Introductory background
This paper assesses the impact of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza on Israel’s democratic institutions and societal values. Examining events from a chronological and, for comparative purposes, global perspective can provide insights regarding the unique character of the occupation, its impact, and trends over time. Through analysis of the public discourse of Israel’s political elites, we should be able to identify any modifications to previously identified trends pointing to a deterioration of democratic standards in Israel.

Revisiting Kaufman’s “The Effect of War and Occupation on the Israeli Society” after a 15-year hiatus, we may well ask whether there is a new awareness concerning the importance of democracy in the public statements of that nation’s political leadership. The task requires interpretation of the text – and, equally important, any tacit subtext – of former Prime Minister Sharon’s repeated assertions that majority rule requires “painful concessions” and a concurrent evaluation of the implications of Prime Minister Olmert’s pre-Lebanon II War locution, “convergence”.

In the first observation in the late 1980s, he wrote, with a measure of concern, of the prospective impact of occupation on Israel’s democracy, including the possible nexus between a developing colonial situation and the possibility of warfare following in its train. I was once counted among those who believed that the concepts of the Declaration of Independence, the social-democratic tenets of leadership and the characteristics of a “benign occupation” provided some temporary economic welfare to the Palestinians with, at most, modest levels of repression, perhaps a necessary step toward an eventual peace agreement. But even before the first intifada, this view had become untenable, given the Jewish settlements’ rates of growth and the shifting of the electorate towards more annexationist policies. When the
Palestinians moved from passive steadfastness (Summud) to an active, albeit mostly non-violent rebellion, the true face of occupation became all too apparent. That is even more the case after the armed rebellion of the second intifada.

We wanted to ascertain the impact of that occupation at the level of formal government institutions (i.e., judiciary, executive, and legislative), as well as in the context of society at large. The 1993 article concluded that Israel’s long-term occupation of another nation, while withholding civil rights (including voting rights) from the affected population, has implicitly undermined the normative standards of Israel’s democracy. This evaluation reflected more the values expressed by the national leadership and prevailing public opinion than any observable diminution of the authority of state institutions or independence of non-state-controlled media. Polls on values at the level of leadership and public opinion showed readiness to neglect Arab minority rights, extending even to condoning expulsion. Kahanism was in the process of becoming legitimised at the popular level, despite the fact that the Kahanist party was not permitted to participate in the electoral process. There was manifestly less public tolerance for unconstrained freedom of the press; accusations of treason were made against peaceful dissenters; and the preference for majority rule at the expense of constitutionally mandated respect for individual and minority rights was awarded de facto precedence.

The most affected Jewish groups in terms of anti-democratic trends were youth (understood as a cohort at the age of first military service), the Orthodox (that included a militant religious component), and “Orientals” (minority ethnic, socio-economic component). Their greatest intolerance was expressed toward aspects of pluralistic democracy, rather than the concept in general, with a more intense animosity expressed toward the peace groups and “left-wing Jews”, Israeli Arabs, and professional groups such as journalists, academics, the judiciary and the police.

Our conclusions identified three trends that pointed to the erosion of democracy. First, there was a lagging commitment to and respect for the rule of law, not only among extra-parliamentary groups such as the hard core of the settlers (who favored supremacy of divine law), but also among a minority of legislators. Second, increasingly confrontational attitudes, accompanied by increased polarization within active sectors of society, extended to carrying the threat of violence of Jews against Jews – a warning that was followed, tragically, by the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. Third, and finally, these dissatisfied Israelis sought a stronger leadership position, one from which they could use authoritarian – even extra-constitutional – powers to curb perceived external and internal threats.

Nonetheless, the article ends describing these developments on a more optimistic note. “In some ways, the security dilemma contributes to the continuing strength of Israel’s democracy. The acute controversy over the peace-war issue has indirectly helped in shaping Israel’s civil society into a highly participatory community. This tendency for mobilization – some would say even hyper-mobilization – was demonstrated then not only in the consistently high turnout for elections but also in the continuous engagement of a significant segment of the Israeli public opinion in demonstrations, picketing, and other extra-parliamentary activities that are the lifeblood of any democracy.” An updating to the current situation seems to point towards a weakening of the pluralistic civil society elements, a fatigue and depletion of the “peace camp” and a growing insularity of the younger liberal element into career and family.
Methodological considerations

Finding common ground

The collaborative Israeli/Palestinian effort 15 years ago examined the relationship between democracy and war in the context of occupation – the first such effort of its kind – and looked beyond the prevailing political parameters in hopes of establishing a general theoretical proposition, one which might prove useful in developing a “thinking outside of the box” perspective. This effort grew out of the impasse that prevailed after Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir’s government banned any official contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization. (Such contacts were forbidden despite the 19th Palestine National Council’s 1988 Statement of Algiers, which opened the way for negotiations with Israel towards a two-state solution.) Furthermore, there was disappointment as the first intifada turned into an “intrafada”, one in which Palestinians were killing Palestinians in numbers as great as those slain by Israeli troops during the uprising.

Issues beyond the control of the disputants

This rift between the Israeli government and PLO leadership was aggravated by a factor beyond the control, or even influence, of either party: the 1991 military occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi armed forces (with the goal of absorbing Kuwait politically as an Iraqi province) and the consequent effort by the United States-led coalition to expel those same forces, thereby preserving Kuwaiti independence. “Lateral thinking” at that time fostered the fashionable “democratic peace” proposition, to wit, democracies do not make war against each other. Reintroduced as a reinterpretation of Kant’s eternal peace, it was elaborated thereafter, supported by systematic data gathered and analyzed by Rummel and Weart. Democracy is defined as a multi-party electoral system, and war is established as conflict generating one thousand or more casualties per year. The International Crisis Behavior data set provided us with only four exceptions when all wars between 1918 and 1990 were tabulated. Two of these related to Israel and Lebanon (the 1948 and 1982 conflicts relating to border definition).

Prospects for sustaining democracy in Israel

Accepting the tested validity of the proposition, we formulated an initial working hypothesis that, if Israel could remain a democracy, and if the Palestinians could engage in a process of transition to – and consolidation of – democracy, these conditions would constitute as good a foundation for a stable peace as well as any other strategic/security territorial considerations. Hence Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, allowing room for consolidation of a Palestinian democratic state, became a major desideratum for a lasting peace. But we reversed the dependent variable (that democratic states do not make war with each other) and the independent variable (peace). Kaufman cautioned that the lack of progress toward peace might well both erode the standards of democracy in Israel and delay – or even reverse – the democratization process in the Palestinian territories. (The recent Hamas electoral victory appears to be just such an unwanted complication in that democratization process.)

This was the paradigmatic framework of the analysis during the period of the research effort and their findings can be compared with the declared and practical policies that currently are in effect.
Initial steps at finding common ground

We evaluated the subject of the prolonged occupation of the West Bank and Gaza during the Israeli/Palestinian encounter at Barcelona in 2006 under the auspices of the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. Developments at this conference provided an opportunity to address the effect of occupation on Israel’s democracy, within a global context. Again relying on lateral thinking, established analogs for the specifics of the Palestinian territorial occupation. (Comparative description is not limited to identifying similarities; it also entails establishment of unique patterns. As a consequence, evaluators are better able to put conflict-specific events into a larger perspective, in terms of both in time and space.) Israel’s singularity can still be identified as a unique case of late colonialism, one still in functioning in the 21st century. Nonetheless, context distinguishes it from similarities and salient differences, especially with respect to the impact on democracy in the metropolis in the history of other colonial cases in the past. The wide spectrum of historic cases, in conjunction with an historical period that embraced more than a century, required a major research effort. At this time, we are limited to drawing some initial observations, in the expectation that they will be more fully explored in coming years by scholars concerned with the same general issues, as well as the specific issue of a future resolution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Defining parameters

At the outset, we suggest an examination of Israel’s presence in the West Bank in terms of two modes of government largely by administrative fiat: colonial rule and military occupation. We examined the old definitions of “colonial rule” and concluded that most apply to the Israeli situation (to wit, the dominant power controlling the “colonized” territory does not provide full civil rights to that territory’s native inhabitants). The prevailing power imbalance likewise facilitates, and may even encourage, Israeli citizens to establish separate settlements within the occupied territory, settlements that, for practical purposes, enjoy a status virtually indistinguishable from extraterritoriality. A corollary outcome of this political subordination is, for practical purposes, the relegation to Israel of such local government responsibilities as infrastructure development and the provision of services incident to the state’s police powers (e.g., health care, public safety).

