jewish right to settle in every part of Eretz Israel; disregard of the Palestinians' national identity and their national rights to the country and state.

**Nationalistic-Pragmatic orientation:** Society members belonging to this category view the territories as exclusively belonging to the Jewish people, but take into their consideration the internal, regional and international conditions that determine how to handle the issue of the territories and the Palestinians. These society members are usually dominated by the emotion of fear, which is aroused as a result of the perceived threats. This group of society members is further divided on the basis of

how their members understand these specific conditions and their implications. This understanding is translated along the dimension of the willingness to withdraw from the territories. On the one extreme of the dimension can be found the **National nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation which focuses on the possible security threats and dangers that may arise as a result **of any withdrawal**, and believe that withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip may jeopardize the very existence of the state of Israel. In contrast, the **Practical nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation focuses mainly on two types of threats to the Jewish and democratic nature of the state as a result from **maintaining control** over the territories. The first type of threats pertains to the loss of the Jewish dominance as a result of demographic shifts emanating from annexing large Palestinian population in the territories. The second type of threats refers to the possible loss of the democratic natures of the state as a result of the continuing control of the territories populated by the Palestinians (those are two sides of the same coin). This sub-orientation may support even a substantial withdrawal, believing that only such an act can secure the Jewish and the democratic character of the state of Israel. The latter group may also recognize the rights of the Palestinians to statehood.

In order to operationally define this orientation, we used the following criterion for assessing positions of groups and individuals: Viewing the territories as exclusively belonging to the Jewish people; using a combination of nationalistic and threats-oriented arguments in order to justify either opposition to or support for territorial compromise; recognition of the Palestinian people as having distinct national identity; willingness to reach some territorial compromise with the Palestinians, in the context of final peace accords.

**Universal-Pragmatic orientation.** This category of society members uses universal moral values and norms as major argumentation for their views, but at the same time they also take into considerations the special conditions in which the state of Israel exists. Members who hold this orientation acknowledge the situation as an occupation, viewing it as an act of defense that was necessary, but recognize that termination of the occupation is necessary because of moral considerations and Israel's interests. At the same time, they demand that any withdrawal either from the whole territories, or at least part of them, will be dependent on the fulfillment of the security needs of the State of Israel.

These society members are usually dominated by the emotion of fear that is aroused as a result of perceived threats, but they also may experience guilt and shame because of their values. In order to operationally define this orientation, we used the following criterion when assessing the positions of groups and individuals: Recognition of a distinct national existence for the Palestinian people; recognition of the right of the Jews and Palestinians to a national homeland in Eretz Israel; willingness to reach a territorial compromise with the Palestinians, in the context of final peace accords; use of moral argumentation and security considerations to support a territorial compromise.

**Universal-Ideological orientation.** This category of society members are driven solely by the universal moral values and norms. They view occupation as a violation of basic moral codes and therefore demand complete withdrawal from the territories that are viewed by them as being occupied and the occupation perceived as causing unjust transgression. Some of them even engage in various activities to terminate the occupation. These individuals face the discrepancy between the desired moral ought and the reality and therefore experience guilt and shame. In order to

operationally define this orientation, we used the following criterion for assessing the positions of groups and individuals: use of moral arguments in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the desire to resolve it peacefully; recognition of the right of the Palestinians to the national homeland in Eretz Israel; and willingness to reach a division of land with the Palestinians, in the context of final peace accords.

We will now review the prevalence of the four described orientations in the Israeli Jewish society, between the years 1967-2009. The review will be done by dividing the timeline into four distinguished periods according to major political events<sup>2</sup>. For each period we will try to determine the strength of each of the approaches in the Israeli Jewish society by looking into political parties' platforms<sup>3</sup>, leaders' opinions, and public opinion polls.

### **The First Period: 1967-1977**

#### **Views of the Political System**

The 1967 war and the conquests of the West Bank and Gaza Strip brought about a wave of national sentiments, which swept across the Israeli Jewish public, as well as most of its political leadership:

Prime Minister at that time Levy Eshkol said: *“I see myself as an emissary of the whole Jewish people, as a representative of many generations of our people, who craved for Jerusalem and its holiness... Blessed is the Lord, who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this time”* (Tevet, 1973: 39).

Defense Minister at that time Moshe Dayan said: *“we returned to our holiest of sites, and we shall not relinquish them ever again”* (Tevet, 1973: 36).

The mainstream of Israeli political leadership referred to the historical and national rights of the Jewish people to the land of Israel (Whole Eretz Israel). However, each political faction put a different emphasis and drew different conclusions from these historical rights.

**The nationalistic-ideological orientation** was most prominent in religious and nationalist parties, like Mafdal<sup>4</sup> and Likud<sup>5</sup>. Mafdal was part of the coalition and Likud joined it for a brief period in 1967. The leaders of these parties viewed the West Bank and Gaza Strip as the heartland of the Jewish people, as an indivisible part of Eretz Israel, the Jewish Promised Land. The platforms of both these parties clearly stated:

*“The national right of the Jewish people to the land of Israel is undeniable and is integrated in our people’s right and desire for security and peace. We shall refuse any offer which necessitates a renewed division of Western Eretz Israel.”* (Likud, 1973)

*“The Mafdal believes in the eternal connection between the Jewish people, Eretz Israel and the Jewish Gospel; and, based on this connection; it aspires to ground the state of Israel and the life of the Jewish people on Jewish religious principles.”* (Mafdal, 1977)

Both platforms stressed the need for “Jewish settlement on a large scale” of the “liberated parts of Eretz Israel”; and both ignored the existence of the Palestinians, referring to them as “the residents of Eretz Israel”.

*“The Mafdal view the Arab residents of Eretz Israel as equal citizens bearing rights and duties towards the state. They owe the state their full and active loyalty, together with the maintenance of their distinct cultural-religious heritage”.* (Mafdal, 1977)

*“In the state Israel there will be a complete equality in rights for all its citizens and residents... Any resident of Eretz Israel, without prejudice of race, nationality or religion, who would seek citizenship of the state and who will swear allegiance to it – will be granted”.* (Likud, 1973)

For Menachem Begin, leader of the nationalist party Likud, the West Bank was part of the Jewish heritage, as he declared:

*“These are liberated territories belonging to the Jewish people... there will be no annexation as these are our lands and not the lands of foreigners”* (Zertal & Eldar, 2007: 84).

For Begin, a withdrawal from these territories was comparable with treason:

*“This joy of dividing this piece of land of our ancestors, of ourselves, of our sons, is the weirdest phenomenon in Jewish history. For thousands of years we have demanded our full rights to the whole Eretz Israel, and now - divide?”* (Begin, 1970).

Begin absolutely rejected a distinct Palestinian identity saying in the Israeli parliament (Knesset) in 1975 “there is no Palestine here and therefore there is no

entity, no identity, and no nation that is called Palestinian” (quoted by Auerbach and Ben-Yehuda, 1987, p. 330). He thus used the label “Arabs of Eretz Israel” when he referred to the Palestinians.

On the basis of the above presented views about the territories and the Palestinians, it is not surprising that the Likud party objected to any type of withdrawal from the occupied territories.

*“The stated policy of the Labor government, which strives for the renewed division of Western Eretz Israel, poses a threat to the future of the state of Israel, and its very existence”* (Likud, 1973)

This orientation emphasized exclusive Jewish national rights over the “liberated territories”, while utterly rejecting Palestinian nationality.

**The nationalist-pragmatic orientation** during this period first of all supported the idea that Whole Eretz (Country) Israel belongs to Jews. Nevertheless this orientation was divided between two major sub-orientations, represented by Shelomzion and the Labor parties- between those political leaders which opposed territorial compromise and those which supported territorial compromise on the basis of various considerations. **The National nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation was represented by Ariel Sharon, and his party Shelomzion<sup>6</sup>, as well as some of the more hawkish Leaders of the Labor party<sup>7</sup>, like Moshe Dayan. This orientation, while recognizing the existence of the Palestinian people, emphasized nationalistic and security argumentation in order to legitimize the continued Israeli control over the West Bank and Gaza.

The platform of Shelomzion referred to the rights of the Jews to whole of Eretz Israel, and therefore supported their settlement in the conquered territories.

*“Jews will be allowed to live in every part of Eretz Israel, as it is our undeniable historical right. As Arabs live today in all parts of Eretz Israel so will the Jews...”*(Shelomzion, 1977).

At the same time the party recognized the existence of the national identity of the Palestinians, which necessitates negotiations with them.

*“Peace will be achieved in direct negotiations between Israel and the relevant Arab actors, involved directly in the conflict, including the Palestinians.”* (Shelomzion, 1977).

Indeed, Ariel Sharon, who headed Shelomzion, recognized Palestinian identity, but regarded Jordan as the Palestinian state in reality (Auerbach & Agid-Ben Yehuda, 1993). He was even ready to recognize the PLO as genuine representative of the Palestinian people, in contrast to almost all other Israeli leaders, saying in 1977 “Israel must talk with the PLO representatives if they represent the Palestinians” (quoted by Auerbach and Agid-Ben Yehuda, 1993, p. 154).

For Sharon, Jews have historical rights to the liberated territories

*“These places (Judea and Samaria) were so much a part of our heritage... The basic fact was that these areas were part of the country that had been captured by the invading Arab armies in 1948. Now we had come back to them.”* (Sharon, 1989: 208).

But in addition to the ideological historical-national argument he also held arguments taken from the security realm, which emphasized the strategic importance of maintaining Israeli control over the West Bank:

*“We did not need or want the agricultural lands. But I was just certain that we did need the important road junctions and the high controlling terrain... to protect and give depth to the tiny heartland along the coast, to be able to defend ourselves on the line of the Jordan River, and to secure Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish people forever”* (Sharon, 1989: 208).

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan represented another example of a leader with national nationalist-pragmatic orientation. Although being a member of the Labor party, Dayan emphasized Jewish historical rights, while acknowledging the distinctive Palestinian identity (Auerbach and Ben-Yehuda, 1987):

*“We have returned to our holiest of sites”* (sited at Tevet, 1973:39). *“This territory is part of historic Jewish homeland”* (Dayan, 1974)

Dayan also acknowledged the role of the PLO in settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

*“The PLO isn't just the terrorists or the terrorist organization. It's also the civilian part of it. That is to say, the Palestinian refugees... No one thinks a final settlement of the conflict in the Middle East can be achieved without a settlement of the refugees.”* (Dayan, 1979a)

Nevertheless Dayan rejected the Palestinians connection to Palestine, suggesting that their place is in Jordan (Auerbach and Ben-Yehuda, 1987). While declaring his support for peace agreement, Dayan put off any notions of territorial compromise so long as there is no full peaceful settlement of the wider Israeli-Arab conflict:

*“I support fully the formula set by the government of Israel that, as long as there are no full and fair peace agreements – such as any country has with its neighbors - we should continue our hold over these territories”* (Cited by Tevet, 1973: 119).

At the same time he thought that holding territories that provide depth for defense is more important than peace.

A somewhat different sub-orientation which we call **Practical-nationalistic-pragmatic** was shared by other leaders of the Labor party which led the government in this period. This sub-orientation emphasized the salience of maintaining the Jewish and Democratic character of the state of Israel, over Jewish historical rights. These perceptions of threats, deriving from the loss of either the Jewish or the democratic nature of the state of Israel, justified the need for territorial compromise.

The Labor's platform emphasized the Jewish character of the state of Israel, and its connection with the Jewish historical Homeland:

*“The state of Israel was created for the Jewish people, and it is the homeland of every Jew who wishes to return here... (The state's roles include) the concentration of the Jewish people in its historical homeland”.* (Labor, 1969)

*“Israel is the homeland for the whole Jewish people. It must continue to nurture its Jewish national character.”* (Labor, 1977)

Furthermore, the Labor's platform emphasized the Jews right to settle anywhere in Eretz Israel, but subordinated these rights to security considerations:

*“The settlement of the whole of Eretz Israel is the highest commandment, from Zionist, security and societal perspectives... (The government) should continue to expand and strengthen the (Jewish) urban and rural settlements in the Jerusalem*

*area, the Golan, the Jordan valley, the Raffah area, and along the red sea. These settlements should be established according to government policy of securing defensible borders.” (Labor, 1977)*

However, the Labor acknowledged the existence of a Palestinian people, while negating their claim for an independent state:

*“Israel negates the establishment of an independent Arab-Palestinian state west of the river Jordan. The national identity of the Palestinian and Jordanian Arabs will be fulfilled in the neighboring Jordanian-Palestinian state”.* (Labor, 1977)

While expressing readiness for territorial compromise, the Labor utilized security considerations in order to negate a withdrawal to the 1967 borderlines:

*“Based on past experience of decades of animosity around us, and on the necessity of guaranteeing Israel’s future security, Israel will never again return to the ceasefire lines before the Six-Days war.”* (Labor, 1969)

*“While expressing readiness for territorial compromises with each one of the neighboring Arab countries, the Labor negates the policies of return to the 1967 lines, which relinquishes the claim for defensible borders.”* (Labor, 1977)

However, the Labor’s platform expressed readiness to grant some form of autonomy to the “local population” in the territories:

*“The government of Israel will assist the independent activities of the local population (in the territories) in areas of education, culture, and religion, and in nurturing the principles of democracy and progress in societal, municipal, and public life”* (Labor, 1977).

Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir was among the first to clearly state the demographic threat of continued occupation:

*“I’m against the addition of one million Arabs to the (already existing) 400 thousands Israeli Arabs, which will then form a 40% minority within the Israeli population...It will not be difficult to predict when there will be an Arab Majority within the state of Israel.”* (Cited by Tevet, 1973: 288)

Yitzhak Rabin, who was appointed Prime Minister in 1974, emphasized Jewish claim to their homeland:

*“The right of the Jewish people to live its life in its own state, free, independent and in peace... To insure the existence of our people in their homeland.”* (Rabin, 1967)

Rabin also stated his support for Jews right to settle anywhere in Eretz Israel:

*“I do not agree with the rule that it is OK to settle near Jericho, but it is wrong to settle near Kfar-Saba. I do not understand why it is OK (to settle) in the Jordan Valley and forbidden on the mountains of Samaria.”* (Cited by Zertal & Eldar, 2007)

However, he recognized the existence of moral considerations, which serve to limit these rights: *“I acknowledge that it is immoral to settle through the dispossession of Arabs and disregard towards their sentiments.”*(Cited by Zertal & Eldar, 2007)

Rabin also recognized the Palestinians as a distinct group, stating in 1977: *“We recognize the existence of a ‘Palestinian problem’”* (Rabin, 1979: 431). However, he objected to the establishment of a Palestinian state, claiming that Jordan should become a Jordanian-Palestinian state (Auerbach & Agid-Ben Yehuda, 1993). He spelled out his ideas very clearly in his 1974 inauguration speech as the Prime Minister:

*“Even in the framework of peace accords, we will not withdraw to the 1967 lines, which are untenable, and which encourage aggression against us. We aspire to achieve peace agreement with Jordan which will be based on the existence of two independent states: Israel, with united Jerusalem as its capital, and an Arab state east of Israel. The neighboring Jordanian-Palestinian state will express the political identity of both Palestinians and Jordanian Arabs. Israel totally objects to the establishment of another Arab state between us and Jordan, West of the Jordan river.”* (Rabin, 1979: 424)

Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Alon emphasized his commitment to Jewish national rights:

*“The historical right over the fatherland is what makes the fundamental difference between a just return to Zion and a colonial settlement. Our historical rights over Eretz Israel are the moral basis for the existence of Israel in any borders.”* (Alon, 1973)

However, Alon also acknowledged the collective rights of the Palestinian people, while emphasizing their connection with Jordan:

*“A deeply rooted Arab population has been living in Eretz Israel for hundreds of years, during which time it has developed its own unique characteristics ... Actually, in the borders of historic Eretz Israel – on both sides of the river Jordan – there already exists, in principle, two national homelands, an Arab and a Jewish. If the name given to the Arab homeland is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, that’s their own affair.”* (Alon, 1973)

Alon emphasized the dangers posed by annexation of the territories to the Jewish character and moral nature of the state of Israel:

*“The choice before us in this matter is brutally clear: If we annex the densely populated areas (of the West Bank) to Israel, while giving their inhabitants full civil rights – then we will cease to be a Jewish state. If we annex the territories without giving their inhabitants full civil rights – we will cease to be a democratic society... There is a real danger of a “Rhodesian” process within the Israeli society.”* (Alon, 1973)

Alon further expressed more universal values, stating in 1977:

*“Committing justice with another people... I mean the Arab Palestinian nation that resides on the banks of the Jordan, in the historical Land of Israel is also in itself of historical significance.”* (Agid-Ben Yehuda & Auerbach, 1991, p. 530)

Finally, Alon emphasized his explicit support for territorial compromise, while negating withdrawal to the 1967 borderlines:

*“If I support territorial compromise, it is not in the absence of national historical rights, but in spite of these rights, and for a much higher historical cause – peace... There can be no peace with full (Israeli) control of the territories, as there can be no security with a total withdrawal (to 1967 lines).”* (Alon, 1973)

Defense Minister Shimon Peres (1974-1977) also professed to Jewish historical rights:

*“The validity of the Jewish historical rights over Eretz Israel... was carried by the Jewish people in its heart, its consciousness, and its fate, throughout the centuries of its wandering.”* (Peres, 1978: 94)

However, Peres emphasized the importance of Jewish majority in securing these historical rights, and warned against a pending Demographic problem:

*“The continuing political and security struggle of the Jewish people must be guided by the ideal definitions of Zionism – the concentration of the majority of the Jewish people in the largest part of Eretz Israel.... If we had 6 million Jews in Israel... it would have been possible to solve the “Palestinian problem” without fear of the “Demographic problem”. It would have been possible to maintain the Jewish character of the state of Israel, together with greater flexibility in solving the Palestinian problem within (Israel).”* (Peres, 1978: 94)

Peres justified the necessity of territorial compromise with the need to maintain the Jewish national character of the state of Israel

*“The territorial compromise, as suggested in our platform, is not a goal in itself, but a price ... a necessary guarantee for preserving the Jewish character of the state.”* (Peres, 1978: 35)

However, all three leaders opposed the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, claiming that Palestinian national aspirations should be settled in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian state (see Agid-Ben Yehuda & Auerbach, 1991).

These leaders, while recognizing Jewish historical rights, placed special emphasis on threats posed to the state of Israel from continued occupation of the territories. Furthermore, they also acknowledged the distinct national character of the Palestinian people, and made reference to the demographic threat as well as to the threat of losing the democratic nature of the state of Israel which led to the necessity for some kind of compromise. However, they rejected the idea of the independent Palestinian state, placing security as a major consideration in delimiting of possible withdrawal from the territories.

The **Universal-pragmatic orientation** was expressed by groups and parties to the left in the Israeli political spectrum, which considered themselves as Zionist parties. The Zionist left was comprised in this period of such parties as Mapam<sup>8</sup> and Ratz<sup>9</sup>, as well as the “Peace and Security”<sup>10</sup>. These parties of a small minority (Mapam even entered into an alliance with the Labor party in 1969), while supporting the right of the Jewish people to its historical homeland (but not as being exclusive and without referring to the extended boundaries), espoused recognition of the Palestinian national rights as well and objected to permanent annexation of the “Held Territories”.

Ratz focused on Jewish return to its historical homeland, while Peace and Security emphasized the national rights of both nations:

*“Peace will be based on the aspiration to guarantee the existence of the state of Israel as the sovereign state of the Jewish people which has returned to its historical homeland.” (Ratz, 1977)*

*“The movement will fight for strengthening the recognition that ending the Middle Eastern tragedy will not be accomplished by way of coercion and outside intervention...rather, only by way of mutual understanding, moderation, and a respect for the national rights of all the nations in the region. ...consideration for the justified national rights of the Jewish and the Palestinian people.”* (Peace and Security, 1968, 1969a)

Both platforms emphasized the temporary nature of Israeli control over the territories:

*“The territories, which are under Israeli military rule since the 1967 war, have not been annexed by past Israeli governments, and are held by us as a guarantee only, for achieving peace and security.”* (Ratz, 1977)

*“The Israeli government should clearly state that Israel does not aspire to annex any territories, and that it adopts, as before, the principle of evacuating held territories as a consequence of peace accords.”* (Peace and Security, 1969a)

Peace and Security further emphasized moral and democratic considerations in support of territorial compromise:

*“The domination over another nation, against its will, undermines the moral justification for the very existence of the state of Israel. How can a nation, whose sole justification for sovereign statehood lies on its being a persecuted minority without a homeland, (claim independence) while he himself denies the same right from its neighbors, the Palestinian people, and coerce them, against their will to become an oppressed minority. The domination over the Palestinian people... will ruin the Jewish-Democratic fabric of the state (of Israel), because it is an impossibility to grant the minority full civil rights without jeopardizing the security and national character of the state. It is also an impossibility to deny them these rights without turning Israel into a police-state, which uses its brute force to intimidate a hostile minority.”* (Peace and Security, 1969b)

However, both platforms still put considerable emphasis on “Israel's security” and remained vague about the future status of the West Bank and Gaza,

*“In exchange for peace agreements with the confrontation states, there is a place to accede to territorial compromises in all sectors, which will guarantee Israel's existence and security requirements”* (Ratz, 1977)

*“An Israeli peace plan which will be predicated on the following elements: readiness to negotiate a settlement which will establish secure and recognized borders for Israel and its neighbors; readiness to include the Palestinian inhabitants of the “held territories” as an actor in the efforts towards peace... The most vital of national interests must motivate all of us to object to any annexation plans and to aspire, as soon as possible, to reach peace accords, which will enable us to hand over populated areas (in the West Bank) - to the other nation.”* (Peace and Security, 1969b)

The **universal-ideological orientation** was represented by the alternative negligible left party of HaOlam HaZeh, later called MERI<sup>11</sup>. This orientation recognized both Israeli and Palestinian national rights and strongly emphasized universal values of self determination, equal national rights and peaceful conflict resolution.

*“Eretz Israel is the homeland of two peoples: the Jewish people and the Arab-Palestinian people. The state of Israel is the embodiment of the national rights of the Jewish people... The national rights of the Arab-Palestinian people were not fulfilled. The Palestinian people have the right for self determination, and its fulfillment will be achieved based of coexistence in peace with the state of Israel.”* (MERI, 1973)

In line with these principles, the party opposed any annexation, called for a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, and asserted that peace would be the ultimate guarantor for security:

*“The border between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Arab state will correspond to the pre-war lines of June 1967.”* (MERI, 1973)

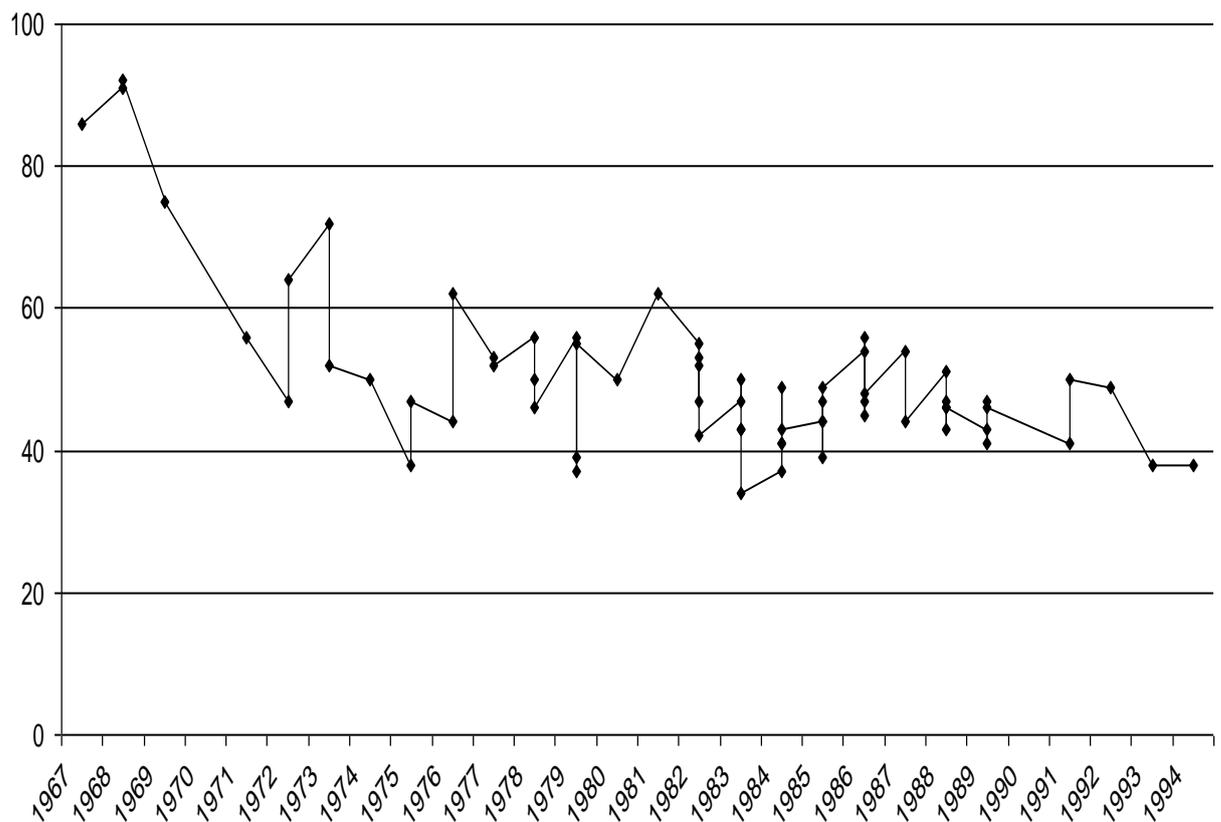
### **Views of the Jewish Public:**

Public opinion polls of the Israeli Jews referred to several topics that are relevant to the present interest; the legitimacy of the Israeli claim for the land, the illegitimacy of the Palestinian claim, and the willingness to withdraw from the territories. In later years we can also find public opinion's views about the idea of a Palestinian state, and whether a Palestinian state is a threat to the state of Israel.

The polls indicate that in congruence with **the nationalistic-ideological orientation** most of the Jews in Israel during this period did not recognize the unique identity of the Palestinians as a nation. For example, in the period between 1973 and 1977, 70% of Israeli Jews agreed with the statement “‘The Palestinian Arab Nation' is an artificial concept that has only emerged in the last years due to developments in our area’”.

