

"Us Here, Them There"
The Politics of Recognition in Israel-Palestine
by
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ABSTRACT

The concept of recognition developed through the 20th century as a form of political legitimation has served a central if problematic role in understanding international politics. On the one hand, recognition aims toward establishing essential collective identities that must be conceived as relatively stable in order to then gain respect, receive political protection, and occupy both physical and discursive space. On the other hand, recognition tacitly accepts a social constructivist view of the subject who can only become whole unto itself – and in turn exercise positive liberty, freedom, or agency – through the implied assent or explicit consent of another. There is an inherent tension between these two understandings of recognition. The attempt to reconcile this tension often manifests itself in forms of symbolic and systemic violence that can turn to corporeal harm. In order to enter into the concept, history, politics and performativity of recognition, I focus on what is often viewed as an exceptionally complex and uniquely controversial case: the Israel-Palestine conflict. Undergoing a discourse analysis of three epistemic communities (i.e., the State/diplomatic network, the Academic/intellectual network, the Military-Security network) and their unique modes of veridiction, I show how each works to construct the notion of ethno-nationalism as a necessary political logic that holds the promise of everything put in its right place: Us here, Them there. All three epistemic communities are read as knowledge/power networks that have substantial effect on political subjects and subjectivities. Influenced by the philosophy of Hegel and Levinas, and supported by the works of Michel Foucault, Wendy Brown, Alphonso Lingis, Jacques Derrida, Patchen Markell, and others, I show the ways in which our current politics of recognition is best read as violence. By tracing three discursive

networks of knowledge/power implicated in our modern politics of recognition, I demonstrate forms of symbolic violence waged against the entire complex of the Israel-Palestine conflict in ways that preclude a just resolution based on mutual empathy, acknowledgment, and (re)cognition.

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INTRODUCTION: THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

We need the Palestinian leadership to rise and say, simply "We have had enough of this conflict. We recognize the right of the Jewish People to a state its own in this Land. We will live side by side in true peace."... The fundamental condition for ending the conflict is the public, binding and sincere Palestinian recognition of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish People... Palestinians must truly recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people.¹

– Israel Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, “Bar-Ilan Speech,” June 14, 2009

The 'Jewish state.' What is a 'Jewish state?' We call it the 'State of Israel.' You can call yourselves whatever you want, but I will not accept it. I say this on a live broadcast. It's not my job to define it, to provide a definition for the state and what it contains. You can call yourselves the Zionist Republic, the Hebrew, the National, the Socialist [Republic]. Call it whatever you like. I don't care.²

– Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, April 26, 2009

I don't feel we need declaration from the Palestinians that they recognize Israel as a Jewish state... The whole concept, to me, of the State of Israel is that we recognize ourselves; that after 2000 years of being dependent on people, we are now independent and make our own rules.³

– Former Israel Minister of Finance Yair Lapid, October 7, 2013.

This is a study on empathy; more precisely, the barriers to its development. The study will not involve direct explication of the contours of empathy, the history of the concept, its importance for human life and social health, its exploration and development through the academic literature, or other critically important issues that deserve – arguably require

¹ “Full Text of Netanyahu’s Foreign Policy Speech at Bar Ilan,” *Haaretz*, June 14, 2009, accessed May 4, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/full-text-of-netanyahu-s-foreign-policy-speech-at-bar-ilan-1.277922>.

² The quote pre-dates Netanyahu’s Bar-Ilan speech but was in response to the weeks preceding Netanyahu’s election in April 2009, when the Prime Minister began to iterate this demand. Palestinian Media Watch, last modified April 19, 2009, accessed May 4, 2016, http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=381&fld_id=381&doc_id=1143.

³ *The Charlie Rose Show*, October 7, 2013, accessed on May 4, 2016, <https://charlierose.com/videos/23266>.

– serious attention. And yet, a concern for and with empathy provides the motivation and background of this study.