Kaufman likewise examined the nature of military occupation as a stratagem for exercising authority over other nations in a post-colonial, democratic world, one in which, in theory at least, formalized abridgement of individual rights, based on the asymmetrical power relationship would be otherwise unacceptable. The temporary nature of such control can be justified in terms of the Geneva Conventions, or as the temporary suspension of enjoymnts of full rights in emergency situations as allowed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In the past, such restrictive provisions could stretch for decades under international legitimization, as the British and French mandates in the Middle East, or, for that matter, those United Nations trusteeships in the Pacific and certain Caribbean islands that effectively legitimizd foreign occupation extending in duration over a half century.

After World War II, Germany and Austria were administrated by the victorious Allied Powers for less than a decade. The Soviet Union militarily occupied the Baltic States in 1945, and, to some extent, “Russified” them, essentially colonizing them with Russian nationals, contrary to the desires of local populations. This unilateral population transfer policy,
however, lasted only four decades. Nonetheless, it created social tensions that persist to this
day and, for that matter, appear to resist amelioration.

*Stratagems for maintaining occupational superiority*

Given current standards of legitimate government behavior, while a military occupation
cannot be legitimized unilaterally, such a presence can be legitimated by assuming the
structure of an international presence, one that is subject to periodic review and renewal by
higher international authority and has a humanitarian purpose (e.g., the protection of belea-
guiered local populations in East Timor or Kosovo). Even the American military presence in
Iraq was formulated as a component of a group of nations designated “coalition forces”,
and whose initially stated purpose was stopping the allegedly developing Iraqi nuclear threat
– afterwards determined to be without foundation – but which later mutated into the pub-
lic goal of installing a democratic regime in that nation.

We are now approaching four decades of Israeli administration in the West Bank, the
longest military occupation of recent vintage.\(^2\) The conquest of Sinai in 1956 did not lead
to the establishment of settlements. However, after Israel’s victory in the 1967 Six Days War,
matters were otherwise. In 1979, in an effort to make peace with Egypt, Israel reversed Moshe
Dayan’s\(^3\) dictum – “better Sharm Al Sheikh to Peace” – to its mirror reverse. The 1982
Lebanon War, the outcome of which established Israeli military domination of Lebanon’s
southern region, did not result in any efforts at Israeli civilian settlements. And, for that
matter, even the annexation of the Golan Heights in 1981 had more the nature of a border
dispute, one in which resolution was secured when international boundaries were shifted
eastward. Full citizenship was granted to the Height’s Druze population, totaling a mere
17,000, and Kuneitra, the main urban center on the plateau, had been returned to Syria
under the terms of separation of forces truce agreement. In the Palestinian Territories,
however, the military occupation has assumed a long-term colonial dimension. Israel’s offi-
cial policy of referring to these lands as “militarily occupied territories” (per Geneva Convention
rubrics) keeps available residual options extending from continuing the status quo, to overt
annexation, or, even, to a forced “ethnic cleansing” – all of them acts abhorrent to prevail-
ing international community standards. This distinction between the colonial and military
aspects of occupation is relevant for the current policies of Ariel Sharon\(^22\) (and now Kadimah)\(^23\)
of keeping the settlement blocs near the Green Line\(^24\) (with at least 10% of the West Bank)
and in the Jordan Valley, and to maintain a military presence.

*Shifting loci of popular Israeli perspectives*

Kaufman took into consideration those mutations in Israeli standards of democracy inci-
dent to other trends/variables, e.g., (1) transitions of leadership from founding fathers to
the third generation; (2) wealth generation and economic growth (3) policy shift; (4) demo-
graphic changes brought about through immigration (e.g., Russians, Ethiopians) or ethnic-
specific birth rates, (5) modernization and development, and (6) such international process-
es as globalization.\(^25\)

A final methodological observation relates to longitudinal two-point comparisons: i.e.,
to what extent is choice development over what may appear to be arbitrarily selected peri-
odization influenced by the dominant paradigm? When do we start counting: from the
formative stages of Israel prior to 1948, when the return to the land of the ancestors was
known as the Yishuv (Jewish settlement)? Or, alternatively, from 1967, when de facto military occupation without de jure annexation took shape? Before the Six Day War, the overwhelming majority of Israelis were ready to settle on peace at the existing borders, even with a divided Jerusalem. Victory in a war that was not initially welcomed and that was waged to preserve the existence of the Israeli state, resulted in a polarization of the Jewish citizenry. Occupying the two opposing poles were the Greater Israel supporters and their Peace Camp opposites. The issue of occupation was legitimized through a process of colonization, some such efforts being ostensibly temporary in nature (heachzuiot), but clearly (if tacitly) aimed at creating the fact of permanent Israeli presences on specific terrains in question. Therefore, a double process was at work – occupation either for short term bargaining purposes (as implied by Moshe Dayan) or establishment of an ostensibly permanent, irreversible situation – a process that further complicated the original proposal of a “land for peace”.

**Perspective of the early idealists**

Yehoshafat Harkabi recalled the capacity of the pre-1967 Zionist leadership to separate realistic minimalist objectives from grand designs, whereas the Arab-Palestinian leadership remained wedded to unrealistic maximalist objectives. However that thinking underwent evolutionary change in the post-1967 political environment: pragmatism increasingly prevailed in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), leading gradually to the acceptance of Israel, while, at the same time, on the Jewish side, dogmatism prevailed (exemplified by the annexation policies relating to Judea and Samaria). Yet another justification for defining the adoption of an Israeli “colonialism” policy commencing in the aftermath of the 1967 War and not earlier is the very effect on Israeli democracy described in this study. While in the pre-1948 state formation period the main Yishuv leadership’s concern was acquisition of territory as a refuge for Jews (while at the same time minimizing suffering and damage to the local population), after 1967 the spirit of expansionism effectively ignored the grave costs of its implementation. Therefore, it appears that a new analysis is merited, if only because both Israel’s political leadership and the public at large now manifest a clear preference for ensuring a Jewish majority over the physical topography.

**Impact of the intifada**

Reflecting on work already accomplished and on studies of more recent and immediately relevant historical milestones, we determined to ascertain the impact of occupation on Israel’s democracy in a first take in 1991 (after the first Palestinian uprising, or intifada), and in a second take after the second intifada (triggered, at least in part, by Muslim reaction to Sharon’s visit to Al Aqsa in 2000). Yet another way of looking at the matter involves asking ourselves how Israelis became embroiled in what appears to be the high-risk (and politically self-defeating) venture of establishing settlements in all parts of Palestinian territories (and, as a corollary, finding some answer to questions relating to an appreciation by Israelis of the benefits accruing to Israel through withdrawal from occupied territories, in much the same manner as has already occurred in Gaza). With these thoughts in mind, we believed that changes in public perceptions and attitudes occurring during the interim between these two points in time can be established. Furthermore, the differences between the Israeli experience and ostensibly similar cases can likewise be established.
Thesis desiderata and the implications for resulting conclusions

Establishing an algorithm to define attitude evolution

Moving on to the present, we have asked ourselves what constituted the nature of the evolution of attitude change as that period progressed. What were the implications of Oslo? Of Geneva? Of Gaza? We choose the present day for comparison with 1991, because, after a long period of continuity, we entered one of flux, the first intifada being a watershed, an event of a magnitude comparable to the 1967 War, and one having an impact at the both the level of leadership policy formation and of shifting societal trends.

Does the policy of PM Ariel Sharon and his successor, PM Ehud Olmert, of partial pullouts from the occupied territories and separation from the Palestinians originate in an awareness of the importance of democracy and individual rights? Perhaps, sad to say, as a practical matter, decisions relating to decolonization are more often a function of cost-benefit analysis rather than obeisance to moral and ethical imperatives. Open discourse in Israel seems to be no exception to the general rule. Justifications are promulgated in terms of self-interest, and concern about what occupation is doing to Israelis, with considerably less regard for its impact on Palestinians. In the face of such desiderata as the global dimension of human rights, self-determination and the quest of democracy, Israel’s ruling elites have historically preferred to accentuate the “demographic time-bomb”, one potentially no less damaging than its physical counterparts. A prevailing subtext of democracy recognizes the requirement for a “one-person-one-vote” system. But those who wish to maintain unchallenged Israeli control over the territories – no matter what the price – have yet to come to terms with the fact that any such effort at least tacitly presupposes an abandonment of democratic norms.

Shifting Israeli attitudes

Growing support for an evacuation of the occupied territories, or at least most of their area, likely signals increasing Israeli public awareness of that cost, a development perhaps related to the traumatic experience of the second intifada’s suicide bombing campaign. But it possibly signals as well an ongoing redefinition of the soul of the country, its vision, and its dreams. A couple of quotations relate to the limits of absolute power exercised by a democracy. “The disengagement will give us a chance to look inside ourselves” (now called by Olmert in Hebrew Hitkansut, or convergence). The domestic agenda will change with the end of occupation, according to Labor party leader Amir Peretz.

“Economic policy will find the time to address closing social gaps and a real war on poverty.”