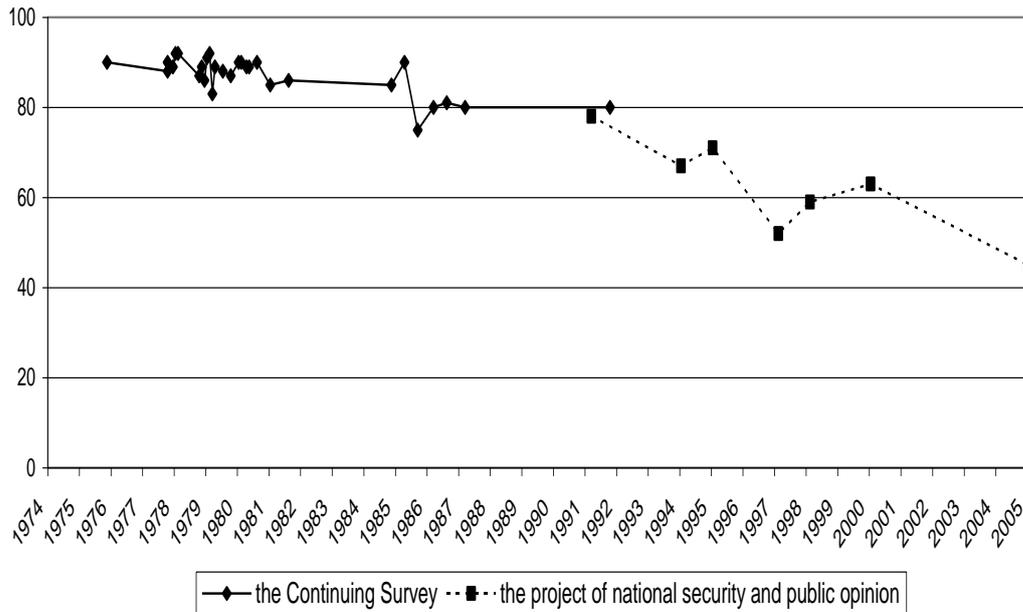
The polls at that time did not directly ask Israeli Jewish public about their perception of the conquered territories or about the reason for continuing to hold them. It is interesting to note, though, that the wording of questions in public polls from this period referred to the territories mostly as "the administered territories" rather than liberated or occupied territories. Some polls used the Hebrew name of these territories (e.g. Judea and Samaria), hence indicating that they are Israeli territories. Still other polls referred to this area as "The West Bank".

The polls did however ask the respondents whether Israel should continue to hold these territories. The data indicate that during the years 1967-1972 most of the respondents (above 60%) thought that Israel should keep the territories. Since 1973, the Israeli public has been divided on that issue (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Percentage of Jews in Israel not willing to return territories: the West Bank, 1967-1994.**<sup>12</sup>

Also, most of the respondents perceived Palestinian state as a threat to the state of Israel (around 90% thought so – see Figure 2). Therefore, opposition to the idea of a Palestinian state during the years 1976-1977 was very high (more than 85% opposed this idea – see Figure 3).



**Figure 2: The percent of Jews in Israel who perceived Palestinian state as threat to Israel 1974-2005**

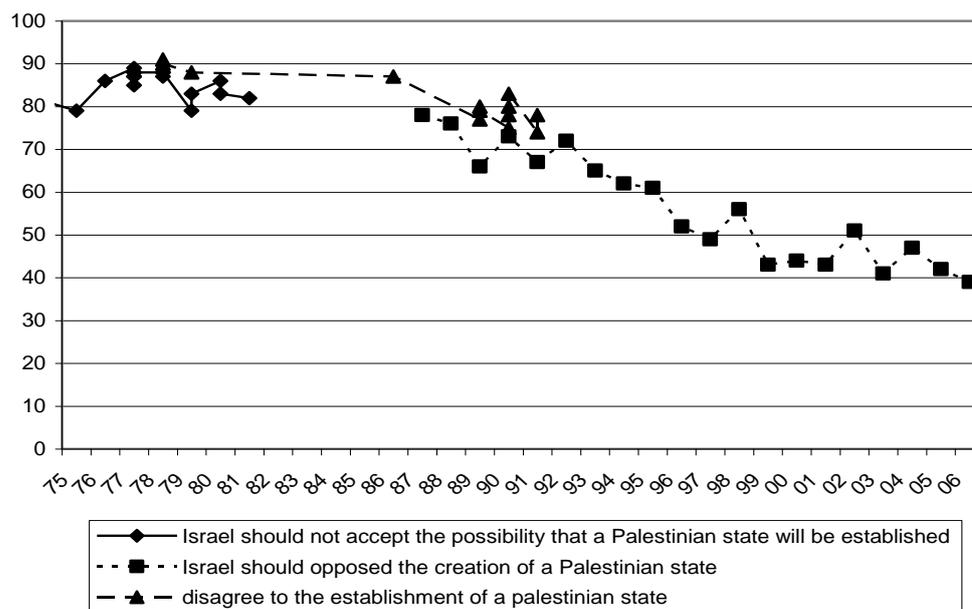


Figure 3: Percentage of Israeli Jews opposing establishment of a Palestinian state through the years.<sup>13</sup>

### Summary.

The great majority of the Israeli public, as well as its mainstream political leaders and political parties during 1967-1977, emphasized Jewish exclusive national rights and security considerations as a rationale for continued Israeli control over the territories. At the same time, the majority of the Jews in Israel negated the existence of the Palestinian people and viewed the Palestinian state as a great threat to Israel. The Likud party which was part of the mainstream fully adhered to the nationalistic-ideological orientation. The other part of the political mainstream, which constituted a majority at that time (i.e. the Labor party), advocated the nationalistic-pragmatic orientation. This orientation was divided - between the nationalist sub-orientation, emphasizing security threats and the need to maintain Israeli control of the conquered territories; and the practical sub-orientation, emphasizing the Jewish and democratic character of the state which necessitates a territorial compromise and at least a partial withdrawal. Only a very small minority during this period focused on the universal values recognizing the rights of the Palestinian to self-determination and their state.

### **The Second Period: 1977-1992**

The political upheaval of 1977, which brought into power a Nationalistic coalition - headed by the Likud party, served as a background for changes in the political orientation on the nationalistic side. Following the Camp David accords, and Israel's recognition of "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" (Camp David accords, 1978), the Likud began to veer towards a more nationalistic-pragmatic orientation. This became evident with the entrance into the newly-formed government by more pragmatic political figures like Sharon, Weitzman and Dayan.

### Views of the Political System:

The **nationalistic-ideological orientation** came to be represented by smaller nationalistic parties like the Mafdal, Tzomet<sup>14</sup>, and Tehiya<sup>15</sup>. However, within the Likud party, there were some leaders and supporters who continued to hold this orientation. This orientation emphasized the exclusive rights Jews to all the territories between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, continued to ignore the existence of the Palestinians, espouse no form of territorial compromise over “liberated territories” and advocated Jewish settlements within them.

The Mafdal platform, throughout the 1980s, stressed Jewish historical rights and values, and negated any form of “ceding”:

*“The movement sees the religious and historical right of the Jewish people over the whole of Eretz Israel, as the foundation of its ideological and educational course of action...Between the sea and the river Jordan there can be only one state, the state of Israel. There can be no ceding of any part of Eretz Israel to foreign rule or foreign sovereignty...and no independent Arab national entity can be established in Eretz Israel.”* (Mafdal, 1988)

Referring to the Palestinian inhabitants, the Mafdal stated:

*“There should be held honorable and fair negotiations with the Arab inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, on their rights and obligations, in the personal and the municipal levels, towards the state of Israel, and on their citizen rights in the framework of a neighboring Arab state.”* (Mafdal, 1988, 1992)

Following the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada, Rafael Eitan, Leader of Tzomet party, stated:

*“I would have declared, right now, the Eretz Israel belongs solely to the Jewish people. There will be no compromise on any inch of land. The Arab inhabitants of Judea and Samaria are citizens of Jordan”.* (Barzel-Miurski, 1988)

Yitzhak Shamir<sup>16</sup>, a leader of the Likud party, was a prototypical representative of **nationalistic-ideological orientation**. Shamir viewed Jewish national rights and the idea of Greater Israel as supreme to any other value (even to democracy):

*“The ‘security’ of our ownership of Eretz Israel is beyond all questions of security... For democracy I will not give up on Eretz Israel”* (Cited by Aronoff, 2009, p. 46, 50). *“Jews are forbidden from relinquishing any part of their historical homelands”* (Cited by Naor, 2001, p. 13)

Shamir warned against the existential threat posed by the Palestinians:

*“The Intifada ...proved to me once more that the conflict was not over territory, but over Israel’s right to exist...The Palestinians threaten our survival, as long as we are here, they won’t be satisfied”.* (Cited by Aronoff, 2009, p. 51,54)

*”The only way to reach an agreement (with the Arabs) is an Iron Wall”* (Cited by Aronoff, 2009, p. 48)

The **nationalistic-pragmatic orientation** continued to be divided into two major sub-orientations, represented by part the Likud and the Labor party. These sub-orientations remained divided on the issue of territorial compromise.

The **national nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation became embodied in some parts of the Likud party which throughout the 1980’s began to use security considerations to legitimize its support for some sort of concessions, in the form of the Autonomy plan. Nevertheless it continued to reiterate its commitment to Jewish exclusive national rights over Eretz Israel, to Jewish settlement of the territories, to negation of the Palestinian identity, and its refusal to any meaningful withdrawal from the territories-

*“The right of the Jewish people over Eretz Israel is an internal right, which may not be disputed, and is combined with the right for peace and security... Any plan which includes the cessation of parts of Eretz Israel to foreign rule, as offered by the Labor party, undermines our rights over the land ... The Autonomy arrangements, agreed upon at Camp David, are the guarantee against the creation, in the western part of Eretz Israel, of a Palestinian state”.* (Likud, 1981, 1988)

Referring to the Palestinians, the Likud platform related to “Arab inhabitants” and expressed readiness to grant them some Autonomy:

*“Most of the Jordanian population came originally from the West Bank of the Jordan, and the Arabs of Judea and Samaria are Jordanian citizens. The Likud will continue to negotiate with representatives of the Arab inhabitants of Judea and Samaria, in order to arrive to Autonomy arrangements according to Camp-David accords”.* (Likud, 1988, 1992)

Menachem Begin, who served as Prime Minister between 1977-1983, referred to the West Bank as “liberated territory”, part of the eternal “promised land” of the

Jewish people. Following the Camp-David accords, Begin explicated on the nature of the proposed concessions:

*“The true meaning of the Camp David agreement is this: Autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza strip; Jews and Arabs living together in Eretz Israel; and security for Israel and all its citizens.”* (Begin, 1979)

Moshe Dayan, moving from the Labor party to the Likud government, emphasized Jewish historical rights in the territories and the right for settlements:

*“The Israeli settlements in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district are there as of right. It is inconceivable to us that Jews should be prohibited from settling and living in Judea and Samaria which are the heart of our homeland.”* (Dayan, 1978)

As a result Dayan could not imagine giving up the West Bank

*“I cannot see giving up the West Bank to Jordan as been accepted by any Israeli party or government.”* (Dayan, 1977)

*“The change, which autonomy will bring about, will be in status and not in the way of living of the Arab population and of the Jewish settlers.”* (Dayan, 1979b)

Ariel Sharon, a leader in the Likud party, used the outbreak of the first Palestinian Intifada to stress the security rationale for continued Israeli control over the West Bank:

*“Realistically speaking, there’s only one solution, a Palestinian state in Jordan... It is unacceptable to take the security responsibility over the West Bank and Gaza away from Israel.”* (Barzel-Miurski, 1988)

While offering some form of autonomy to the “Arab inhabitants” of the territories, even the most pragmatic leaders of the Likud party still opposed any meaningful territorial compromise.