More immediately, this is a study on the concept of recognition. In what follows, I argue that the concept of recognition, developed through the 20th century as a form of political legitimation, has served a central if problematic role in understanding international politics. The term has an inherent tension that arises from its dual function. On the one hand, recognition aims toward establishing essential collective identities that must be conceived as relatively stable in order to then gain respect, receive political protection, and occupy both physical and discursive space. On the other hand, recognition tacitly accepts a social constructivist view of the subject who can only become whole unto itself – and in turn exercise positive liberty, freedom, or agency – through the implied assent or explicit consent of another. The ends of recognition (political stability) appear to be at odds with its means (social construction).

Through the 20th and into the 21st century, the process and practice of recognition has perpetuated forms of ontological violence that can often slip into corporeal insecurity and harm to peoples. The modern conception of recognition in this way offers a false promise of security. It is my intention to hold the modern conception of recognition to account for all the risks involved in its promotion. The principles of the enlightenment – rendered in the Kantian and Hegelian sense as the development of Reason through History – are betrayed by the modern rendering of recognition, a concept that has been entrusted to light the way toward achieving the highest aspirations of the human species: freedom, liberty, sociality, agency, and the virtues that might provide access to these lofty goals. In order to extricate ourselves from the harmful binds of the modern recognition

discourse, I offer a case for placing (re)cognition – and the ethics implied by the concept, which I will develop shortly – at the center of our political practice.

In order to enter into the concept, history, politics and performativity of recognition, I have chosen to focus on what is often viewed as an exceptionally complex and uniquely controversial case: the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Israel-Palestine conflict is perhaps the most contentious and notorious struggle for recognition in the 20th century. Alongside what were the seemingly intractable conflicts in South Africa and Northern Ireland, the Israel-Palestine conflict has been described as a case that is hopelessly fraught with injustice.

Solutions, when they are offered, almost always resign themselves to some degree of necessary harm done unto the conflicting parties. Early Zionist leaders, for example, understood the tension inherent in their ideal, even if their conclusions pointed toward the inevitability of tragedy. Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the ideological father of Revisionist Zionism and a man not especially sympathetic to Palestinian aspirations, explained that “the tragedy lies in the fact that there is a collision between two truths... But our justice is greater.”⁴ Similar views had been expressed by such notable Zionists as Chaim Weizmann, Israel’s first President and the Zionist movement’s chief negotiator in the pre-State period, David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s founding father and first Prime Minister, and Albert Einstein, the brilliant physicist and pride of the Jewish people.

The inevitability of tragedy was similarly noted by the other peoples who settled Palestine. Early Arab and later Palestinian nationalists were sympathetic in general to the

⁴ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage, 2001), 108.

suffering of the Jewish people throughout the 19th and 20th century. They could hardly accept the principle, however, that the Jews had a unique right to the Land of Palestine, especially not over and above the rights of those who had lived in the Promised Land for centuries prior to the development of Zionist movement. The demand for the creation and recognition of a Jewish homeland in British Mandate Palestine, for recognition of the State of Israel following the 1948 War, and for recognition of Israel as a Jewish State in recent years all appeared as violent impositions. Palestinian nationalist responses, like those of the Zionist movements, ranged from outright rejection of Jewish Statehood to timid recognition of the State of Israel as a new reality. And like many Jewish nationalists, Palestinian nationalists advocated less for co-existence as they did for separation and the requisite recognition of each community's separate if not equal right to parts of the land.

Both movements suffered at the hands of the other in the decades that followed. The aspiration of mutual recognition, viewed by many to hold the promise of coexistence, nonetheless seemed to always bear varying degrees of injustice. Israeli recognition of the Palestinian State would in the eyes of many Jews amount to a self-denial and abdication of the Land promised to the people by God. For many secular Jews not swayed by religious fervor, acceding to Palestinian demands amounts to rewarding the heinous acts of violence, terror and incitement against Jewish Israelis since the founding of the state.