There even is a self-serving recognition of the Palestinian suffering: “If to prevent the huge explosion, the Palestinians with [the perspective] that life ‘without any horizon of hope’ [are no more than] a ‘prescription for turning human beings into walking bombs’. Separation barriers are popular. They are crowded into especially densely populated refugee camps, in poverty and suffering, in hothouses of increasing hatred.” Sharon himself has employed expressions such as “we cannot occupy another nation”. General Amiram Levin stated, “Ruling over another nation brings deterioration, stagnation, dirtiness.” And he added, “The impact of occupation [is] particularly negative on [the] Israel Defense Forces, officers [now being] afraid to tell the truth to policy makers... Democracy and a moral society cannot be victorious over a conquered nation, conquered by force.” The morale of the troops and parents of soldiers are lower than at times of war against armed enemy.
Prospective solution alternatives

While Israel’s democratic discourse is now increasingly connected to abjuring responsibility for the bulk of the Palestinians, we concluded that they needed to ascertain, if possible, a reigning subtext, one behind the more popular and overt expressions emphasizing Jewish self-interest. In brief, we examine the components of the discourse pertaining to the occupied territories, those that describe current policies and, thereafter, determine to what extent former assumptions remain relevant for current and popular policies, ones that implicate, tacitly or otherwise, Israel’s understanding of and commitment to democratic ideals. Suggested alternatives to occupation include:

Two-state solution: The principle of self determination is arguably the most important collective right (preference over one bi-national state), albeit one not normally formulated in terms of universal rights, collective self-determination, individual rights, or one person-one vote in a democracy. “Occupation is becoming more of a burden for us Jews (in terms of) human and financial cost). In a content analysis of leadership discourse, Sharon only once mentioned human rights” (Akaba speech with the then Palestinian PM Abu Mazen\textsuperscript{39} and President George W. Bush).\textsuperscript{40} However, domestic Israeli discourse only rarely extends to self-determination as a fundamental Palestinian entitlement.

Disengagement, separation (Hitnatkut), rather than withdrawal, (Nesigah): The terminology has changed, if only because it is embarrassing to speak publicly about a pullout in the face of Palestinian militant fire. The term “withdrawal” is considered problematic by the Israeli establishment and perhaps the locution “re-deployment” was preferred, if only because it implied a pullout, not necessarily to the pre-1967 border but only from certain areas of the West Bank. The motivating understanding, as expressed by Ehud Barak,\textsuperscript{41} was, “We are here and they are there”, two worlds apart. Israelis are seeking to keep Arabs away, not to coexist. The danger is that separation will not just be from territories, but a concomitant abandonment of the principle that Israel as a nation may include Arabs that are Israeli citizens, as now being advocated by Israel Beiteinu.\textsuperscript{42}

Prospective “hot buttons” in the naming of the fence/wall/security barrier: The emphasis of the Israeli government on security highlights the issue of the route of the wall/fence currently building. Unlike the previous border with Jordan (the Green Line), the new fence on the Israeli side includes not only additional territory, but also additional Palestinians. Setting final borders may entail the construction of additional walls/fences. In other cases (Spain, the United States) it does not seem to have seriously affected democracy. In the case of Israel, however, the fence places Palestinians on the Israeli side of the “security barrier”, a people to be deprived of voting rights (as in East Jerusalem), and likewise facing dimmed prospects for family reunification. Furthermore, on the other side of the barrier (in the West Bank), let alone in Jerusalem, it curtails Palestinian rights of movement, work, and education.

Conversely, the pullout from Gaza did not affect democracy so negatively, if only because it did not leave Gazans in Israel devoid of civil rights. Indeed, if Israel is to grant the right of passage from Gaza to the West Bank, it would not be considered an entitlement but rather a concession, one subject to negotiation and, prospectively, to denial. As PM Sharon real-
ized early on (and, as now, does the Kadimah party), the limited planned control of 10 to 20% of Palestinian territory to include the big settlements on the Western side of the fence/wall still imposed significant colonial costs on Israel.

There is a growing awareness of the ongoing threat to peace inherent in keeping small Jewish settlements in the midst of a hostile Palestinian majority population. Likewise, there is a growing consensus that personal security cannot be enhanced through reliance on oppressive tactics. However, those same realizations have yet to find formal expression in the Legislative or Executive decision-making bodies.43

Unilateralism: The mantra that there was no partner for negotiation became a commonplace during the late Yasir Arafat’s heyday. Nonetheless, negotiations with Abu-Mazen were viewed as a possibility, at least subsequent to dismantling of terrorist groups. Now, however, that mantra has reemerged in full force, a function of the intransigence of the Hamas government.

While the new Israeli government states now that it has reversed previous decisions and will be willing to negotiate with Abu-Mazen, it may well be the case that this is no more than a posture. Setting the final Israeli borders unilaterally appears the preferred option of the Kadimah leadership. Negotiated agreement may not have a chance along the minimalistic lines of the Israeli “center” (keeping 15-20% of the West Bank). Hence the logic is to impose borders rather than define policies in terms of rights. The government’s understanding of past experiences, is that it took 40 years for Arafat to accept the contested 1949 borders, recognized initially only as temporary ceasefire lines. As Ze’ev Jabotinski,44 the militaristic Zionist leader, urged early in the 20th century, let’s try now to have an “Iron Wall”.45

So once more, what matters is what the Jews do and not what others say, and unilaterally defining the permanent limits of Israel may well mean waiting another 40 years until the Arabs will recognize these new borders. Those who predict a continuation of the conflict do not mention restrictions on the Palestinian population caused by structural violence, or the suffering and killings on both sides during the last 50 years.

Dividing Jerusalem: The annexation of Jerusalem with the Jewish settlers within the Muslim quarter of the Old City and some of the adjacent Arab communities, let alone the construction of entire satellite neighborhoods, can be described a species of urban colonialism. However, this turn of events is now being questioned – at least conceptually – by some of the Israeli establishment leadership. Indeed, according to a recent public opinion poll, 63% of Israelis anticipate that the city will be divided and that the Arab neighborhoods will be Al Quds46 and that city will become the new Palestinian capital.47 Again, the reasoning is demographic: excluding Arabs from Israel proper. Nonetheless, under the anticipated rubrics, given the geography of existing Israeli security infrastructure (notably, the dividing wall), 200,000 Arabs would remain under Israeli jurisdiction, albeit with a measure of civil rights. (Under the terms of Israeli legislation, since repealed, resident Arabs were eligible for full citizenship and all associated civil rights.) As a practical matter, the dilemma for Israel is how to proceed unilaterally on this underlying issue: continued occupation will likely preclude a peace agreement. But, at the same time, ceding portions of Jerusalem’s Old City to establish Al Quds and recognizing unquestioned Muslim jurisdiction over the Haram al-Shariff 48 may
not be sufficiently politically palatable to a majority of Israelis to permit enactment of enabling legislation, at least in the absence of a *quid pro quo*.

**Hitkansut** (Convergence): This locution was employed by Kadimah in the recent electoral campaign to symbolize the need to re-deploy and consolidate the Jewish population and look inward. It is an ethnocentric term and appears to have been used as a means of attracting the support of more militant Israelis – in the recent election the Kadimah slate listed no Arab candidates to the Knesset – and it, at least tacitly, anticipates isolation (and, perhaps eventually, exclusion from Israel).

**Attitudes towards Hamas:** The Hamas party received a plurality of votes in the Palestinian Authority’s recent election. The development, in turn, poses the question whether a democratically elected government – one now dominated by a political party nominally dedicated to the destruction of the Israeli state – can be accepted as a negotiating partner. As it happens, most Hamas leaders (and the Hamas prospective political program) during and, for that matter, after the electoral campaign, stressed the end of the post-1967 occupation. It was largely silent about the previous appeal for the destruction of Israel.49

**Comparison of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza with other colonial situations**

Each of the following comparative analyses calls for further research. At this one can reach only tentative conclusions, based, as they are, on working assumptions that remain to be fully validated. However, examination of these variables may establish what amounts to a checklist, one pointing to the unique character of Israel’s relationship with the occupied territories, specifically by disaggregating the correlates of what amounts to a colonial situation in a post-colonial world.

From the perspective of securing and maintaining their own democratic norms, why should Israelis concern themselves with the normative values of Palestinians? In a more expanded historical context, to what extent did colonialism have an impact on normative democratic values in metropolitan countries? In the 19th and first half of the 20th century, did their respective colonial practices generate concerns for the durability of democratic government among political leaderships in London, Paris or Brussels? Should there be a comparable lack of concern in Jerusalem?

To answer these (and related) questions, we determined to ascertain to what extent governments’ colonial practices had an impact (if any) on respective national populations’ attachment to democratic norms. Further, we explored yet another issue: Are there any long-term lessons to be drawn from historical experience that may realistically be applied to the Israeli case? To answer these questions, we must first appreciate both similarities and differences in comparison with other, ostensibly comparable dyadic instances.