The **practical nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation was represented by the Labor party, which was in the mid 1980s in the coalition with the Likud party. This sub-orientation emphasized the demographic and moral dangers of continued Israeli control over the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Labor platform, while insisting on the Jewish historical rights in Eretz Israel, emphasized also the need to maintain the unique Jewish character of the state of Israel:

*“The Labor will enhance the efforts of the people to build an independent Israel, and to realize the goals of Zionism, predicated on the historical right of the Jewish people to establish and maintain a state in its homeland. The state of Israel was always meant to be a Jewish, democratic and independent state, which maintains full equality to all its citizens.”* (Labor, 1981, 1984)

*“Israeli security needs and the maintenance of its unique national character, realization of Zionist goals and the aspiration to establish Israel as a westernized democratic society will guide to policies of the government towards permanent borders.”* (Labor, 1984)

The Labor warned against the demographic threat to the Jewish character of the state:

*“This policy (of annexation) will lead to Israel turning from a Jewish state to a bi-national state. Even in the context the moral and societal essence of the state of Israel, the Labor rejects the notion of permanent domination over the million and 200 thousands Palestinian-Arabs, the inhabitants of these territories.”* (Labor, 1981)

Furthermore, the Labor party emphasized the consequences of continued Israeli control over the territories to the democratic character of the Israeli society:

*“The domination policies of the Likud government in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza have already caused alarming undermining of the democratic and moral values of the Israeli society in regard to the rule of law, equality before to law, and the treatment of Israeli Arabs. The Labor position is that maintaining a democratic regime in Israel, which is predicated on equal rights to all of its citizens, does not coincide with permanent domination over the Arab Palestinian inhabitants of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza strip.”* (Labor, 1984)

However, the Labor also emphasized Israeli security concerns and the need for

“defensible borders”, objecting to the possibility of a withdrawal to the 1967 lines:

*“The state of Israel needs defensible borders which will allow her to effectively defend itself against all imminent attacks. Demilitarization and other security arrangements will be included in future peace accords in addition to, and not instead of defensible borders. Israel will insist of recognized defensible borders... and will not return to the 1967 lines, which posed a temptation for aggression.”* (Labor, 1984)

Furthermore, the platform emphasized the vital role of “security settlements”, as part of these defensible borders:

*“The settlements – in the Jordan valley, the North West shores of the Dead Sea, the Ezion Bloc, and the Jerusalem vicinity – are vital for Israel’s security... the Israeli government will insist that in time of peace, all these settlement areas will be included under Israeli sovereignty.”* (Labor, 1984)

While recognizing the existence of a “Palestinian problem” and acknowledging Palestinian's national rights, the Labor party clearly negated the notion of independent Palestinian state, emphasizing the solution of the Palestinian issue in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian state:

*“Being aware of the existence of the Palestinian problem Israel is willing to assist in solving this problem, in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian state. The Jordanian-Palestinian state would include the territory of Jordan, which the majority of its citizens are Palestinians, as well as densely populated areas in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, which the IDF will evacuate with the advent of peace. Only in the context of this territorial and political unit can the national identity of the Palestinian Arabs be realized and the question of Palestinian refugees be settled. Israel negates the establishment of an additional Palestinian state on the territories between Jordan and Israel.”* (Labor, 1981)

The Labor party reiterated its commitment for withdrawal from “densely populated Palestinian areas”: *“Withdrawal from densely populated Palestinian areas, in the context of peace accords – is a vital contribution to the security of the state of Israel.”* (Labor, 1981)

Labor leaders used threats considerations to justify territorial compromise. The party realized that holding the conquered territories may lead to bi-national state which will threaten the Jewish dominance. Both Rabin and Peres emphasized the consequences of “continued domination over another nation”:

*“I do not know of any nation of 3.5 million people which absorbed another nation of 2.3 million against their will, there is no historical precedent for it, not now and not in the past ... A Jewish sovereign state does not go along with annexation, with the whole of Eretz Israel. Those who wish for the whole of Eretz Israel...**it's a racial state with Apartheid, there is not other alternative.**”* (Rabin, 1989)

*“The democratic principle of majority rights and majority rule has become well accepted in international relations today. Being a majority is the dominant factor in defining identity and assigning rights.”* (Peres, 1978: 94)

Peres also empathized with the Palestinians and upheld their rights to determine their own future. In 1979 Peres declared: *“Our rejection of the PLO is not linked with rejecting the rights of our neighbors, the Palestinian Arabs. We mean them well. We*

*want to bestow good and honor on them, on their identity, their heritage, their children, and their future” (Agid-Ben Yehuda & Auerbach, 1991, p. 530).*

However, although recognizing the need in territorial compromise, both Rabin and Peres emphasized security considerations, to oppose full Israeli withdrawal, and an idea of a Palestinian state.

*“I’m against a withdrawal to the 1967 borders, no way. Jerusalem will remain united under Israeli sovereignty, and I’m not prepared, for security considerations, to return to the 1967 border”. (Rabin, 1989)*

*“Negotiating with the PLO means a Palestinian state between us and Jordan, to which I utterly object. It also means the return of Palestinian refugees which today live outside the borders of British Palestine”. (Abramovitz, 1989 Citing Rabin)*

*“The settlements along the Jordan valley are meant, in practice, to fix the Jordan River as Israel’s security border. The settlements on the Western slopes of the Judea and Samaria ranges are meant to redeem us from the curse of the “slim waists” of the state of Israel.” (Peres, 1978: 47)*

The **universal-pragmatic orientation** was represented by very small Zionist-left parties Ratz and Mapam (that parted from the alliance with the Labor party in 1984), which placed greater emphasis on mutual rights’ discourse:

*“Eretz Israel is the joint homeland of the Jewish people, which has returned to its homeland, and the Arab-Palestinian people who live in it. Both peoples have the right to realize their national self determination in their homeland, based on mutual recognition, in the framework of mutual compromise, and in secure and recognized borders”. (Mapam, 1988)*

*“Two nations live in Eretz Israel – the Jewish people and the Arab-Palestinian people, both with historical and natural rights over the land... Israel should acknowledge the Palestinian right for self determination, and demand from the PLO to acknowledge Israel’s right for secure and safe sovereign existence”. (Ratz, 1988)*

However, the Zionist-left still referred to Israeli security considerations in determining the future status of the West Bank and Gaza:

*“In the framework of peace agreement, Israel will be willing to withdraw, gradually and sequentially, from the West Bank and Gaza, which will then be demilitarized in order to avoid security threats to the state of Israel”. (Ratz, 1988)*

One of the most unlikely representatives of this orientation was Labor MP Yossi

Beilin, who proposed to establish a Palestinian state in Gaza:

*"I do not propose a Palestinian state only in Gaza. Instead of an interim agreement in the West Bank and Gaza, I'm offering a state in Gaza now, and autonomy in the West Bank. The Palestinians in the West Bank would be able to exercise their right for self determination following peace accords with the rest of the Arab world". (Levy, 1991)*

Ratz leader, Shulamit Aloni, expressed greater degree of empathy and humane approach towards the Palestinians in her assessment of the effects of the ongoing occupation on the Israeli society:

*"We have no inhibitions in our relations with the Arabs, as the Kozaks in Ukraine had no inhibitions towards the Jews. We perform the same kind of de-legitimization that was directed towards us... So many myths has been build around Judea and Samaria, it has become very hard to break them. However, even today, as a matter of fact, although it has been erased again and again, there's no one in Israel which does not know about the Green Line". (Golan, 1991)*

The **universal-ideological orientation** was represented by the very marginal alternative left party SHELI<sup>17</sup>. This party emphasized recognition of Palestinian national rights, and claimed the fulfillment of these rights to be the ultimate guarantor for peace.

*"There's only one political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which Israel will acknowledge the right of the Palestinian people for self determination in its own state, alongside the state of Israel, and this in the framework of mutual recognition and peace agreements which will guarantee Israel's security". (SHELI, 1978)*

The platform declared the need for a full Israeli withdrawal and the creation of an independent Palestinian state:

*"Israeli-Palestinian problem...should be resolved in the framework of negotiations with the Palestinians over national independence in the West Bank and Gaza, alongside Israel". (SHELI, 1982)*

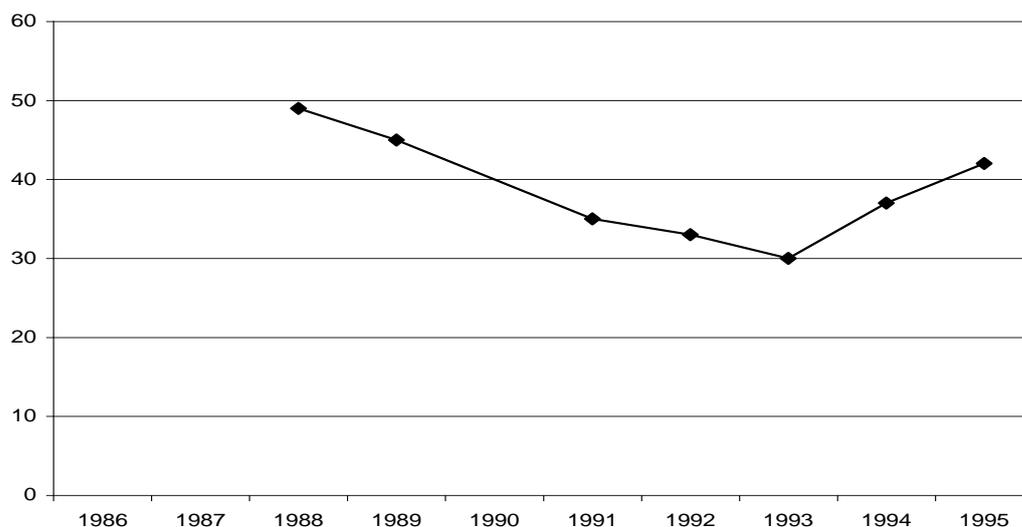
This marginal party carried a clear discourse based on universal rights.

### **Views of the Jewish Public:**

During the years 1976-1992 fewer Israelis concurred with the **nationalistic-ideological perspective**, which viewed the Palestinian nationality as an artificial concept (50% in 1979 and 1983). Still, a 1985 survey of PORI institute indicates that

60% of the respondents thought that the Palestinians do not have the right for a Palestinian state. Most of the Israeli Jews in this period thought that Israel claim for the territories is just and that it is more established than the Palestinian claim for the land. For example, in a 1986 survey, 70% of the respondents thought that "Jews have the rights to the Land of Israel that are more just and compelling than those of the Arabs" (Zemach 1987).

Furthermore, while referring to the reasons to hold on to the territories, at the beginning of this period the respondents clearly preferred the ideological reasoning. For example, in a continuous time-series survey conducted in 1986 50% of Israeli Jewish respondents ranked "Israel's right to the Land" higher than the other security-pragmatic reasons.<sup>18</sup> However, the percentage of respondents who held this belief decreased steadily (see Figure 4), while, the percentage of respondents who refer to pragmatic reasons to hold on to the territories (such as "to maintain strategic depth for military operations", or "to use it in future negotiation" ) more than doubled at the end of this period (Arian 1995). The data, then, indicate a shift during these years from ideological to more pragmatic reasons that underlie the discussion about the future of territories, that is, a shift from **nationalistic-ideological** orientation to **National nationalistic- pragmatic** one.



**Figure 4: Percentage of Israeli Jews who choose the right to the land as first reason to hold the territories (1986 – 1995)** <sup>19</sup>

This tendency appears in another time-series survey that was done during these years. Respondents were asked to rank four values (democracy, peace, Greater Israel, and a Jewish majority in Israel). During the years 1988-1992 the percent of respondents ranking "Greater Israel" (e.g. the ideology of keeping the territories) as either first or second priority decreased from 38% in 1988 to 24% in 1991 (Shamir & Shamir, 2000).

The data show that Israeli public has been still divided about the question whether to keep the territories (see Figure 1). Yet, the opposition to the Palestinian state dropped from 90% during the years 1978 to 1986, to about 70% during the Intifada years (1987-1993) (see Figure 3). The polls further indicate that the percentage of respondents who perceived Palestinian state as a threat to the state of Israel dropped from around 90% in 1985 to around 80% in 1992 (see Figure 2),

### **Summary.**

The second period represents two major shifts in the Israeli political discourse. On the one hand, the fault-line of the political mainstream - based between Labor and

Likud - shifted, as the Likud adopted a more pragmatic orientation. This shift occurred, as the issue of Jewish exclusive national rights became less consensual within public opinion and the negation of the Palestinian people became more contested issue. The nationalistic-pragmatic orientation remained divided between the national sub-orientation, espousing continued Israeli control of the territories; and the practical sub-orientation, espousing territorial compromise in order to maintain Israel's Jewish and democratic character. However, on the other hand, the fault-lines between the pragmatic mainstream and the ideological perspectives became sharper and more pronounced. Both ends of the political spectrum gained power as they adopted a clearer discourse about the rights to the land.

### **The Third Period: 1992-2000**

The 1992 elections brought a second turnover in Israeli political life, with a Labor government being formed after 15 years of Likud rule (during 1984-1990 in a coalition with the labor part). This political landmark was soon followed by a historical landmark in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with the signing of the Oslo accords in September 1993. The Oslo accords spelled, for the first time, mutual recognition of the Israeli and Palestinian national rights.

#### **Views of the Political System**

The **nationalistic-ideological orientation** continued to be represented by right wing parties, such as Mafdal, Moledet, Tzomet and later Ihud Lehumi<sup>20</sup>, which augmented their electoral power in the 1992 elections<sup>21</sup>. There were also leaders and groups in Likud party who supported this orientation. However, this orientation faced its greatest challenge following the Oslo accords. The platforms of these parties continued to emphasize the claim for exclusive Jewish national rights:

*"The Mafdal is adamant on the guiding principle of Zionism from its early days – Eretz Israel to the Jewish people, in light of the Jewish gospels". (Mafdal, 1996)*

*"Eretz Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, based on its tradition and heritage, home for the return to Zion... The party would strive to exercise Jewish sovereignty over all parts of Eretz Israel under our control". (Ihud Leumi, 1999)*

Palestinians were regarded as "Arab inhabitants" who were entitled to respectful treatment, and some form of autonomy:

*"The state of Israel should hold honorable and fair negotiations with the Arab inhabitants of Judea and Samaria, regarding their autonomous conduction of municipal, social, and cultural life". (Mafdal, 1996)*

However, no meaningful territorial compromise was deemed feasible:

*"The party would strive to exercise Jewish sovereignty over all parts of Eretz Israel under our control. Jerusalem, the eternal capital, would remain solely in Israeli sovereignty. The party would strive to enhance and strengthen Jewish settlements in all parts of Eretz Israel". (Ihud Leumi, 1999)*

Any cessation in the West Bank and Gaza was deemed as a grave risk to Israel's security:

*"The Mafdal would object to any autonomy plan which would raise the risk of the creation of a Palestinian state, and would jeopardize Jewish settlement activity in Judea and Samaria". (Mafdal, 1992)*

*"The Way, Hebron, and Oslo agreements impinge on our (national) rights, and are leading to more bloodshed instead of peace... The party negates any claims for "right of return" of the Arab population to any parts of Eretz Israel". (Ihud Leumi, 1999)*

The West Bank and Gaza were deemed as "liberated territories" and no reference was made to "domination" or "occupation" of these territories.

The **nationalistic-pragmatic orientation** remained divided between two sub-orientations over the extent of territorial compromise.