For some Palestinians, recognizing the Jewish State amounts to an abdication of their inherent rights to the land from which they were displaced not a generation ago. For many others, recognizing the Jewish State is tantamount to denying their own tragic

history of injustice at the hands of the Jewish settlers and colonizers. But if the politics of recognition implied a surrender to violence that could not be justly supported, then neither could recognition be ignored or dismissed.

As Palestinian nationalists are well aware, Zionists throughout history and into modern times have argued that the Palestinians are a modern invention, and as such, have no right to their own state. As the old Zionist slogan went, Israel was “A land without a people for a people without a land,” whatever the truth might have been.⁵ As Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir stated in 1969, “There was no such thing as Palestinians...They did not exist.”

In light of these arguably still dominant views – dominant if current Israeli political discourse is any sign – Palestinian nationalists have understandably placed importance on their own recognition. Whether in recognition of the PLO during the Oslo Accords, in the negotiations with the Government of Israel to recognize the State of Palestine, or in diplomatic relations with other states and international bodies like the UN, recognition of the Palestinians right to a state of their own is a central condition for the Palestinian nationalist movement. As one of the longest standing and as of yet unsettled post-colonial nationalist struggles, official representatives of the Palestinian national movement continue to push for a solution via the problematic concept of recognition.

⁵ As Benny Morris documents, Ahad Ha’Am wrote during his 1891 visit to Palestine: “We abroad are used to believing that Eretz Israel is now almost totally desolate, a desert that is not sowed... But in truth this is not the case. Throughout the country it is difficult to find fields that are not sowed. Only sand dunes and stony mountains...are not cultivated.” Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 42.

As I argue below, the politics of recognition, while appearing as a general political trend since the 19th century, has seen a modern re-emergence and qualitative shift. Until the first decade of the 21st century, the Zionist political project aimed at securing Jewish hegemony over the land designated as Palestine by force and this project was largely if not completely successful. Unable to secure full dominance and legitimacy by force, a new strategy has recently emerged which cannot quite extirpate itself from past violence. This new strategy, which seeks explicit annunciation of recognition by the Palestinians of Israel as a Jewish State, is itself a too often unacknowledged form of violence. For all the pretensions of a negotiated, mutual agreement on a peaceable final status solution for control over the lands between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, the recognition discourse in its current form would bind the peoples, both Jewish and Palestinian, to an all-too-rigid and exclusivist political relation that would only serve to extend the tragedy of two peoples (are there only two?) in one land.

The Jewish State

Before trying to present recognition of a Jewish State as a form of violence, it may be worthwhile to recite, if only briefly, the underlying history, logic, and affective appeal of the Jewish State. The Jewish State is an aspirational project with a goal toward not simply providing a home for the Jewish people, but providing a Jewish home. Notice, for example, the settler-inspired political party led by Naftali Bennett, appropriately called *Ha'Bayit Ha'Yehudi* (The Jewish Home). If this attachment to a Jewish Home were merely represented in the right-wing neo-revanchist elements of the Zionist movement

and ideology, that would be enough. But in fact, this aspiration is diffuse and appears to represent the values of the majority of Jewish Israelis.

As early as the Balfour Declaration, the “establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish People” had been the guiding principle of the Zionist project. Of course, the October 31, 1917 declaration included the proviso that it be “clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” The extent to which this latter proviso can be made consistent with a state that declares an ethno-national character cannot be easily ascertained. The difficulty has to do with the ideals of liberalism that work at cross-purposes. The Liberal (Republican) State is based on the conception that the will of the people are represented in government actions, even if “the people” are not directly involved in decision-making practices. The people must have their interests represented in state action simply as part of their basic, generic identity as human beings with universal equal rights. However, the Liberal State also depends upon the unique social, cultural, and national affiliations of a distinct people – it depends upon identity conceived in terms of difference. Between these particularistic interests (i.e., national interest) and the universal rights (i.e., human rights) there exists constant tension that is resolved (or not) through the discursive performance and affective engagement of politics.