**Establishing variables and applying them in the Israeli context**

To accomplish this objective, we have established 12 variables relating to both settlements and military occupation, variables that may reasonably be expected to have an impact on democratic practice in Israel. The categorical variables are both mutually exclusive and comprehensive (e.g., including such categories as political, geopolitical, economic, normative religious values, and the like).
Geographic location: The proximity of the colonial territory may generate different dynamics. The closer to the metropolis the location of the colony, the more that the colonizer may aspire to make the occupation permanent, perhaps even extending to political annexation. In the case of overseas colonies (e.g., India for Great Britain, and Indonesia for the Netherlands) apprehensions flowing from two-tier treatment regimes for citizens and non-citizens did not arise all that much in the political center. However, in the later stages of empire (and, for that matter, after the political independence was achieved), these dual treatment regimes generated conflicted relationships for empire immigrants to metropolitan countries. They were often marginalized in what was, for them, all too often an unaccommodating cultural environment.  

Perceived geopolitical limitations imposed by established borders in Central Europe contributed to the impulse toward conquests on other continents. As a practical matter, past colonizers were not concerned with native numerical majorities. Proximity, however, was a factor for France. Its efforts to contend with revolt in Algeria, at only a modest distance across the Mediterranean, had political echoes in metropolitan France. The need for strong leadership, in the person of General Charles De Gaulle, was required to reorder the constitutional structure of the French Republic, to bring the Algerian business to a close. This, in turn, led to his dramatic change towards Algerian self-determination and his ability to implement such policy. (Some parallels were drawn with Ariel Sharon, but his comparable experiment was truncated, incident to declining health.)  

In Israel, before the 1967 War, the distance between Palestinian Tulkarem and the Mediterranean Sea resort of Nathaniah was less than 10 miles, a geographic bottleneck in the middle of Israel. Jewish Jerusalem was surrounded on three sides by Jordan’s West Bank. But the fact that we are talking about possible annexation of adjacent territories makes the Israeli case more a policy of expansionism, the search for additional territory, vital space (in German, Lebensraum) necessary for future growth. Under modern economic conditions, land is not in itself worth acquiring at high human cost. Particularly in a democracy, the electorate will not tolerate a high number of casualties, unless the gravity of the situation – e.g., national survival – warrants. The assumption that war has traditionally changed borders – perhaps especially applicable in the case of the 1967 War, essentially one of self defense against an unprovoked attack – could be a rationale for Israeli expansion. But only in the case of the Golan Heights do the Druze, the native inhabitants still resident in the occupied territory enjoy the same rights as any other Israeli citizen.

Length of the violent conflict: The level of security threat to the metropolis is particularly evident in the protracted – and seemingly intractable – Israel-Arab dispute, especially in comparison with other colonial situations or, for that matter, military occupations. Often, in the history of Israel, periodization has been made according to the wars, a war each decade. Nearly 100 years of violence: wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, and 1991; two intifadas (1987 and 2000); “riots” prior to independence (1921, 1929, 1935-7), and, between wars since national independence, a succession of incursions and retaliations – attrition warfare, in essence.  

In most cases Israelis saw these wars as a necessary evil, ones fought in response to threats to its national security. As described supra, the 1967 War that resulted in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Golan Heights and Sinai originally was not fought for conquest but for self-defense – in effect, a “no choice” war. The premise of “land for peace” ini-
tially prevailed. No such long history of violent confrontation has occurred in other colonial situations, even over centuries of colonial rule. Colonial rebellions, with the arguable exceptions of Algeria and Vietnam, were much shorter and did not threaten civilian populations in metropolitan countries. In contrast, Israel has taken on the attributes of a garrison state – arguably a modern Sparta – emphasizing national security, at the expense of democracy, when and if necessary.

The quest for a “strong” leader and the active participation of former high-ranking military in politics – perhaps one reminiscent of France’s De Gaulle – appear to be direct results of security interests as leading concerns for citizens. Strong rulers such as De Gaulle and Sharon, both of whom received massive popular support for putting an end to fragmentation and internal dissent, were likewise catalysts for abrupt changes of policy toward the occupied territories. As welcome as such outcomes may be, the quest for strong, even authoritarian, leadership may well negatively impact the practice of government in what is otherwise a liberal democracy.

At a time of adopting the policy of “most territory” for “no war”, in lieu of withdrawal from all occupied territories in return for the promise of peace, the public put its faith in General (and, later, Prime Minister) Sharon. To the extent that reliance on a single individual is deemed essential in giving birth to a particular policy, the venture is inherently risky. In the case of Algeria and De Gaulle, negative outcomes (at least insofar as the specific policy change was concerned) did not materialize. Such proved not to be the case in Israel, where Sharon’s declining health vitiated his strategic peace initiative.

The changing nature of warfare:

With rigorous keeping of peace with Egypt – militarily, the strongest Arab country – and with Jordan – with whom Israel shares its longest border – the existential threat to Israel at its immediate borders has been significantly reduced. However, even as the threat of military assault has receded in the past decade, a new threat, in the form terrorism, has emerged.

The issue of occupation is no longer so much national as it is personal security. Suicide bombings reach into Israel’s coastal cities. Missiles launched from Gaza threaten towns in the surrounding areas, with the threat envelope expanding as effective missile range increases. Homes, shops, and workplaces have assumed the characteristics of a “home-front” – one in some respects little different from a battlefield environment. Herein lies a fundamental difference in comparison with past colonial independence movements. In similar situations, metropolitan residents considered themselves immune to attack in their capitals; conversely, for years Israelis have been apprehensive as they have gone about such activities as visiting coffee houses, riding public buses, or shopping in main street markets.53

At present, Israeli fear of terrorism can be compared with the American public’s fears after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The latter events led to military intervention in Afghanistan and, at the least, contributed to a justification for military action against Iraq. One-time bloody events in cities such as in New York,54 London,55 and (to a lesser extent) Madrid56 have to some extent implicated traditionally accepted norms respecting individual freedom. The current preoccupation extends to what might be termed “impositions” on civil rights within the United States (interception of personal communications, profiling, interrogation procedures).57

The much greater challenge in Israel, with persistent monthly and weekly explosions in civilian venues, are likely to have resulted in a blank check policy for the Border Police, or
Israeli Defense Force in the occupied territories. There is concern with restrictions to the freedom of movement and the dearth of consideration for Palestinians’ human rights (and, for that matter, personal dignity, especially at public security check points) as a response to the threat of terror, not only for altruistic reasons but also because, as a practical matter, such activities may contribute, however indirectly, to increased domestic violence and criminality within Israel. The effect of occupation on democracy in times of violent conflict particularly affects youth, on both sides, a group over-represented in the tally of victims and victimizers. Comparison of young soldiers’ concerns with humanity towards an armed Arab enemy in the aftermath of the 1967 War, and at present, in dealings with unarmed civilians, points to an erosion of basic values.

Depth of democratic roots: Colonial domination over long periods of time did not affect the centuries-long transition to democracy in Western Europe. While there were no strong anti-colonial movements, the demand for the respect of citizens’ rights grew independently of the fact that such rights were not granted to large numbers of individuals overseas under the same government control. Israel is a new country, and, although inspired at its birth by democratic and egalitarian ideals, most of its founders and, for that matter, post-independence immigrants, came from countries in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, regions in which democracy was hardly normative. Nonetheless, most of the immigrants who arrived from non-democratic countries before the establishment of the Israeli state were, however, ideologically committed to democratic governance.

The pre-state leadership shaped majority rule or consensual decision-making in community life, an underpinning that provided a strong foundation for establishing and maintaining democratic institutions, even under adverse circumstances. Yet, the shallowness of democracy was seen in the societal values, as large segments of the population did not fully endorse equal rights for all citizens, or respect for minorities. Later waves of immigrants, particularly after the 1967 occupation, not only came from countries in which a democratic tradition was absent, but also in Israel absorbed an understanding that inequality of rights was both rampant and even tacitly accepted and, further, the validity of a subtext of superiority of one nation over another. These perceptions often underlie the official discourse of certain political leaders and their recent settler supporters within Israel proper.

There is the growing concern that, unlike citizens of the United Kingdom, Belgium, or the Netherlands, many Israelis are not fully socialized into democracy. Hence, the threat to democratic ideals incident to ever-lengthening occupation is arguably higher. Furthermore, and aggravating this development, is recognition of a demographic reality: the “one person-one vote” principle, coupled with the substantially higher Arab birth rate, in comparison with that of the current Jewish majority – would have produced an Arab majority government in Greater Israel by the year 2010. This recognition has served as a wake-up call for most of the Israeli leadership and public.