The **national nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation was represented by the Likud party, which regained ruling position following 1996 elections. The party's politics during this period represented a contradiction between ideological and pragmatic orientations. The party maintained its commitment to "Jewish exclusive national rights", while acknowledging later Israel's commitment to the Oslo accords, and recognizing the existence of the Palestinian Authority. This difference reflected

two periods: the first period when Likud party was in opposition, and then the later period in which the Likud was the leading political force in the newly-formed government. During the term of the Labor-led government (1992-1996), and especially following the Oslo Agreement, the Likud party followed a nationalistic-ideological orientation, supported with security considerations. Its platform clearly expressed exclusive Jewish national rights, while denying the unique character of the Palestinian people and their claim for self determination:

*“The state of Israel has a right and a claim for sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and Gaza strip. These claims will be upheld by the end of the interim agreements, and Israel will act to realize them...The Arab people had been given ample rights for self determination, by establishing 21 independent Arab states.”* (Likud, 1992)

Referring to the “Arab inhabitants” of the territories, the Likud platform expressed its commitment to “interim agreements”, which negated any form of territorial compromise, or the possibility of a Palestinian state:

*“The Likud-led government will continue to negotiate with the representatives of the Arab inhabitants of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza strip, in order to reach interim agreements in the framework of the Camp-David accords. These accords are the guarantee that there will be no more territorial divisions in the Western part of Eretz Israel, and that under no conditions there will be an independent Palestinian state.”* (Likud, 1992)

Benjamin Netanyahu, who was the leader of Likud party after 1992 and later served as Prime Minister (1996-1999), made extensive references to Jewish historical rights, while denying the existence of the Palestinian people:

*“The areas of Judea and Samaria are the heartland of the Jewish people... The claim of “Palestinian” Arabs for self determination is false. The inhabitants of Jordan are all Palestinian Arabs... Most Palestinian Arabs live today on the largest part of Mandatory Palestine – Jordan”.* (Netanyahu, 1995: 150)

Furthermore, Netanyahu justified Israeli continued control over the West Bank based on security considerations:

*“The utmost importance should be attributed to the fact that these territories were used by the Arab regimes as staging ground for the attack on Israel in the 1967 war”.* (Netanyahu, 1995: 143)

And, warned against an independent Palestinian state:

*"We can fathom the grave strategic danger that an independent Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria represents for Israel". (Netanyahu, 1995: 276).*

However, towards the 1996 elections Likud's platform was amended, in order to accommodate a more pragmatic view of the changes in the political context and in the Jewish public opinion. The platform acknowledged the Oslo accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, while emphasizing its threat to Israel's existence- it moved to **practical Nationalistic-pragmatic sub-orientation**:

*"The Israeli government will honor international agreements... it will acknowledge the existence of facts on the ground, created by previous accords, **and will act to limit the dangers these accords present to Israel's security and future existence.** The Israeli government will negotiate with the Palestinian Authority for the conclusion of final status accords, conditional on Palestinian fulfillment of all their obligations". (Likud, 1996)*

The platform further acknowledged the existence of the "Palestinians" and their right for "Self-rule". However, it reiterated its opposition to an independent Palestinian state:

*"The Israeli government will allow the Palestinians to manage their own affairs freely, in the framework of self rule. However, issues of foreign affairs and security, as well as other issues which demand coordination, will continue to be the sole responsibility of the Israeli government. The government opposes the establishment of an independent Palestinian state". (Likud, 1996)*

Furthermore, the platform elaborated stringent Israeli restrictions on any future territorial compromises:

*"Israeli security forces will continue to enjoy, as the need arises, full freedom of action (in the West Bank) in their war on terrorism; vital security areas and Jewish settlements will remain under full Israeli control; Israel will safeguard vital water resources in Judea and Samaria... the eastern border of the state of Israel, south of the sea of Galilee will be the Jordan River". (Likud, 1996)*

Prime Minister Netanyahu also amended his positions, acknowledging the existence of the Palestinian Authority and expressing his willingness for Palestinian "self rule". However, Netanyahu negated any form of Palestinian sovereignty:

*"We need a new model, where a national group could exist under an arrangement less than sovereignty, but that enables that group to control and govern just about every aspect of national life. I don't want to run their lives, I don't want to dominate*

*them, nor do I want them to have those powers that would threaten my country... the Palestinian autonomy should incorporate most of the Palestinian population."* (Schmemmann, 1996)

Ariel Sharon, one of the leaders of the Likud party during this period, expressed tentative support for territorial compromise:

*"Although I'm not in favor of territorial compromise, if I had to choose between territorial compromise and autonomy, I would prefer territorial compromise. Territorial compromise means a Palestinian state in part of the Territories, whereas Autonomy means a Palestinian state in all of the Territories".* (Kadmon, 1994)

However, Sharon also placed a series of restrictions on any future compromise.

*"The government may gain the support of the opposition if it declares that there will be no independent Palestinian state... the application of Autonomy or Self-rule only in areas which hold a majority of Arab inhabitants; (if it declares) that areas populated by Jews, security areas, and major routes which connect the coastal plain with the Jordan valley, will be left outside the jurisdiction of the Autonomy."* (Kadmon, 1994)

Avigdor Liberman, head of the newly established Israel Beytenu<sup>22</sup> party can be also located in the **practical nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation. While reiterating his commitment to historical Jewish rights, he expressed readiness to territorial compromises,

*"I believe in the Greater Eretz Israel, not willing to relinquish anything. We have full rights to both banks of River Jordan... However, on the practical level, I'm willing to accept the situation as it is, de-facto... Regarding final status agreements, I'm willing to accept an Alon Plus plan, which enjoys the greatest Zionist consensus, including all vital security areas. 55% of the territories will remain in our control, and the rest is for them".* (Caspit, 1998)

Regarding the "occupied" status of the territories, Liberman commented:

*"Before 1967, they (the Arabs) had full control over these territories and no one talked about creating a Palestinian state, about autonomy, about nothing".* (Caspit, 1998)

However, Liberman also expressed his objection to a fully independent Palestinian state:

*"Regarding a "Palestinian state", it will be an entity, not exactly a state. We will not be able to relinquish control over the exterior borders... it will not be a state in the full sense of the word; it's a far fledged autonomy".* (Caspit, 1998)

The Labor party moved somewhat further within the **Practical nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation to use more saliently arguments taken from the arsenal

of universal values. The party, while referring to Jewish national rights, supported territorial compromise on the basis of arguments focusing on threats to the Jewish and democratic nature of the state. At the same time it emphasized concern over the Israeli security needs which dictated the extent of the withdrawal from the territories. It also began to raise the possibility of establishing the Palestinian state.

The Labor platform clearly stated the connection of the Jewish people to Eretz Israel:

*“Our essence and identity are linked with the Jewish tradition. A direct pathway leads from the roots of our cultural and religious traditions to the future of the state of Israel... A Jewish state with deep roots and irreversible ties to Eretz Israel.”* (Labor, 1999)

The platform further emphasized the need for Jewish and democratic character of the state of Israel and the importance of maintaining Jewish majority:

*“We want peace and we need it – in order to maintain a democratic regime, to secure a Jewish majority in the start of Israel, to create a homogeneous society, and to assist with the absorption of emigration.”* (Labor, 1992)

*“We are currently preoccupied in the construction of the state of Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state. A state which realizes its commitment to humanistic values, as well as values relating to social justice, equality, liberty, and love for mankind as expressed in the Jewish tradition.”* (Labor, 1999)

However, the Labor platform also recognized the existence of the Palestinian people, and acknowledged their collective and national rights:

*“Recognition of Palestinian rights, including their national rights, and on the basis of their participation in determining their future.”* (Labor, 1992)

*“We acknowledge the Palestinian Authority and recognize its leaders as the representatives of the Palestinian people.”* (Labor, 1999)

The Labor also emphasized its objection to the “domination over another nation” on moral grounds:

*“Predicated on the belief that a Jewish state should not dominate another nation, the Labor proposes to initiate physical disengagement between the two nations... Only such disengagement will guarantee personal security to its citizens and will serve the political, security, and moral interests of Israel.”* (Labor, 1999)

The Labor reiterated its commitment to territorial compromise, in the framework of peace accords. However, the platform also emphasized its commitment to Israeli security needs and security considerations:

*“Israel will progress in negotiations towards peace accords, predicated on (territorial) compromise, with the Palestinians and Jordan. These accords will be predicated on guaranteeing Israeli security needs.”* (Labor, 1992)

*“Under no circumstances shall we return to the 1967 borderlines. We shall not compromise the security of the state of Israel and its citizens. Any accord will be predicated on guaranteeing defensible borders and enabling us to defend the state and its citizens.”*(Labor, 1999)

The platform further elaborated on the security restrictions with regard to the concept of territorial compromise:

*“Negotiations with the Palestinians will be based on the Oslo accords, and Israel will insist on the following principles: united Jerusalem the capital of Israel in Israeli sovereignty; Israel will not dominate the Palestinian people; the River Jordan will be the Eastern security border of Israel, and no foreign army will be stationed on its western shores... Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan valley, the north shores of the Dead Sea, Etzion Settlement Bloc, and vital security areas in the West Bank”.* (Labor, 1996)

Furthermore, the platform emphasized its objection to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, but also raised the possibility of its establishment:

*“The creation of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation is the preferable option, from the Israeli perspective. A Palestinian state shall never be an Israeli objective. However, if a Palestinian state will be the outcome of the permanent agreement, there’s need to insure that the political and security restrictions agreed upon correspond to the vital interests of the state of Israel.”* (Labor, 1999)

Taken at their face value, the platforms of both Likud and Labor parties differed somewhat in the extent of territorial compromises and in the possible final solution. They also presented a very different position regarding the nature and valence of the Oslo accords. For the Likud, the Oslo accords presented a threat which they need to edge against, whereas, for the Labor, they presented an opportunity to realize the vision for a new Middle East.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin emphasized the demographic threat to the Jewish character of the state, while stating his personal commitment to Jewish exclusive historical rights over Eretz Israel:

*"I believe in the right of the Jewish people to the whole of Eretz Israel, however, what is the current reality? Currently there are over two million Palestinians in the territories. Add to that over a million Israeli-Palestinian citizens. If you realize the Greater Israel you will get 4.4 million Jews with over 3 million Palestinians. Is that a Jewish state? We said in advance: we do not want the whole of Eretz Israel, we want a Jewish state not a bi-national one". (Ben, 1995)*

In addition Rabin also emphasized security considerations in determining the future of the territories, and constrained Palestinian sovereignty:

*"However, we will not return to the 1967 lines.... Eventually, the overall solution is in the triangle of Israel and Jordan as sovereign states, and between them, a Palestinian entity in the most parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which is less than a (sovereign) state". (Ben, 1995)*

Ehud Barak, the Labor leader in the late 1990's, also stated the Jewish historical connection with the West Bank:

*"(These are) Parts of the homeland from which we had been separated by a hostile border and to which we returned... A natural expression of our love for and historic bond with this land, which has been our patrimony and homeland since antiquity."* (Barak, 2000)

Barak also acknowledged Palestinian national aspirations, and empathized with the Palestinians' anger:

*"Both our peoples have aspirations, rights, and legitimate interests, some of which are inimical to each other. Both have dreams and desires, some of which are incompatible... We have no desire to rule over you or to deprive you of your expression of self-determination."* (Barak, 2000)

*"I imagine that if I were (a Palestinian)... I would at some stage get involved in one of the terror organizations and join the struggle... I don't accept their methods, but what I understand is that the Palestinians feel they have been cornered by the historic circumstances."* (Barak, 1998)

Furthermore, Barak emphasized the need for territorial compromise, in order of maintaining Jewish national character of Israel:

*"The gist of our vision is a Zionist, Jewish, and democratic state living in security and peace with its neighbors... If it wishes to attain peace and preserve its character*

*as a democratic, Jewish state, Israel cannot retain all the territory it captured in 1967 and rule over another people.*" (Barak, 2000)

Barak further emphasized the threat to democracy because of continued occupation:

*"Israel cannot afford and shouldn't try to govern over another people...I think we should separate ourselves from the Palestinians. We do not need here either a kind of apartheid, or a Bosnia."* (Batia, 1997)

However, Barak also emphasized Israeli security needs as restricting any compromise:

*"It may be possible to conclude an agreement on the most important issues, in which we disengage from them with actual, physical separation under five major guidelines: United Jerusalem under our sovereignty; No return, under any conditions, to the 1967 borders; No foreign army west of the Jordan River; Most of the settlers, not necessarily most of the settlements, under our sovereignty".* (Dankner, 1998)

Barak also clearly stated Israeli objection to an independent Palestinian state, while acknowledging the possibility of such an outcome:

*"We should prefer a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation, but we are not in a position to dictate it."* (Beck, 1997)

*"It is obvious they will demand an independent state, what will they want, a circus? Ariel Sharon has been saying for some time that they already have a state, de-facto".* (Dankner, 1998)

Labor leaders continued to emphasize ending "domination over another nation", while constraining the extent of proposed territorial compromise on security considerations. Of special interest is their use of moral arguments that come to reinforce the need for withdrawal from part of the territories.