It is important to note that while Balfour called for a home for the Jewish people, it did not articulate the notion of a Jewish Home, and there are important differences between these two conceptions. There has been a trend in recent years within the Zionist movement from seeking a home for the Jewish people toward seeking a Jewish Home. This is not to say that the latter has not been central to elements of the Zionist movement

from the outset. The character of the State of Israel has long been debated and one can readily find historical precedent or influence from previous eras in the contemporary political scene. Still, I argue that the logic of the Zionist project as a whole – and thus of the government of Israel – has increasingly become one best expressed by former Prime Minister Ehud Barak: “us over here, them over there.”⁶ In recent years, forces across the political spectrum have attempted to make this slogan appear reasonable, plausible, and desirable.

This slogan, it turns out, was one that emerged from the center-left Labor Party. Recall that the Labor Party, in the most recent elections (2014), decided to form a coalition and adopted the party name *Mahane Ha'Zioni* (The Zionist Camp). This was the Labor Party, the purported left spectrum of mainstream Israeli politics, the party responsible for negotiating with Arafat, trading Land for Peace, and defending secular Israeli values (largely Ashkenazi) against those radical religious devotees (whether in Jerusalem or in the settlements). Even here, on the mainstream left – in matter of fact the center-left – the ideal of Israel as a Jewish home is unquestionable and held in high esteem. Their Zionism, too, depends in large part upon maintaining virtual silence around the history immediately preceding the establishment of the State of Israel and the current de facto binational character of the state within the Green Line. As I claim above, the

⁶ This echoes earlier slogans both from the Moledet political party in 1988 and from Rabin's 1992 campaign slogan: “Us here, them there, peace with Rabin.” Robert Blecher, “Living on the Edge: The Threat of ‘Transfer’ in Israel and Palestine,” *Middle East Report*, 32 (Winter 2002), Accessed on May 17, 2016, <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer225/living-edge>. There is more to say here regarding the reasons for this shift in logic. Neve Gordon demonstrates how Israel underwent a shift from an integration principle (using Palestinian labor, maintaining relatively open borders to the territories) to a separation principle that began in the early 1990s but pursued in earnest around the time of Ariel Sharon's Disengagement Plan. Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

desirability of a Jewish State has general agreement between left and right factions of Zionism, leaving the bi-nationalist Zionism in the early days of the movement (best represented by *Brit Shalom*) to appear foolish and a mere relic of history.

Let me try to be clear so that I am not misunderstood. The desire for a Jewish state, and the entire history of the Zionist project which worked toward this end, can be justifiably viewed as a triumph; a rare example of self-determination for a peoples living through a long history of repression based on their identity. There can be little doubt that the multiple pogroms suffered by the Jews – preceding but leading up to that Holocaust that remains the most horrifying case of cold human rationality directed toward inflicting inhumane levels of suffering – left a deep impression of insecurity for most who identified or were identified as Jewish.

For those like my grandparents who fled Poland and Romania and were unable to convince their families to join them – their families who would later face the life of the ghetto, followed by that of the concentration camp, and ultimately the death camp – this was not a mere matter of history. For those like my parents who were born into a family and neighborhood of survivors and victims – born into the State of Israel – setting a distance between their identity and discrimination was unsurprisingly difficult. As such, the successful creation of a strong Jewish political entity – first the World Zionist Congress and later the State of Israel – can stand as a heroic example of devoted political action in the face of historical injustice. It can be seen as an answer to the question: what is to happen to us, to us as Jews? But as much as this narrative resonates with a great number of Israelis, and as much as identification with this narrative could be viewed as justifiable, it is a gross over-simplification.