Ideological “zero sum” paradigm: The Israel/Arab conflict, unlike other colonial conflicts, was perceived in the past as an existential conflict (both jihad/Hamas and Jewish settlers respectively dispute the whole of “Historic Palestine” versus the whole of the “promised land”). As a result, and based on perceptions of the worst intentions from the enemy, the issue, rather than becoming tractable, becomes one of life or death.
However, it now appears that for the Palestinians the end of occupation is a matter of conflict resolution. All their lives are daily affected by the occupation. But for the Israelis, the pullout from Gaza and the West Bank was one of conflict amelioration, if not outright dissolution. Following the withdrawal from Gaza, Israelis managed to forget the fact that they had only recently controlled the Palestinian population, and, for that matter, the resulting psychological trauma for those 8,000 Jewish settlers now in the process of being relocated in Israel proper. In the past, and especially during the intifadas, Israelis – with the exception of settlers directly involved – refrained from visiting the West Bank, Gaza, or even East Jerusalem, and could likely reframe their lives with no more than a modicum of difficulty, even in the absence of guaranteed access to those areas.

Bridging the gap between the maximalist “zero sum” game – the all-or-nothing dream – and a more practical and reachable reality, a long-term vision of a practical and temporal two-state solution that is combined with a “one-state super-structure, that can satisfy the maximalist aspirations of both sides”. In his study of the social impact of colonialism, Memmi wrote about the “Nero complex”: the more the colonialist oppresses the colonized, the more he realizes the atrocity inherent in the role he has chosen. His hatred of the usurped grows. He wants the colonized to disappear because their very existence leads him to act the role of usurper. The rise of maximalist views among an Israeli minority has likewise exacerbated latent anti-democratic feelings among Israelis.

In our assessment, a resort to ethnic cleansing (or, if possible, voluntary population transfer) would be the settlers’ preferred solution. Frustrated by the uprising and growing lack of governmental support, a Jewish underground group’s recent acts of violence and vandalism visited on native Palestinians and their property. However, ongoing settler confrontations with the Israeli armies, by and in illegal outposts, appear to have finally brought the majority of the Israeli public – those within the Green Line – to marginalize the Israeli settler population. Their being perceived as troublemakers and fanatics, as well as their often manifested lack of respect for governing statutes that impede the achievement of their goals, have put considerable distance between them and the majority public.

The religious component: Colonialism has often encouraged religious conversion and assimilation (Memmi) to its culture (e.g., flag, holidays). But this is not the case with Jewish settlers, who stress residual differences in order to maintain a separate existence – no intermarriage and discouragement of conversion from Islam to Judaism or vice versa. Particularly relevant to the case in point could be a comparison with the practice of apartheid in South Africa, where justification for the Boers’ assumption of superior status included the concept of a promised land and chosen people with more rights than obligations to the “Other”. (Justification extended back at least to the 18th century and was usually predicated on biblical exegesis.) The geographic reality of the post-1967 occupation has transformed the previously symbolic adherence to the “promised land” of Israel’s biblical 12 tribes into a more thoroughgoing sense of impending messianic times, at least among a minority of Israelis. This, in turn, has presented Israelis with a conundrum: Does one compromise the ostensibly divine endowment of the same land to the people of Israel – understood as “the People of the Book” – by separating the declaratory adherence to all “our” land from a pragmatic recognition that such a dream must be deferred, at least until some future messianic times?
Normally, colonizers consider themselves as expatriates living in exile, but the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem, Judea (Abraham’s tomb) and Samaria are perceived as the core of the historic Jewish nation. The colonizers’ sense of homeland and natural rights – even if many of the settlers were born in the United States or elsewhere – is exclusively ethnocentric, ignoring any ostensible rights of native-born Arabs. Our national conflict has thus evolved into more of a religious conflict, for the Jews after 1977 (when the Likud party gained power on a Greater Israel platform) and for the Palestinians increasingly after the first intifada and, more recently, Hamas’ electoral victory.

As outlined supra, resistance to the withdrawal from Gaza and from the illegal West Bank outpost at Amana were solely the province of the kipot srugot (“knitted yarmulkes”) – factions of militantly chauvinist Orthodox Jews. Such groups are increasingly perceived as being divorced from political reality by the majority of Jews in Israel.

Specific Jewish traumatic historical experience: The Holocaust affected the polarization of Israel in two camps, ones that drew very different lessons from what was arguably the most grievous level of suffering ever visited upon any nation. Jews regularly say “never again” – often, for that matter, intending the reach of that assertion to encompass all of humanity. No comparable trauma comprises the history of any other colonialist metropolis. The experience of the Inquisition, pogroms, ghettos, and in particular the Holocaust has seared into Jewish collective memory the perception of Jews as victims.

Today’s unconstrained behavior, however much it may be related to a grim collective memory, and while it certainly poses a challenge to moral justification, may nonetheless be put into an understandable context. We can appreciate the psychological concern for survival and the lack of trust in other nations. However, in the face of recent Islamists’ declarations favoring not only the eradication of the Jewish state and its inhabitants, but also the recent resort to the anti-historical negation of the Holocaust, Israelis may well see their own behavior and ostensible intransigence as not only justified but also prudent.

Does this present threat justify some underlying unwillingness to respect the otherwise inherent rights of persons whose only offense appears to be no more than belonging to the same nationality as the anti-Semitic Islamists? How does the victim become a victimizer? Does applying the motto “never again” presuppose that Jews learn from history only about themselves as Jews? Or can it extend to other victims of oppression – in this case the Palestinians? Defining the Holocaust as a uniquely horrible episode in modern history establishes in many Jews a reluctance to place it within the larger spectrum of other genocides, albeit almost certainly as the most extreme case. The perception of that single historic event can also be used to justify acts with the ancillary effect of causing suffering in others that is of substantially lower magnitude than that visited upon Jews in the past, relying on such an argument to undermine the legitimacy of Palestinian demands for equality of treatment.

Time difference: While colonial rule was widespread when the Zionist movement first facilitated Jewish immigration to the ancestral homeland, the Jewish immigration nonetheless remained exceptional in then-contemporary politics. A process of decolonization started soon after the Balfour Declaration. In the Middle East the process of decolonization already begun by the League of Nations legitimated Mandates “A”, “B” and “C” for the former colo-
nial possessions of the First World War’s defeated Central Powers. Some mandated territo-
ries (e.g., Iraq, Syria) became independent before the outset of World War II.

It was this latter conflict that eventually proved a watershed, one that saw the establish-
ment of popular acceptance of the notion that basic human rights (including, especially,
respect for the integrity of the individual) – and proactive efforts at their assurance – were
normative international requirements and intimately related to the post-war decolonization
effort. Indeed, Israeli independence was seen to be part of the decolonization process of
the British Empire then in progress, in much the same way that India’s independence com-
prised a part of that effort. Soon afterward, a major wave of decolonization continued in Sub-
Saharan Africa, and Israel was perceived to be a partner in development.

The further expansion of Israel after 1967, and the encouragement of establishing set-
tlements in “Judea, Samaria and Gaza”, came a century late, and was clearly ahistoric.
Reactionary Israelis posed the question: Why not replicate with the Arabs what the Americans
did to the native inhabitants of that continent during their national expansion period? Realistic
Israelis answered: The human rights regime has become central to the world’s ethics, with
principles such as legal equality and one-person-one-vote. If we agree with a premise of
“progress in international relations”,63 that the world has changed to the extent that com-
parable behavior is no longer an acceptable option, and, further, that such notions are not
solely the province of the political left but, rather, pragmatic observations about the way the
world works in this day and age, then we must conclude that such an option for dealing with
the Palestinian minority is simply not available.

There hardly remain in today’s world other examples of self-determination, in which inde-
pendence resulting from secession is denied while at the same time the option of full citi-
zenship in the metropolis is refused. Nowhere else does there exist some intermediate sta-
tus of semi-autonomy – one with municipal rights but without concurrent national rights,
including therein the right to vote for the national government.64

Economic exploitation: Colonialism usually entails economic benefits for the colonizer.65
Profit results from the exploitation of human and/or natural resources (the latter not being
the case in the West Bank and Gaza). A colony is “a place where one earns more and spends
less”,66 and that was quite true in Israel during the period called “benign occupation”, when
cheap Palestinian labor was used not only in the metropolis (Israel within the Green Line)
but even for infrastructure construction in settlements in the occupied territories. But the
abrupt change from steadfastness (summud) to popular uprising (intifada) brought that era
to an effective close. In other colonial experiences, “the colonialiser realizes that without the
colonized, the colony would no longer have any meaning”.67 Still, in the Israeli case, the col-
onization process continued with the new “globalization”, as foreign workers replaced local,
low-salary workers, particularly in agriculture and construction.