The **universal-pragmatic orientation** was represented by a minority Zionist-left party Meretz<sup>23</sup>. On the one hand, Meretz platform for 1996 election echoed the rights' discourse and emphasized Palestinian national rights and its support for an independent Palestinian state:

*"Meretz perceives the implementation of the Palestinian national right of self determination as a solid foundation for any future peace accords. The meaning of such declaration is the recognition of their right to establish an independent state alongside Israel, which lives in peace with Israel, on the basis of maintaining the security of both sides and the strict implementation of these accords".* (Meretz, 1996)

However, the platform also emphasized the importance of security and demographic considerations in determining the future of the territories, echoing the security discourse:

*"Eventually Israel will have to evacuate most of the territories conquered in the Six-days' War, as will be agreed upon. The salient considerations in determining the borders should be the security and the demographic considerations, so the Israeli security will be enhanced and the continuation of Israeli rule over Palestinian inhabitants of the territories should be avoided as much as possible". (Meretz, 1996)*

Beginning with the 1992 elections, the **universal-ideological orientation** ceased to be represented by any Jewish party<sup>24</sup>. However, the universal rights' discourse continued to be propagated by various NGOs, operating outside the institutionalized political system.

### **Views of the Jewish Public**

At this period the respondents began to accept more and more the idea that the Palestinians have the right for the Palestinian state. For example, in a Gallup poll from March 1997, 50% of the respondents thought that the Palestinians have the right to have their own state (45% thought that the Palestinians do not have this right) (*Maariv* 28 March 1997 p. 16). A Peace Index survey during the years 1996-1999 indicates that the percentage of respondents who believes in the justness of the Palestinian demands for their own independent state rose during these years from 45% in June 1996 and September 1998 to 55.6% in March 1999. However, as will be shown below, a minority believed that the fact that the Palestinians also have a right to the land is a reason to give up the territories.

As can be seen in Figure 4, in 1992 and in January 1993 (before Oslo accords) only 30% of the Jews in Israel identified "Israel's right to the Land" as the main reason to hold on to the territories. At the same time the percentage of respondents who refer to pragmatic reasons to hold on to the territories continued to grow and by 1993 was almost equal to the percentage of those who prefer the ideological reasons (Arian,

1995). Furthermore, Arian found that during the years 1992-1993 among those who cited the ideological "right to the land" reason, the percentage refusing to return the land was decreasing. In other words "not only was the 'right to the land' camp in retreat, but in addition there was a softening of commitment to retaining the land among those who remained in the ideological grouping" (Arian, 1995 p. 31). This indicates again a shift toward **practical nationalistic pragmatic** orientation.

The tendency to prefer pragmatic reasons to return the territories appeared in another question that was asked in 1994 and 1995: 39% thought that the main reason for returning the territories is to lower the risk of war and 27% thought that the main reason is because there was no alternative. Only around 17% thought like the **universal orientation** that the reason to return the territories is that "Palestinians and Israelis both have the right to live here". A similar percentage thought that the reason to return the territories is "to preserve Israel as a Jewish state" (Arian, 1998). Unfortunately, these questions about the reasons to keep and to return the territories were not asked after 1995, so we can not know what the trend was in later years.

We do have, however, data from later years about the percentage of respondents ranking "Greater Israel" and "Jewish majority" as the most important values, that indicate further decrease in those who prefer "Greater Israel": from 14% in 1992 to 7% in 2000.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, the value "Jewish majority" was ranked as the most important value by higher percentage of the respondents (29% in 2000). This trend appeared also in Peace Index surveys: In June 1996 54 percent ranked preserving the Jewish majority as more important, while only 25 percent gave preference to the Greater Israel<sup>26</sup>.

Overall, this period is also characterized by a significant decrease in opposition to the idea of a Palestinian state (see Figure 3). In fact, at the end of this period, most

respondents (57%) accepted the idea of a Palestinian state. There was also a decrease in the percentage of respondents who perceived Palestinian state as a threat (see Figure 4). The combination of Figure 3 and Figure 4, then, indicates that with the exception of 1999-2001 the perceived threat of a Palestinian state and levels of support for a Palestinian state were inversely related: As the perception of the threat declined, support for a Palestinian state gradually increased.

After the Oslo accord, public opinion revealed an increasing gradual trend toward greater willingness to return the occupied territories to Palestinians (Arian, 1995, 2002). Nevertheless the polls showed that most respondents thought that Israel should keep the Jordan Valley, Gush Etzion and East Jerusalem.

### **Summary.**

The third period is characterized by the decreasing support for the idea of Greater Israel. This decrease was related to the growing acceptance of the ideas of “territorial compromise” and “independent Palestinian state”. These trends are mirrored within the political discourse, with the blurring of the fault line within the pragmatic mainstream between the Labor and the Likud parties. The controversy between security needs and compromises was substituted with the controversy over the extent of the proposed compromise. However, as the pragmatic sphere became blurred, the political power of both the Zionist left and the Zionist-National Right parties grew substantially. Nevertheless, the universal-ideological orientation ceased to be represented within the Jewish political spectrum.

### **The Fourth Period: 2000-2009**

The events of October 2000 and the outbreak of the second Intifada (al-Aqsa Intifada) caused to an emergence of consensual beliefs in the Israeli political system. The peace camp was decimated and many of its members moved towards the center

and the right (Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2007; Bar-Tal & Sharvit, 2008). All the Israeli Zionist parties condemned Palestinian violence and supported Israeli “war on terrorism”.

### **Views of the Political System**

The **nationalist-ideological orientation** was represented in the Knesset by Mafdal and Ihud Leumi. This orientation continued to reiterate the ideology of the Jewish national right to the whole of Eretz Israel, called for the annulment of the Oslo accords, but even these parties left absolute views. They utterly objected to any form of territorial concessions, but tacitly also acknowledge the reality of the Palestinian Authority and the need for some compromises.

*"The Mafdal supports direct negotiations for peace with the Arab countries and the Palestinian Authority based on the following principles... 2) Between the River Jordan and the sea there should be only the state of Israel. No Palestinian state should be established. 3) United Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Jewish people and Israel alone, and will not be divided."* (Mafdal, 2003)

*"A cantons' program will be implemented for those Arab inhabitants who are not residents of the refugee camps. This program will be based on local and authentic leadership, not imported from Tunisia, and under full Israeli sovereignty and security control".* (Ihud Leumi, 2003)

Furthermore, these parties refused to recognize the collective and national status of the Palestinian people, still referring to them as “Arab inhabitants”.

The **nationalist-pragmatic orientation** remained divided between two primary sub-orientations. The **national nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation continued to be represented by the Likud and Israel Beytenu parties. While insisting on the exclusive rights of Jews in the Whole Eretz Israel, these parties began to realize that there is demographic threat to the Jewish character of the state of Israel, caused by continued control over the territories:

*"The Arab population of Judea and Samaria ... constitutes a demographic threat on the Jewish character of the state of Israel. This threat may reach a point of an overall*

*change in the demographic balance in Israel, which will be turned in a short time from a Jewish state into a state with an Arab majority". (Israel Beytenu, 2006)*

Thus, they came to acknowledge the need for territorial compromise, while placing serious limitations on its implementation:

*"Only actual disengagement of Israel from the Arab inhabitants of Judea and Samaria, and from the majority of the Muslim Arabs within Israel, will be able to prevent this irreversible process". (Israel Beytenu, 2006)*

*"The overall purpose of final-status accords with the Palestinians is the ending of conflict between Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of agreed, stable and lasting cooperative relations, including safeguarding Israeli national interests as a secure and prosperous Jewish Zionist state." (Likud, 2003)*

The Likud platform continued in its objection to the independent Palestinian state, but in 2006 did not oppose it explicitly:

*"Israel will not allow the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state west of the River Jordan. The Palestinians would be able to govern their lives freely, in the framework of self rule and not an independent sovereign state". (Likud, 2003)*

However, Israel Beytenu accepted the need for territorial compromise, and a complete separation from the Palestinians.

*"Israel will initiate an act which will set its border with the Palestinians. The new border will guaranty a stable and secure Jewish majority in the state of Israel for years to come." (Israel Beytenu, 2006)*

Benjamin Netanyahu, who served as leader of the Likud party in the second half of the 2000s, represents a borderline case between ideological and pragmatic nationalist leader. Netanyahu challenged the view of the territories as occupied and repeated his commitment to Jewish national goals:

*"This [the territories] is a contested area, not an area of occupation". (Barnea', 2004)*

*"The connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel has lasted for more than 3500 years. Judea and Samaria... This is the land of our forefathers" (Netanyahu, 2009)*

However, Netanyahu did acknowledge the existence of a Palestinian people:

*Within this homeland lives a large Palestinian community. We do not want to rule over them; we do not want to govern their lives; we do not want to impose our flag and our culture on them. (Netanyahu, 2009)*

Furthermore, Netanyahu expressed his readiness for a "Palestinian state".

*"In the framework of a permanent agreement I will be willing to seriously consider this idea (of a Palestinian state). I'm in favor of a Palestinian self-rule, except for certain authorities which may undermine Israel's security (like an Army)." (Blum, 2006)*

*"In my vision of peace, in this small land of ours two peoples will live freely, side-by-side, as good neighbors with mutual respect. Each will have its own flag, its own anthem, and its own government." (Netanyahu, 2009)*

Netanyahu, however, emphasized security considerations, placing stringent limitations on future Palestinian sovereignty:

*"We ask for clear commitments that in a future peace agreement, the territory controlled by the Palestinians will be demilitarized: namely, without an army, without control of its airspace, and with effective security measures to prevent weapons smuggling into the territory – real monitoring, and not what occurs in Gaza today. And obviously, the Palestinians will not be able to forge military pacts... Israel needs defensible borders, and Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, must remain undivided with continued religious freedom for all faiths." (Netanyahu, 2009)*

Avigdor Liberman, leader of Israel Beytenu, and the Foreign Minister emphasized the sinister nature of the Arabs and the threat they pose to Israeli security:

*"At the moment when there's a temptation, when it seems possible to destroy us, to annihilate us, then our enemies grow stronger all the time. They do the same between themselves. Once one side is weaker, they immediately take advantage of the situation. This is the nature of any tyranny." (Duek, 2001)*

Liberman also challenged the concept of causal connection between occupation and the continuation of the conflict:

*"I told Condoleezza Rice that she is mistaken in her assessment that the occupation is the cause of this conflict. It is clear for everyone that even if we were to return to the 1967 border, it will not change anything. (Duek, 2007)*

However, while formally opposing the concept of "territories for peace", Liberman later expressed his support for territorial compromise and the concept of "territorial swap":

*"The Israeli Right has not managed to stop the Sinai evacuation, the Oslo process, the Evacuation of Amona and the disengagement... My conclusion is that we need to adopt a different approach, stop saying always no, and put forward a positive offer. My offer is for territorial swaps: they will relinquish areas in Judea and Samaria, and will receive Wadi Ara". (Duek, 2007)*

Avigdor Liberman, and his party Israel Beytenu, represent a borderline position, between national- and practical sub-orientations of the nationalistic–pragmatic orientation. .

The **Practical nationalistic-pragmatic** sub-orientation was represented by the Labor and the newly-formed Kadima<sup>27</sup> parties. While reiterating Jewish national rights in the occupied territories, this orientation emphasized demographic (Kadima) threats and a threat of losing democratic nature (Labor), which necessitated territorial compromise and the conclusion of peace accords with the Palestinians. However, it also emphasized security needs of Israel as an important consideration in peace making.

Kadima’s platform emphasized the demographic threats which necessitate territorial compromise, while expressing its commitment to “Jewish historical rights”:

*“The Jewish people has national historical rights over the Greater Eretz Israel...The choice between letting every Jew settle anywhere within Eretz Israel, and maintaining the state of Israel as a national Jewish homeland, necessitates relinquishing parts of Eretz Israel. The ceding of parts of Eretz Israel does not constitute relinquishment of this ideology, but the realization of an ideology which seeks to guaranty the existence of a Jewish democratic state in (part of) Eretz Israel.”* (Kadima, 2006, 2009)

The demographic consideration was also emphasized in Kadima’s support for the “two states” solution:

*“The interest of maintaining a national Jewish state necessitates accepting the principle that ending the conflict will result in the establishment of two nation states, based on the current demographic reality, which will live in peace and security side by side.”* (Kadima, 2006)

The platform, however, emphasized security and national considerations in its reasoning for opposing full territorial withdrawal:

*The shaping of Israel’s borders, in the context of a final peace accords, will be guided by the following principles: 1) The inclusion of areas vital for Israel’s security, 2) The inclusion of Jewish holy sites and sites of national symbolic importance, and above all united Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, 3) The inclusion of maximum Jewish settlers, with an emphasis on settlement blocs.* (Kadima, 2006, 2009)

Ariel Sharon<sup>28</sup> made a significant step when he recognized the “occupation” of the Palestinian people and in his statement alluded to moral consideration:

*"It is impossible to hold 3.5 million Palestinians under occupation" and that "the occupation cannot last indefinitely"* (Likud party meeting at the Knesset- 26.5.2003)

Empathizing with the suffering of the Palestinian people, Sharon was willing to consider ideas regarding peace making:

*"I acknowledge the hardships and suffering of the Palestinian people and I believe we could proceed gradually towards peace, based on an approach of mutual respect and the building of trust and confidence between the two parties. We are willing to review different ideas as to the advancement of peaceful negotiations and the alleviating of the Palestinian suffering. However, this may not be possible under the added pressure of terrorism and violence"*. (Sharon, 2001)

Nevertheless, Sharon remained very vague as to the future of the territories and Palestinian independence, emphasizing again and again his commitment to Israel's security:

*"My government will lay the foundations for a different kind of agreement, which is predicated on gradual interim accords, in which the most salient principles will be security for the Israeli citizens, and security for the other side based on reciprocity."* (Barnea', 2002)

*"In my opinion real peace, peace for the next generations, requires concessions, we may have to evacuate some settlements... for the real thing (peace)... I will be willing to make far-reaching concessions. However, I will not make any compromises with regard to the security of Israel and its citizens"*. (Barnea', 2003)

Ehud Olmert, who succeeded Ariel Sharon as head of the newly-formed Kadima party as well as the Prime Minister, clearly expressed his empathy with the settlers and his personal belief in the Jewish exclusive historical right. However, he also acknowledged the existence of the Palestinian people, and the demographic threat they represent:

*"The existence of Jewish majority in the state of Israel does not coincide with the continued domination over the Palestinian population of Judea Samaria and Gaza. We insist on the historical right of the Jewish people over the whole of Eretz Israel... However, the choice between the aspiration to enable every Jew to live anywhere within Eretz Israel, and the existence of the state of Israel as a Jewish state – necessitates relinquishing parts of Eretz Israel"*. (Olmert, 2006)

Olmert used the demographic threat to justify his support for territorial compromise. However, he still emphasized Israeli security concerns as constraining and limiting and such future compromise:

*"We will make a decisive step towards safeguarding Israel as a Jewish state, with a solid and secure Jewish majority which may not be threatened... The principle which will guide us in the dialogue (with the Palestinians) is the convergence into the Big Settlement Blocks and the solidification of these settlement blocks... In any case, our security border will run along the River Jordan. This is due to major strategic considerations, on which we cannot compromise".* (Barnea', 2006)

Olmert clearly expressed his support for an independent Palestinian state:

*"The existence of two nation states, Jewish and Palestinian, is the ultimate solution to the national aspirations of each one of our nations, including the issue of refugees which will be repatriated only in the Palestinian state".* (Olmert, 2006)

This orientation emphasized security and demographic considerations in support for territorial compromise, while still proclaiming exclusive Jewish national rights over the territories.