The State of Israel was not developed on a blank slate. The “Land of Israel” was not without a people, a society, a community, an indigenous culture. Indeed, these should all be put in the plural – not without a peoples, societies, communities, indigenous cultures. The Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, the nomadic Bedouins with their own complex political networks of tribal-family lineages, the Orthodox Jewish communities in the Old City, the Druze, Assyrians, Circassians, and on and on. Each of these distinct peoples were integrated, assimilated, expelled, repressed, or promoted to varying degrees at different points in time by different relevant centers of political power. The most politically salient community, not surprisingly, were the majority Arab Palestinians who were made the counterforce to the Zionist project – made so either by the Hegelian *Spirit* of history or through the plans and manipulations by centers of political power, the Arab Higher Committee of Hajj Amin al-Husseini being most prominent.

But this well-documented history and structure, complex enough in itself, is still not the full story. After all, and as with most identities, there is considerable disagreement over the conditions for belonging. If it were just a matter of competing rabbinates interpreting texts and performing Jewish rites differently, that would be enough. But the tension is found not only in varying interpretations of relatively stable biblical texts. The vagaries of history – with all of the implied shifts in human understanding of worldly phenomena and the chaotic migrations of social groups across an expansive geographical space – create new realities that must be enfolded into our thoughts and actions.

With every new migration to the Land of Israel by those who affirmed a Jewish identity – from “Arab” Jews in the 1950s (Mizrahi), to black Jews from Ethiopia in the early 1990s, to agnostic and non-practicing Jews from the Former Soviet Union in the

1990s – the debate over belonging was re-opened. Who can be accepted as Jewish? How might they prove their Jewishness? How might we confirm their affirmations of group belonging and establish non-arbitrary, non-contingent guidelines that would allow for some identifiable notion of a Jewish State? Can “we recognize ourselves,” as Yair Lapid would have it?

Part of the problem here has to do with the nature of identity. Collective identity has no objective existence outside of the process by which it is apprehended and performed. This is not to say that it does not exist. As with language, identity must emerge from some grounds, whether they be metaphysical, biological, or epiphenomenal to some universal laws or Forms. But as Plato argues, and Hegel after him, the presumption of form does not allow one to assert that they have directly apprehended Truth grounded in Form. At best, what is apprehended is parasitic on universal form. It should not be mistaken for the universal, seductive as this may be.

All this is to say that when one is asked to point to the absolute grounding of already present collective identities (Jewish, Palestinian, Algonquin, or otherwise), they must either end their inquiry on the plane of historical emergence and social reproduction or else pin their faith on a myth of origins and distinction of peoples (e.g., Adam and Eve, the Tower of Babel, Plato’s myth of the metals). Contemporary studies of nationalism since Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and Nationalism* and Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* have rejected the latter (primordialism) in favor of the former (modernism), pointing to the historically contingent development of national and ethnic identity through economic, mediatic, and political structures. In short, outside of theology, there

is a virtual unanimity in understanding identity as socially constructed and contingent rather than ontologically grounded and stable.

So does that leave us – any of us, but in this present case let me say the Jewish people, understanding that any ethno-national marker could be put in its same place – without a real collective identity with which to judge belonging or exclusion? Does it mean that we cannot ultimately lay claim to group belonging because the contours and characteristics of the group are radically – or rather ultimately – indeterminate? Not exactly. After all, performance and practice make for affective identification. Axel Honneth, for example, tries to embed his notion of affective disposition within human psychology in order to gain some universal ethic of equitable and just recognition.⁷ Honneth relies on affectivity – more precisely a praxis of empathetic engagement - to ground the universal desire for recognition between the individual and the world and between the self and others. As he demonstrates, humans reveal an innate desire to not just apprehend the world through cognitive operations but to be at home in the world, in themselves and with others.