In other colonial systems, exploitation included such practices as slavery and servitude.
When obliged to share political power with officers appointed from the ranks of the native
population, such colonial systems have often become corrupted.68 It has been argued that
occupation corrupts, that it erodes the faith in democracy. If top government officials are
corrupt, so the popular thinking goes, it follows that their subordinates will be comparably
venal. Experiences of this kind stand in sharp contrast to the frugal lives of Israel’s historic
bi-partisan leadership, including such luminaries as David Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, Menachem
Begin, Yitzhak Rabin and Yitzhak Shamir. While one should not single out occupation as the sole, or even primary, cause of such behavioral change, when rules are subject to flexible interpretation (rather than remaining normative), it is perhaps to be expected that such patterns of behavior may find their way beyond the occupied territories and into Israel proper.

**Civilizing mission:** Generally speaking, the dissonance arising from the recognition of their role as usurpers and of their privileges as illegitimate can be mitigated by the colonizers’ self-image of having a civilizing mission. They may come to believe that they are demonstrating the merits of a superior culture and the possibility of improving the livelihood of the native population.59

Israel has portrayed itself as the Western outpost in the Middle East and was able to present this image elsewhere, for better or for worse. While accepted in the United States and (to a perhaps less extent in Europe) as a participant in an expanded Judeo-Christian civilization, Israel has become isolated from the Middle East not only as the result of Arab rejection, but through its efforts at self-segregation. In some respects, however, this is an anomalous development.

Israel’s technical, scientific, agricultural and economic achievements should have gained it at least a measure of legitimacy in the region. During the difficult Oslo negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, at the multi-lateral tracks of the Madrid Conference, the potential benefits of the Jewish state’s incorporation into the region was seen, at least tacitly, as a “win/win” for all the region’s countries on issues such as water, environment and economic development. At that time, Shimon Peres envisaged a “New Middle East” in which Israel would play an important role in building regional networks. The potential for such an approach was there, even if there was some fear of neo-colonialist domination. Such contributions toward social, economic, and scientific development do not meet real objections in the Arab world, if they were to occur under conditions of equality rather than domination. Clearly, a military occupation is not consistent with such vision. And the settlers’ presence in the territories is a bad example for a mutually beneficial relationship. The settlements have had the undesired effect of reinforcing a Muslim perception of Jews as the instrument of the “new Crusaders”, agents of a clash of civilizations – the West versus the rest.72

Israel was considered for many years the “only democracy” in the Middle East. Now, with ambivalence at the thought of losing that unique status, some Israelis have been preaching that the Arab world would accommodate Israel in the region when they become democracies themselves. The conditions and limits put on Palestinian elections, particularly the last one that brought Hamas to power, have undermined prospects for this erstwhile, anticipated expansion of democracy in the region.

**Late nation building:** In the late-19th century, the formation of centralized states in Italy and Germany, out of separate smaller units, was interpreted as a unifying drive, one that would be followed by continued expansionism overseas or into adjacent territories. The power of the new state was enhanced in a sense of “folk”, a sense of purpose, one that led to the support of expatriates in the newly acquired territories, a colonial paradigm legitimating the late formation of the state. Israel is a new country, calling for the ingathering of exiles. (As a corollary, for many years, Zionism tacitly delegitimized continued Jewish existence as a Diaspora.)
Since the formation of the World Zionist Organization, the Yishuv, the organized Jewish community under the British Mandate in Palestine, was already a state in the making. The establishment of the state of Israel some 30 years later was undoubtedly a “success story”.

For most citizens, the most important post-independence objective was the achievement of peace with regional neighbors – Egypt, Jordan and then the Palestinians – a prospect then appearing a realistic goal. But after the 1967 Six Days War, in the eyes of a growing number of Israelis, “state building” remained an unfinished enterprise, one that needed to be continued by attracting most of the remaining Jews of the Diaspora to immigrate and establish themselves within the nation’s now-expanded geography. The consolidation of a Jewish nation-state was considered still in a premature stage, Israel’s borders were not yet historically defined, and its political culture was still evolving.

Over nearly six decades since independence, Israel flourished within the Green Line for only about the first one third of those years; for the remainder of its history, Gaza, Judea, Samaria, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights have been under Israeli rule and associated settlement policies. The political discourse for a large sector of the Jewish citizenry demanding annexation of all territories has been “Hebron’s faith is Tel Aviv’s, the Arabs make no difference”, often corroborated by extreme Arab statements about reconquering the entire land. The goals of expansion for state building, namely “no right to Jaffa-Tel Aviv if no right to Hebron”, and revanchism seem to have reached their historic apogees.

In the aftermath of the second intifada, the majority is no longer willing to pay that steep price. Some Israelis warn that the lack of an external common enemy will undermine the cohesiveness of the Jewish society and, further, that domestic strife will then threaten to destroy the state from within. The prediction is unfounded, if only because “late nation building” states – even those suffering major defeats – have survived the loss of empire and even adjacent territories. The dilemma of holding the occupied territories, with its attendant moral and human costs, now has become a particularly divisive issue. Before 1967 there was a national purpose, and it is likely to emerge again within the borders of a smaller Israel. If and when peace prevails, or at least the occupation is ended, there is likely to be a focus on economic progress (e.g., seeing more Israeli citizens move above the poverty line). The huge financial outlays incident to the establishment of Jewish settlements (and related infrastructure development in the West Bank) and the ongoing cost of the military protection they require, can be diverted to the neglected parts of Israel. This argument was present before the 2006 electoral campaign. It will likely remain an issue in future elections.

Israel’s diverse ethno-political make up: The image of Israel as an “outpost of Western civilization” has had an impact within the domestic realm as well. One of the outcomes of Zionism in action – and likely an unanticipated one – included the immigration of large numbers of Jews from non-European areas, to the extent that Israel’s population is no longer so homogenous a group as were the initial settlers. These “Oriental” Jews often had markedly different perspectives in matters relating to normative political and social values, at least in comparison with their Ashkenazi counterparts. Whereas it is possible to look at Israel’s demographic makeup as a strict demarcation separating Jews from non-Jews (as in the Central Bureau of Statistics census), a new sociological approach disaggregates the concept into one of “graduated citizenship”, “the existence of multiple levels of formal legal rights and obligations occupied by different groups in the state”.75
The socio-economic status of the more marginalized groups – both Jewish and Arab – improved after 1967, with the growth of the economy and with the new working class coming from the occupied territories. But further examination of the dynamic effect of occupation up to the present “shows their status over time to be fluctuating, impacted among other factors by the colonial character of the state and nation”.

Arabs, as a marginalized ethno-political group, have been unable to overcome practical rules of exclusion established by hegemonic groups.

The most direct impact of graduated citizenship is on the Arab minority in Israel: 20% of the population, those affected by a “state fighting their nation” situation. To a large extent, this situation differs markedly in comparison with homogenous colonial powers. Under these circumstances, Israel is, in a certain sense, a “multicultural” colonizer, with a significant minority identifying with the aggrieved colonized population.

If Israel’s goal now is separation, will that goal eventually translate into separation from this minority, as well? Some geographers and the leadership of Israel Beiteinu – the predominantly Russian immigrant political party – are suggesting just that as the way to rid Israel of its resident Arabs by forcing them to become citizens of the new Palestinian state. They suggest ceding predominantly Arab-inhabited territory to Palestine, in exchange for Israeli annexation of those sectors of the West Bank containing the larger Jewish settlements blocks.

Meanwhile the already uncertain status of Israeli Arabs is deteriorating further. This underscores the difficulty of separating the domestic from the international elements of conflict. This difficulty may eventually affect Israel’s democratic values. The conception of Israel as a Jewish state has an inherent exclusionary connotation. The element of racism that comes across so clearly in the Palestinian territories is antithetical to the pledge of equal rights to all in Israel (quoting the Declaration of Independence, 1948), as often upheld by the Supreme Court of Justice. Unequal access to opportunities is a policy rationalized by many of Israel’s Jews because of their Arab co-citizens’ shared traits with their enemies in the region.

The concept of “graduated citizenship” can be applied to Jewish sub-groups as well. “Mizrahi” Jews from Middle Eastern countries (commonly called “Arab Jews”) have been treated by descendants of Israel’s Ashkenazi founders as no more than a source of “manpower, revenues, and other forms of support, while restricting their entry into the halls of power”. They have suffered discrimination, while at the same time have been expected to assimilate, adopting the European “tzabra” image, rather than be accepted as a component of a diverse society. Discriminatory policies have affected the relationship of the “Oriental” towards Arabs in general, shifting the collective memory of the Oriental Jews away from a status of being accepted and tolerated to one of being victims (albeit minimal in comparison with the Jewish experience in Europe), a history that can now be redressed.