The Labor party moved in its orientation in the last decade towards more nationalistic views, which were blurred with the position of Kadima and recently even with Likud party. As with Kadima, the Labor platform recognized the existence of a Palestinian nation, and acknowledged the "Two states solution", while emphasizing peace as a "vital Israeli interests":

*"Political accords are a vital Israeli national interest...The Labor will strive to renew negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, in order to reach a conclusion which will end the conflict. The principles for the final-status accords (with the Palestinians) are: two states for two peoples, which will live peacefully alongside each other; the border between these two states will be determined in direct negotiations between the two parties."* (Labor, 2006, 2009)

However, while acknowledging the principle of "two states for two nations", the Labor platform emphasized the limitations of territorial compromise it was willing to make:

*"The large settlement blocks will be annexed to Israel, and settlements which are outside these annexed blocks will be evacuated; Jerusalem, including all its Jewish neighborhoods, is the eternal capital of the state of Israel".* (Labor, 2006, 2009)

Israeli security considerations were given precedence over mutual agreement:

*"In the absence of political accords, the government of Israel should strive for a disengagement from the Palestinians, and the creation of security borders. The labor will introduce a plan for unilateral disengagement from the Palestinians according to security considerations...Isolated settlements will be evacuated, especially in Gaza".* (Labor, 2003)

The platform also noted the democratic and humanistic values, associated with the Jewish character of the state. But they do not appear in relation to the situation of occupation:

*"We are currently preoccupied in the construction of the state of Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state. A state which realizes its commitment to humanistic values, as well as values relating to social justice, equality, liberty, and love for mankind as expressed in the Jewish tradition."* (Labor, 2006, 2009)

Ehud Barak, who returned to lead the Labor in the second half of the 2000s, acknowledged the Palestinian right for self determination:

*"At Camp David, Begin did not only relinquish the whole of Sinai. He also acknowledged the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The whole world understands that "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people" includes the right for self determination, the right for a state".* (Shavit, 2005)

However, Barak also specified a series of restrictions on the fulfillment of these rights, emphasizing Israeli security considerations:

*"Israel should be doing five things: first of all, it should complete the construction of the separation fence over the course of several months; Next, it should evacuate isolated settlements to the east of the fence, in the framework of a total withdrawal plan, and over the course of three years... Israel should offer the international community the opportunity to take upon itself the mandate of managing the Palestinian territories in order to assist the Palestinian Authority to prepare for the establishment of a Palestinian state".* (Shavit, 2005)

This orientation presented pragmatic considerations for "ending domination over another people", while maintaining its focus on Jewish character and security considerations.

The **universal-pragmatic orientation** was represented by a small Zionist-left party Meretz, which in this period represented a borderline case between pragmatic

and ideological orientation. Meretz platform emphasized moral values, as well as Israeli inherent interest in ending the occupation.

*"The Israeli occupation in the territories and Israeli rule over the Palestinian population of the territories constitute a moral, economic, social and political disaster for Israel. The practices of the occupation regime cause daily violations of human rights... The Israeli interest was, and still remains, in favor of ending the occupation and dividing this land through an agreement in the spirit of the Arab or the Geneva initiatives". (Meretz, 2006, 2009)*

Meretz expressed a clear vision regarding the future of the territories:

*"Peace agreement will be predicated on the two states for two nations' solution, with the following principles: 1) end of conflict and violence. 2) Permanent borders based on the 1967 lines, with agreed upon territorial swaps. 3) In Jerusalem there will reside two capitals for both states, alongside one another. 4) Mutually agreed upon solution to the refugee problem. 5) Security arrangements which will enable both nations to live peacefully". (Meretz, 2009)*

This orientation echoed the universal rights discourse coupled with security considerations.

### **Views of the Jewish Public**

During this period most Israelis acknowledged the Palestinian right for self determination. For example, the findings of recent Peace Index survey showed a solid majority among the Jewish public (61%) who thinks that the Palestinians' claim for an independent state is just (Peace Index, November 2008). Furthermore, 62% of the Israeli Jewish public recognizes the existence of a Palestinian people (Peace Index, June 2009). And the majority of the respondents (53%) supported the idea of a Palestinian state. This trend was accompanied by decrease in perceived threat from a Palestinian state (see Figure 2) (Ben-Meir, 2009).

During this period there was an increase in the percentage of those who thought that Jewish majority is the most important value from 29% in 2000 to 42% in 2005, and 50% in 2007. At the same time the percentage of those who thought that the Greater Israel is the most important value did not change during the years 2000-2007 (around 9%) (Ben-Meir & Shaked, 2007). These findings may indicate the heightened

salience of the demographic factor that appears also in the rhetoric of politicians from this period.

However, public polls presented mixed results regarding the perceived status of the territories (whether are occupied or liberated). In August 2004, 51% of the Jewish public regarded the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as occupied territories, while in 2008 55% of the Jewish public regarded the West Bank as “liberated territory”, rather than “occupied territory” (32%) (Peace Index, March 2008).

Furthermore, during 2000-2007, there was a decline in support for withdrawal from particular areas in the territories. More specifically, support for returning Gush Etzion declined from 33% to 24%, with regard to the Jordan Valley from 32% to 24%, and with regard to Western Samaria from 51% to 29% (Ben-Meir & Shaked, 2007). The Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem serve as an exception, with support for territorial concession in East Jerusalem more than doubled from 2000 (24%) to 2001 (51%). This level of support remained relatively stable until 2006, dropping to 40% in 2009 (Ben-Meir, 2009).

### **Summary**

The fourth period, following the al-Aqsa intifada, is characterized by a growing legitimacy within Israeli public opinion for Palestinian national rights and an independent Palestinian state. It is possible that this trend is a result of growing awareness of the demographic threat, posed by the Palestinians, if the land will not be divided between the two nations. At the same time a substantial percentage of the Jews in Israel still continue to view the conquered territories in the 1967 war as being liberated. Nevertheless, public opinion is also characterized by a growing fear and skepticism regarding Palestinian sincerity. In the political sphere, the second Intifada served to further blur the lines within the nationalistic-pragmatic perspective, causing

a re-alignment in the Israeli political center, and the emergence of Kadima party. However, the growing skepticism and mistrust served to weaken the political power of the Zionist-left anchored in the Universal-pragmatic orientation, while at the same time enhancing the salience and power of the Nationalistic-ideological perspective. The mainstream political discourse narrowed down to the specific framing of the political solution, while even the Nationalistic-ideological perspective tacitly acknowledged the existence of the Palestinian Authority (see Bar-Tal, Halperin, & Oren, 2010 for further discussion on these points).

### **Implications**

Conquest of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip placed the State of Israel before a determinative question that was not posed before. What should be done with the conquered territories that were positioned by the Palestinian people, the Arab countries and the international community as focal in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? They all demanded withdrawal from these territories in order to establish there a Palestinian state. In other words, withdrawal from the conquered territories became one of the major preconditions for resolving peacefully the Israeli-Arab conflict. Thus paradoxically the 1967 war brought with time the possibility of resolving the conflict peacefully, and with this possibility a major dilemma was posed before the Jewish Israeli leadership and public, whether to withdraw from these territories in exchange of peace.

We assume that the resolution of the dilemma and even its cognitive formulation depends very much on the perception of the conquest and the related issues by the Israeli Jews. Viewing the conquest as an occupation; perceiving Palestinians as a nation who deserves self determination and establishment of their state; viewing the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea as a

homeland of two nations – all these tune the holder of these views to completely different choices of course of action, than someone who holds an opposite view. The opposite view on this dimension considers Jews as having the exclusive right to the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea; denies an existence of the Palestinians as unique nation; and denies their right to self determination and statehood. Obviously the views on this dimension can be moderated by pragmatic considerations of security conditions which usually constitute for Jews a major influencing factor in their evaluation of peace agreement proposals, or of the demographic threats to the Jewish nature of the state of Israel which has gained salience in the last decade. Clearly, consideration of other conditions is possible.

The chapter presented the prevailing views in the Israeli Jewish society on the issues about the conquest and the Palestinians since 1967. The analysis indicates that the Israeli political mainstream was dominated since the conquest in 1967 until 1990s by the Nationalistic orientation that was mostly pragmatic with an ideological segment. There was very little consideration of universal values that recognize the conquest as occupation, acknowledgment of the Palestinians as a nation that needs self determination and recognition of the occupation as immoral situation. The hegemonic orientation viewed the land between Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea as exclusively belonging to Jews. This orientation included almost all the spectrum of the Jewish political parties, including Labor Party. The differences between the various major parties pertained to the view of Palestinians as a nation and the pragmatic considerations of security. Nevertheless since 1992 there is a clear trend of adopting pragmatic views by the major political parties.

Since the beginning of the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza strip in 1967 the Labor party accepted the nationalistic-pragmatic view. Likud party ignored

completely this type of considerations until Ariel Sharon, leader of the Likud and Prime Minister at that time, said that he had reached the conclusion that "it is impossible to hold 3.5 million Palestinians under *occupation*" and that "the *occupation* cannot last indefinitely" (Likud party meeting at the Knesset- 26.5.2003; emphasis added)<sup>29</sup>. Nevertheless, still in 2008 the majority of the Israeli Jews considered the conquest of the territories as liberation and almost all the political and religious leadership of the present consider the land between Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea as belonging exclusively to the Jews. During all the years considerations based on universal values were marginal and in most of the time negligible.

### **Empirical Study**

Our basic proposition is that the hegemonic views in the Israeli Jewish leadership and the public about the conquest and the territories have a determinative influence on the way they approach the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Based on the conceptual framework presented by Halperin and his colleagues (Halperin et al., 2010) we argue that above and beyond the effect of the ideological beliefs or the political affiliation of an individual, the perception about the accurate definition of the territories (i.e., occupied versus liberated) will influence her level of support for specific compromises required for peace.

In a study recently conducted by Rosler and his colleagues (Rosler, Bar-Tal, Sharvit & Halperin, 2009) this assumption was empirically tested utilizing data collected in three nationwide representative samples of the Jewish population in Israel in three different occasions. In all three surveys the associations between support for specific compromises or proposals for peace and an item capturing subjective

perception of the situation of the 67's territories were examined while controlling for relevant socio-political and other psychological variables<sup>30</sup>.

The first two surveys were based on the "Peace Index" project and were conducted in August 2004 (N=504) and March 2008 (N=496)<sup>31</sup>. Both surveys mirrored the general distribution within the Israeli society in terms of political ideology, religious definition and other relevant socio-political factors.

The first survey was conducted in the shadow of the public discourse about the forthcoming disengagement from Israeli settlements in Gaza strip and in North Samaria. As a result we tested the effect of the perceived status of the territories on support for the disengagement plan. In line with our hypothesis, even when controlling for political ideology and other socio-political factors (i.e., religiosity, income, gender, education), the effect of the subjective definition of the situation on support for the plan was significant, positive and relatively high ( $\beta=.29$ ,  $t<.001$ ).

The second survey was conducted almost 4 years later during the intensive negotiations between Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. This time the question used to capture the subjective perception regarding the situation of the territories was dichotomous with 1 representing "occupied territories" and 2 "liberated territories". This method enabled us to compare the level of support for the ongoing negotiations in both groups. As hypothesized those who defined the situation as occupation were more supportive in continuing the negotiations ( $M=2.2$ ,  $SD=.94$ ) as well as in making the compromises needed to achieve peace ( $M=1.7$ ,  $SD=.46$ ) than those who defined the territories as liberated (Support negotiations -  $M=1.5$ ,  $SD=1.10$ , Support compromises -  $M=1.32$ ,  $SD=.47$ , both  $t$ 's $<.001$ ). Again, these patterns held true even when controlling for all relevant socio-political factors.