Concluding remarks
In sum, we have asked why was it important to learn from these similarities and differences over time? What is the impact of occupation on Israel’s democracy as learnt from the 12 explanatory variables? If we assess the rather negative impact of occupation in each separately, we can see it to be overwhelmingly negative in all of the variables. The cumulative strength of such impact could have caused further erosion of societal democratic values. Nonetheless, existing democratic institutions remain by large unshaken.
Lately, however, they have encouraged a rethinking on the part of the Israeli population of the prospect of accepting a smaller Israel, even without peace. At this time, expectations have been lowered from a “lasting peace” to a “no war” situation. While we have said in our previous 1993 study that a regime’s democratic character is not a precondition for its living in peace with its neighbors, this type of relationship has been described as a minimalist “negative” peace. The expression can refer also to the ongoing “cold peace” prevailing between Israel and bordering Egypt and Jordan.

**Looking to the future**

In the long run, consolidation of the democratic experience among the Palestinians has the potential to provide a further guarantee for a stable peace, with positive transactions, not only with Palestine, but also with the larger Arab world. The recent elevation to power of Hamas – the first Islamist fundamentalist group to come into power through democratic elections, and, ironically enough, under foreign military occupation – tests the limits of this assumption. In addition, existing preferences for security over democracy may find an even more favorable hearing among the Israeli populace in the face of the elevated threat of violence. A 2002 public opinion poll showed that an overwhelming 78% of Israeli Jews questioned believe that Palestinians have a legitimate right to seek a Palestinian state, provided that they use non-violent means to achieve it. Likewise, 56% concur with the Palestinians’ right to oppose the expansion of the settlements, if such opposition is conducted peaceably. Thus it appears that if the Palestinians were to move from violent to non-violent forms of protest, a majority of Israeli Jews would favor making concessions to the Palestinians.

Recent developments reflect support for the prevalence of a Jewish majority within a smaller but more homogenous democratic state. The emerging demographic threat likely triggered a realization that any prevailing grand dreams of Israel’s “fanatic fringe” must be set aside, even at the cost of internal political strife and, conceivably, their resort to violence.

**Defining a new paradigm**

Clearly, a colonial situation is an anachronism. The few actually still functioning (e.g., Gibraltar and the remote Falkland/Las Malvinas Islands, which remain allegiance to Great Britain, as functions of self-determination by local populations) are exceptions to the rule. On the other hand, nations that fought for secession from existing states (e.g., successful East Timor, unsuccessful Chechnya) have had the alternative option of full citizenship with the metropolis (Indonesia and Russia, respectively). Palestinians, however, remain in limbo, in a status arguably not all that far removed from apartheid rule in South Africa. As a consequence, it is no wonder that the world has had difficulties understanding Israeli official reasoning, save in terms of self-defense and national security.

The challenge is not in analyzing the evils of occupation and colonialism but, rather, in translating a sober analysis into a democratic discourse accessible to all. Electoral democracy and abiding by majority rule seem fully acceptable to the majority of Israeli Jews. But what is not deeply entrenched is the popular understanding is that democracies are not measured once in several years at the polling stations but in the everyday defense of individual rights for all, and the respect of minorities.

Is all this too little, too late? The objective of this analysis is for Israeli policy makers and civil society to shed light on the negative effects on Israel’s social fabric incident to main-
taining its grip on to the Territories. This realization should not be neglected. For the peace forces, there may be room for a tactical short-term alliance with the concept of unilateral pullouts, while maintaining strategic long-term opposition to partial outcomes that are not equivalent to negotiated solutions. While the agenda for a just Palestinian/Israeli peace includes negotiations based on already established common ground – in essence, the Clinton parameters – an incremental approach would be at this stage to isolate the political forces that have pledged to keep all Jewish settlements. Within the peace camp in Israel, we should not dissipate energy among our component groups, fighting each other’s positions over what amount to minu-
tiae. By analogy, if different groups were driving on a wide highway, our “cars” would be going in the same direction along parallel, distinct lanes. The vehicle models and their respective speeds are different. But, nonetheless, we can try to accelerate as much as possible without losing sight of the spoilers in peace-building: e.g., the “settlers’ movement” or the jihadist fighters.

Are we asking too much from the Israelis? Historically, the Middle East has shown itself to be all too often an inhospitable environment for religious minorities. Perhaps, as in other forums, the more convincing arguments emphasize self-preservation, self-interest, and national interest, in preference to such normative values as morality and humane and humanitarian principles. Ethnocentrism is strong everywhere, and it is certainly not lacking among Jews, a nation proud of its long history and distinct identity. And yet, we believe that we may have a bit of both, that the legitimacy of the acts of our state (and ourselves as individuals) is still a function of pragmatic self-interest, idealism and altruism – national characteristics that we believe to be part and parcel of our national identity. Nonetheless, this struggle for hearts and minds remains far from resolution.

Notes


4. Civil uprising (literally, ‘shaking off’). Palestinian residents in Gaza and the West Bank, chafing under Israeli administration of these predominantly Arab areas, began demonstrations and more violent civil commotions in 1987. These have continued sporadically.

5. Kahanism is the term of art used to describe the political ideology of certain right-wing religious Zionists. The term derives from U.S-born Rabbi Meir Kahane, who argued that Israel should be governed according to biblical tenets and, further, the full citizenship should remain exclusive to Jews.


7. Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995), career soldier and statesman, late in his career pursued a policy of accommodation toward Israel’s Arab minority. He was assassinated by an Israeli opponent of the peace process underway at the time.

8. Ibid., p. 115.
9. Yitzhak Shamir (b. 1915), soldier and statesman, was a prime mover in efforts to facilitate Russian Jewish immigration to Israel. He regularly opposed peace proposals that involved the surrender of Israeli-controlled territory as a quid pro quo for promises of peace.


11. Professor Rummel has used several sources of data (George Modelski and Gardner Perry III, in “Democratization in Long Perspective”, Ted R. Gurr and associates’ POLITY II, and Freedom House; for all the different tables and analysis, Q & A, etc., visit the most comprehensive website on democratic peace at http://www.hawaii.edu /powerkills/DP.CLOCK.HTM).


15. The other two exceptions to the proposition of democratic peace were rather borderline cases in terms of the definition (Guatemala 1954 and Cyprus 1975), see KAUFMAN, E., ARED, S. B. and ROTSTEIN, R. L., op. cit.


17. Hamas is the largest and most influential Palestinian political party. More a militant movement than political organization, it gained considerable popularity as a provider of social services. In the January 2006 Palestinian Authority legislative elections, Hamas defeated the reigning Fatah Party and has maintained a policy of non-recognition of the Israeli state.

18. The definition of “colonial” relates to “colony”, among others, as (1) a body of people settled in new territory, foreign, often distant, retaining ties with the motherland or parent state; (2) a settlement in a new country; (3) the body of descendants of settlers wholly or partially retaining their ideology and organization; (4) settlement made in hostile, newly conquered, or unstable country as a means of facilitating established occupation and governed by a parent state; and (5) a settlement in a new territory enjoying a degree of autonomy or semi-responsible government without severing ties with the parent state and without attaining the more free status of a dominion”, Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield (MA) 1971, p. 447.

19. The author was much inspired in their research by the work of Albert Memmi, notably The Colonizer and the Colonized, Beacon Press, Boston 1991. Memmi examined the colonized/colonizer relationship in the specific context of France and Algeria. Some of his observations are relevant, indeed, to the Israeli presence in the West Bank and, until recently, in Gaza.

20. The specifics of this issue are addressed infra.

21. Moshe Dayan (1915-1981) was a major military figure in the Israeli independence movement. Considered somewhat of a political maverick, he was variously at odds with and in support of Israel’s centrist political parties. In the last years of his life he adopted a stance in favor of Palestinian accommodation, even to the extent of forming a political party (Telenu), which advocated unilateral withdrawal from territories acquired or controlled since 1967.

22. Ariel Sharon (b. 1928), a controversial military and political figure (and recently prime minister until felled by a stroke in January 2006), favored peace efforts that did not entail any territorial transfer. He was succeeding in office by fellow Likud Party member and deputy, Ehud Olmert, in April 2006.

23. The Kadimah [literally, ‘Forward’] Party, founded by Ariel Sharon after a split with the conservative Likud, won a plurality of seats in the Knesset in the March 2006 elections. The party favors territorial concessions in order to maintain a geographical area in which Jews will be in the majority for the foreseeable future. However, at the same time, Kadimah favors maintaining strict Israeli control over a significant portion of the West Bank.

24. The Green Line refers to the 1949 Armistice line separating Israel from its opponents during the war for independence. It takes its name from the green pencil coloration used to draw the defining map. It is popularly employed to describe the enclosed region in which Jews constitute an absolute majority of the population.
25. In this essay, the author concentrates on analyzing the discourse used toward Palestinians and evaluate the extent to which it reveals concern about Israel’s democracy. Hence, the author does not concern himself with expressions of concern relating solely to the indirect impact of occupation on domestic Israeli issues, however much they may limit the state’s democratic nature (e.g., welfare policies, religion and state, inter-ethnic relations, immigration and foreign workers, etc.).

26. Quote from Avi Shlaim’s *The Iron Wall* and/or Rabin’s memorable speech at Mount Scopus in the aftermath of the Six Day War.


30. See especially Y. Yonah’s article in this book. As mentioned by S. Kanafi in this book, the Kadimah party’s policy of keeping most of the land (of the West Bank and Jerusalem) but with fewer people (the native Palestinians) has effectively replaced the Zionist leader Israel Zangwill’s slogan of “land without people for a people with land.”

31. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades are a group of Palestinian militias operating largely in the West Bank and affiliated with the Fatah movement. Evidently influenced to some extent by Hezbollah, the Shiite Lebanese militia, al-Aqsa has committed a number of suicide bombings in Israel proper.

32. Relying on these two events has the added benefit of establishing one benchmark before the Oslo peace process effort began and a second one after its failure to bring about a lasting peace.

33. These all reference various peace initiatives.

34. Ehud Olmert (b. 1945), lawyer, journalist, and longtime prominent political figure, succeeded Ariel Sharon to the office of prime minister after the latter was felled by a stroke in January 2006.

35. Amir Peretz (b. 1952) a Moroccan-born immigrant and active in Labor Party politics for almost three decades, won an upset victory over party chairman Shimon Peres to assume control of the party in 2005. He currently serves in the Israeli cabinet as Minister of Defense.


37. In the sense of personal corruption


39. *Nom de guerre* of Mahmoud Abbas (b. 1935), a founding member of Fatah, Abbas has figured as the leading Palestinian negotiator in various peace efforts. He has long maintained contacts with Israeli leftists and is generally regarded as something of a Palestinian dove. He signed the 1993 peace accord with Israel in September 1993, on behalf of the PLO.

40. KAUFMAN, E., “Are human rights good for the top-dog”, in NEWMAN, David and DAJANI, Mohammed D. (eds.), *Israel-Palestine: Concepts (Book I), Issues (Book II), Middle East Peace and Security Series*, Taylor & Francis (Routledge Imprint) 2006. In the same study, we found out that Y. Arafat often employed the locution “rights”, but always restricted it to “the Palestinian people.”


42. This political party represents close to ten percent of the Israeli electorate (mostly Russian immigrants). It came close to being legitimized as a government coalition party. While Israel Beiteinu wants to retain as much Palestinian territory as practically feasible, at the same time it wishes to establish what amounts to a *cordon sanitaire*, physically separating Israelis from Palestinians.

43. Only Israel’s Supreme Court of Justice has called for recognition of the requirement to adjust the security borders to avoid curtailment of rights of affected Palestinians.

44. Ze’ev Jabotinski (1880-1940), a talented orator and political polemicist, immigrated to Israel in 1903, becom-
ing prominent in the Zionist movement. He organized Jewish military formations to fight alongside British Army units in World War I engagements against the Turks, who then governed the Levant.


46. The Arab name for Jerusalem

47. The results of a poll conducted by Dr. Aharon Fein and the Tazpit Institute, published in *Ha’aretz*, 19 January 2006, p. 5a.

48. Literally, the Noble Sanctuary, the 35-acre area encompassing the Temple Mount, and including the al-Aqsa mosque. At present, this area functions under the jurisdiction of a Muslim *waqf*, although this organization’s authority is legislated and, therefore, subject to modification or, even, outright elimination.

49. This, of course, raises a fundamental question. If, indeed, democracies do not fight each other, what are the chances of peace with the new government if occupation and settlements are brought to an end? The question itself elides over a particularly important consideration: Do fairly conducted, contested elections always point to an underlying popular appreciation of liberal democratic norms of behavior, including respect for the integrity of individuals of different race and ethnicity? Given recurring popular expression among Palestinians of hatred for Jews (and, for that matter, of the inferiority of Christians and individuals of other religious persuasions), Israelis may well question Palestinian attachment to democracy’s normative values and, therefore, the possibility of long term benefits flowing from any negotiation initiative.

50. By the same token, many such immigrants were likely self-marginalized, if only because they had entered an alien social environment, one with normative values very much at odds with those prevailing in the traditional societies whence they came.

51. Historians have proposed a number of underlying incentives that encouraged European nations to engage in empire-building. Financial incentives, while always prominent, were hardly exclusive. German political leaders during the late-19th-century Bismarck period spoke of Germany’s “place in the sun.” And, Italy, like France, considered its ventures in both North Africa (Libya) and the Horn of Africa to be a *mission civilatrice*, as well as an activity reminiscent of classical Rome’s empire achievements. The Berlin Conference (1878), which divided Africa into colonial spheres, granted the bulk of control of that continent to Britain and France. Germany and Italy received rather little, although Portugal gained control of large tracts of southern Africa. In China, spheres of interest were divided among colonial powers. Although formal national sovereignty was sustained, to at least some extent national integrity was compromised incident to the establishment of extraterritoriality in the case of western residents.

52. A locution, of course, replete with unwanted associations with the odious Hitler regime.


54. The September 11, 2001 attacks, however, were preceded by a similar effort – one using planted explosives – to bring down the twin towers of the World Trade Center in 1993. That effort resulted in substantial damage and the deaths of several individuals. Other terrorist events (e.g., the 2000 attack on the *USS Cole*, an American destroyer, the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103) certainly had an effect on American public opinion.

55. The July 2003 terrorist attack on the London municipal transportation system claimed 52 victims. Since then, Scotland Yard investigators and government counter-terrorism experts have uncovered a number of planned terrorist activities before they could be brought to fruition.

56. The March 2004 attacks on Madrid’s commuter train system claimed 191 lives and over 2000 wounded. This event shifted Spanish public opinion away from the conservative government – then actively participating in operations in Iraq – and resulted in the election of a leftist government. That government withdrew Spanish military forces from Iraq. In this respect, the terrorist attack arguably achieved a major aim. Thereafter, Spain has adopted a much more accommodating attitude toward even the most militant of its resident Muslim factions.

57. All of these are highly controversial, with many of the facts still in dispute. All three have been standard police practice, albeit ones that have been challenged by civil libertarians, at least under certain circumstances.


60. Apartheid – racial segregation practiced under the euphemism of “separate development” – was established under South Africa’s Malan Government in 1948. It codified existing social practices, often in minute detail, to assure white racial superiority over the much larger black population.

61. Such maximalist drive also grew up to be very popular among Palestinians in the post-Khomeini expression of Arab political Islam, calling the Middle East “Dar el Islam”, with no room for rulers of other faiths, including Christians in Lebanon and Jews in Israel.

62. The author does not necessarily infer that the historical memory of such cruel mistreatment is necessarily an abstract “good.” Indeed, the case may be made that such collective ethnic memories, at least in certain instances, have done more net harm than good. The murderous rampages in Rwanda of both Tutsis and Hutus – targeting each other – is a case in point, as was also (albeit to a much lesser degree), in the very recent past, the tit-for-tat murders and other forms of reciprocal violence visited by Catholic and Protestant gangs on their respective religious opponents. However, to argue that such collective memories should be – or, for that matter, can be – erased is fatuous. They persist and political planners must take them into account.


64. It may be argued that the inhabitants of various dependencies of the United States (e.g., Puerto Rico, American Samoa) enjoy local, municipal rights but are denied other rights (e.g., to vote in national elections or to be fully represented in the national legislature). However, those same individuals remain American citizens are free to migrate to and settle in the United States, thereby automatically gaining any otherwise denied citizen privileges.

65. There is a body of evidence that certain colonial powers (e.g., Germany before World War II) never profited financially from their colonial ventures.


67. Ibid., p. 66.

68. However, this was certainly not always the historical case. The British Indian Civil Service is considered to have been a model of incorruptibility and, indeed, provided the model for India’s much-respected present-day civil service.


70. Shimon Peres (b. 1923), originally prominent in the Labor Party, shifted his allegiance to the newly formed Kadimah Party in 2005. Peres served as Israel’s prime minister in the 1980s and 1990s and is now a member of the cabinet.


74. An excellent example is modern Germany. Its eastern territories appear to be irrevocably lost, yet the nation is prospering to a degree unimaginable to Germans of only a half-century ago. This, of course, points to the increasing distance between territorial acquisition and national wealth, an outcome of economic conditions in the post-industrial period.


78. Interview with Y. Gorni, in Dayan, Aryeh, “We Racists”, Ha’aretz, 27 December 1991. “Our aura of masters that accordingly everything is permissible to us, only because we are Jews, is dangerous.”
80. Kacowicz, Arie, op.cit.