We (Rosler et al., 2009) conducted the third nationwide survey with the purpose of examining whether the same patterns would hold true when controlling for a series of relevant psycho-political factors (i.e., political sophistication, support for democratic values, authoritarianism and perceived threat from Arabs) in addition to the socio-political ones that were included in the Peace Index polls<sup>32</sup>. As in the previous surveys the statistical analysis yielded significant results, namely, those who defined the situation as occupation tended to support compromises ( $\beta=.23$ ,  $t<.001$ ), even when controlling for all abovementioned factors.

### **Conclusion**

It is our major claim that the view of the territories has determinative influence on the Israeli Jewish approach to the major issues that stand at the core of the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Viewing the territories as being liberated because they are part of the Jewish homeland and belonging exclusively to Jews and/or that these territories are of supreme importance to secure the existence of the state of Israel has imprinting effects on the issue of determining the borders, removal of the settlements and division of Jerusalem, as well as on the establishment of the Palestinian state. It is important to note that this view was relatively marginal before the 1967 war. The conquest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 changed the dominant position of the Israeli Jewish public.

Having this view, it is not surprising that the Israeli leaders and the public do not easily support withdrawal from these territories and dismantling of the Jewish settlements built in these territories. They have a very clear rationale for carrying the occupation without feeling dissonance, guilt or shame. According to this rationale occupation either does not exist and/or is well justified legitimate and can continue.

Only very utilitarian considerations of threat move the great majority of the Jewish leaders and public to compromises that accept the idea of dividing the land to two nations, and the removal of at least some of the settlements (for example, threats of becoming a minority in the land between Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea). They do not approach the issue of occupation from moral perspective or human rights views. But even in this position the very dominant view is that Jews make major compromises and sacrifices that are not comparable to the compromises of the Palestinians. They do not share the Palestinian view that considers the emerging peaceful solution as an ultimate compromise -- one that gives them only 22% of the deserved land.

In our view this approach to occupation is a prominent indicator of the readiness to terminate the occupation not only in Israel but in every place that it occurs. When occupying society members view the occupation as liberation, or in other justifying terms, even when the occupied society resists the occupation, it is very difficult to terminate this situation. Chinese with regard to Tibet, Russians with regard to Chechnya and even Indians with regard to Kashmir constructed very powerful justifications for holding the occupied territories. Indeed in these cases no signs appear that the occupation may be terminated. It is true though that in authoritarian regimes such as China or Russia, there is less cost for such approach as they can use far reaching power and means in putting down the resistance in the occupied territories and also the criticism in their societies, if it appears. Also being super international powers the international community has less will and means to intervene. But Israel has claims to be a democracy, observing moral codes of behavior—and therefore is judged differently.

Thus anyone who tries to understand the Israeli position has to take into account the above presented and elaborated description of how Jews in Israel view the occupation. The 1967 war was a major event that changed the perceptions and beliefs of the Jews in Israel and determined their approach to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. We suggest that one of the conditions for creating support for the emerging contours of the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is convincing the Israeli leadership and the public that the West Bank is occupied and held for many years in contrast to the international laws and moral standards that Israel claims to subscribe, as well as to the views of all the states in the world.

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## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of challenging the 1949 borders and enlarging the state of Israel was prevalent in some circles, most notably among members of Herut and Ahdut HaAvoda parties (Naor, 2001). However, the majority of Israel's mainstream public distinctly abolished these ideas and accepted the 1949 borders as a matter of *realpolitik*.

<sup>2</sup> The major political events mentioned are the electoral upheavals of 1977 and 1992, as well as the outbreak of the Second Intifada in Oct 2000. These events signified major changes in Israeli policies regarding the territories.

<sup>3</sup> In our analysis we refer only to parties that are dominated by Jewish members. This is because the orientations of parties in which Arabs constitute a dominant fraction are dictated by different set of considerations and are therefore less susceptible to our proposed conceptual framework.

<sup>4</sup> **Mafdal (National Religious Party)** was formed in 1956, and represented the religious Zionist movement. Traditionally Mafdal was a practical centrist party, with a socialist and religious orientation. However, following the 1967 war it began drifting towards the right, and in recent decades it became increasingly associated with Israeli settlers, forming a strong political alliance with the right-wing Ihud Leumi (National Union). In the 1960s and 1970s its political power constituted of 11-12

seats in the Knesset. However, in the 1980s- 2000s its power diminished towards 5-6 seats. Mafdal participated in every Israeli government, with the exception of 1992-1996.

<sup>5</sup> **Likud (The Union)** was formed in 1973, as an alliance of right-wing parties. In 1977 it became the ruling party till 1992. The Likud is a center-to-right party with a nationalistic orientation on issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and conservative orientation on economic and social issues. During the 1970s the Likud gradually increased its political power from 26 to 43 seats in the Knesset, which was maintained during the 1980s. However, in the 1990s its power declined steadily to 32, and later to 19 seats. In the 2000s its power fluctuated sharply between 12 and 38 seats. Likud played a leading role in consecutive governments between 1977 and 1992, and again in 1996 and from 2001.

<sup>6</sup> **Shelomzion (Security for Israel)** was founded in 1977 by Ariel Sharon. The party held a nationalistic right-wing ideology, coupled with a conservative economic orientation. Soon after the 1977 elections, where it won 2 seats in the Knesset, it merged into the Likud.

<sup>7</sup> **Avoda (Labor)** was formed in 1968 as an alliance of the socialist parties Mapai, Ahdut HaAvoda, and Rafi. The party has a social democratic as well as pragmatic Zionist ideology, coupled with a center-to-left political orientation. During 1969-1984 it was in alliance with Mapam. Throughout the 1970s the party maintained its political power at roughly 50 seats at the Knesset, and during the 1980s at roughly 44 seats. However, during the 1990s its power declined gradually to 28 seats, and during the 2000s towards 19 and even 13 seats. The Party played leading role in all Israeli governments till 1977, when it lost elections to the Likud. It returned again to power in the 1992, and 1999 elections. However, during the 2000s it came to play a minor role in Likud- and Kadima-lead governments.

<sup>8</sup> **Mapam (Workers' Union party)** was founded in 1948 as a union of several socialist and workers' parties. The party represented both the agricultural working class' settlements (Kibbutzim) as well as the urban working class. Although being a Zionist party, Mapam espoused Israeli-Palestinian coexistence and later supported the creation of a Palestinian state. On economic issues, Mapam held a strong socialist orientation. Between 1969 and 1984, the party was a part of an alliance with the Labor party, and in 1992 it merged with Shinui and Ratz into Meretz.

<sup>9</sup> **Ratz (Runner – Civil Rights and Peace Movement)** was formed in 1973 by MK Shulamit Aloni. The party espoused a secular socialist ideology which protested human rights violations, as well as religious coercion. During the 1980s the party espoused a compromise solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ratz political power rose gradually from 1 seat in the Knesset, in the 1970s to 5 seats in the late 1980s. In the 1992 elections, Ratz merged with Shinui and Mapam, to form Meretz.

<sup>10</sup> **Peace and Security Movement** was a grass-root organization founded following the 1967 war, which espoused a mutually negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The movement was lead by a group of renowned professors from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The movement campaigned in the 1969 elections, but failed to win a seat in the Knesset.

<sup>11</sup> **HaOlam HaZeh – Koah Hadash (This world – New Force)** was formed in 1965 by the journalist Uri Avnery and held two seats in the Knesset. The party espoused a radical left-wing orientation, supporting the creation of an independent Palestinian state. In 1973 the party changed its name to **MERI** (rebellion), and in 1977 it merged into Sheli. The Party has never participated in any Israeli governing coalition.

<sup>12</sup> Sources: Israel Institute of Applied Social Research (the Continuing Survey).

<sup>13</sup> Sources: **Israel should not accept Palestinian state:** Israel Institute of Applied Social Research. **Israel should oppose Palestinian state:** Jaffee Center for strategic Studies. **Disagree to the establishment of a Palestinian state:** Israel Institute of Applied Social Research.

<sup>14</sup> **Tzomet (Junction)** was founded by General Rafael Eitan in 1983 after his retirement from the position of chief-of-staff in 1982. The party held a secular and right-wing orientation. Tzomet introduced the slogan “peace for peace” instead of “peace for land”, and objected to any form of territorial compromise. During the 1980s the party held a modest political power, with 1-2 seats in the Knesset. In 1992 its power increased dramatically to 8 seats. However, in the 1996 elections it lost much of its power, to disappear completely after 1999. The party participated in Likud-led governments in 1990, and again in 1996.

<sup>15</sup> **Tehiya (Resurrection)** was formed in 1981 by right-wing public figures who seceded from the Likud party. The party objected to any form of territorial compromise, demanded the annexation of the whole of Eretz Israel, and supported forceful policies towards the Arabs. Its political power during the 1980s was roughly 4 seats in the Knesset. The party ceased to exist by 1992, and was inherited by Herut, and Moledet. It participated in Likud-led governments in 1981 and 1988.

<sup>16</sup> Shamir served as the Prime Minister intermittently with Shimon Peres (leader of the Labor Party) between 1983 and 1990 and then lead a Nationalistic government between 1990 and 1992.

<sup>17</sup> **Sheli (Peace for Israel)** was formed prior to the 1977 elections by the merger of some small radical left-wing movements, including Meri, Moked, and some members of the Black Panthers. Sheli espoused a radical left ideology, supporting an independent Palestinian state. Its political power amounted to two seats in the Knesset. The party failed to win reelection in the 1981 election and subsequently disappeared, though many former party members joined the Progressive List for Peace. The Party has never participated in any Israeli governing coalition.

<sup>18</sup> Respondents were asked to rank the importance of four contending reasons used by people who want Israel to continue its hold on the territories: "Israel's right to the Land", "to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state", "to maintain strategic depth for military operations", or "to use in future negotiation". The question was no longer asked after 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Sources: Institute for National Security Studies (formerly Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies).

<sup>20</sup> **Ihud Lehumi (National Union)** was formed in 1999 as a coalition of several small right-wing parties, including Moledet, Herut, and Tequma. The party holds right-wing nationalist-religious ideology with strong support for the settlers' movement, coupled with a conservative orientation on economic and social issues. During the 2000s its political power rose steadily from 4 to 9 seats in the Knesset. The party participated in the Likud-led government between 2001 and 2005.

<sup>21</sup> The right wing parties (HaThiya, Mafdal, Moledet, and Tzomet) won 17 seats in the 1992 elections, as opposed to 12 seats at 1988, 11 seats in 1996, and 13 seats in 1999.

<sup>22</sup> **Israel Betenu (Israel our home)** was founded in 1999 by Avigdor Liberman, as a secular party which caters for the Russian population. This party holds a nationalistic political ideology, coupled with a conservative economic orientation. However, Israel Betenu supports territorial swaps, in order to maintain a homogenous Jewish state. The Party's political power has grown dramatically during the 2000s from 4 to 15 seats in the Knesset. Israel Betenu has participated in recent Israeli governments since 2001.

<sup>23</sup> **Meretz (Vigor)** was founded in 1992, following the union of Mapam, Ratz, and Shinui. Meretz is a social-democratic secular party which espouses a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, together with a liberal economic orientation. The party's political power during the 1990s was relatively stable with 10-12 seats in the Knesset. However, in the 2000s, its power gradually declined from 6 to 3 seats. Meretz participated in the Labor-led governments in 1992 and 1999.

<sup>24</sup> In our analysis we refer only to parties that are dominated by Jewish members. This is because the orientations of parties, in which Arabs constitute a dominant fraction, are dictated by different set of considerations and are therefore less susceptible to our proposed conceptual framework.

<sup>25</sup> We thank Michal Shamir and Asher Arian for the data.

<sup>26</sup> Respondents were asked: "In your opinion, which of these two objectives is more important: preservation of the Greater Israel or of the Jewish majority?"

<sup>27</sup> **Kadima (Forward)** was formed in 2005 by then PM Ariel Sharon. The party incorporated leading political figures which seceded from both the Likud and the Avoda parties. The party holds a center political ideology with a strong emphasis on Israeli national interests, coupled with a liberal economic orientation. The party's political power, since its inception, has been steady 28-29 seats in the Knesset. Kadima played a leading role in the government between 2005 and 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Sharon served as Prime Minister for the Likud party in the early 2000's and later seceded to form Kadima party.

<sup>29</sup> Of interest is the fact that Elyakim Rubinstein, the Attorney General of Israel, objected to the use of the term "occupation" by Ariel Sharon claiming that all the Israeli governments considered the territories as "territories in dispute" and the Prime Minister agreed to change the term he used (Zertal & Eldar, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> The exact wording of the "occupation" item was "Some people argue that the Israeli domination over the West Bank constitutes an occupation. To what extent do you agree or disagree (1 = not at all, 6 = very much) with this claim?"

<sup>31</sup> The Peace Index polls are monthly polls that have been conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel-Aviv University since 1994 (for more information about the Peace Index project see [www.tau.ac.il/peace](http://www.tau.ac.il/peace)). All Peace Index polls include several fixed questions regarding support for and belief in the peace process between Israel and the Arab world.

<sup>32</sup> The sample included 716 respondents representing the adult Jewish population residing within the 1967 borders of Israel, of whom 46.5% were men and 53.5% women. The mean age was 45.9 years ( $SD = 16.49$ ). Regarding political orientations, 45.8% of the respondents defined themselves as Hawkish, 37.7% as Centrist, and 16.5% as Dovish.