This appeal to a human psychology and existential engagement (or “affective disposition”) could help justify the desire for recognition, revealing it as a natural and necessary condition for the flourishing of the individual and society. Still, in order for human psychology to serve as the justificatory grounds for a politics of recognition, we would have to address through a Foucauldian genealogical survey the way in which this fields (i.e., psychology) understanding is subject to its own unique history of concepts,

⁷ Axel Honneth, *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (London: Verso, 2003).

citations, logics, frameworks, and knowledge/power networks. This sort of genealogy of the concept of human psychology – more specifically the centrality of empathy – would take a volume to deconstruct and is not the goal of this present study. Even if such an account were undertaken, it would not leave us with a true form of human psychology, but rather, a contingent understanding and appreciation for patterns and relations that the subject (whether as individual or social agglomerate) has traversed over time.

So what are we to do? Where does this leave us when we seek to understand what exactly recognition might offer, how it operates, the extent to which it is a necessary condition of peaceable human affairs, and the manifold uses of the concept and politics of recognition? In my view, which I develop throughout this project, it leaves us at the doorstep of an ethics of epistemology. Viewing knowledge networks as sites where power is enacted and exercised, we might be able to better understand the logics that prop up a politics of recognition that implies social privilege to some and social harm to others. We are ethically bound to understand the ways in which a politics of recognition can be rallied toward ends that imply harm so that we might motion beyond this politics toward more just approaches at settling social conflict.

Ethno-nationalism: Sometimes a Great Notion

Let us take this as our jumping-off point. What might we take for our *ethics of epistemology*, here and now (though not forevermore), in the face of the absurdity of collective identity? First, we need to understand why it is that collective identity *strikes* us. If this notion, great though it may seem, turns out to be little more than an instinctive

affectation developed from repeat experiences of belonging or worse yet, an externality of violent imposition from without (by institutions, broadly construed in the social sense), then it could not be the basis for a universal ethic by which we can secure ourselves against some other. And surely, the project would be quite simple if we were to assign ethno-nationalism to something ordained by God; that is to say, if we would take scripture seriously (and in the process have to submit to its commandments). Put another way, if the Jews are right that God designated them as some distinct people – one should say uniquely or exceptionally distinct given their having been *chosen* – then there would be no mystery. The Jewish State would be the clear submission to divine instruction. This is the ideology of Revisionist and Religious Zionism that has been adopted by the increasingly powerful rightwing settler movement and the political parties who represent their interests. The problem here is that the majority of Israeli Jews are not devout and will rarely if at all call upon *Hashem* for justification, at least not without some blushing and perhaps shame for profaning the sacred.

Eschewing at the outset the biblical, divine narrative that would end all debate, I turn to the human, arguably profane narratives that make similar attempts. These narratives – from officialdom of the academy, the state, or the military – rely on different epistemological foundations into which they stake their claims. Each has their own position regarding justice influenced in part by their own particular modes of veridiction – “the set of rules enabling one to establish which statements in a given discourse can be described as true or false.”⁸ This Foucauldian terminology is deliberate. Speaking of

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-79*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 35.

modes of veridiction helps to better conceive political power as an operation of translations flowing through circuits – through networks – that do not transmit so much as transform their objects of inquiry.⁹ These modes of veridiction, in turn, determine what might be taken as “serious” or “legitimate” and what falls beyond the pale of reason and logic. As Foucault explained:

What is important is the determination of the regime of veridiction that enabled them [i.e., experts] to say and assert a number of things as truths that it turns out we now know were perhaps not true at all. This is the point, in fact, where historical analysis may have a political significance. It is not so much the history of the true or the history of the false as the history of veridiction which has a political significance.¹⁰

In the case of the politics of recognition, “serious” and “legitimate” turn out to be crucial discursive tools that work to establish a certain kind of bifurcation of the social world (between collective-self and collective-other), a particular distribution of power, and a consequent hierarchy of rights. In so doing, these discursive props have the potential of creating real bodily harm and an inequitable and unjust distribution of ethical duties to self and other. Put another way, it places at risk the practice of recognition, not in its technocratic or juridical register (which it in fact supports), but in its higher aspiration, as a practice bearing the promise of empathetic engagement.

In the present study, I focus on three epistemic communities and their unique modes of veridiction. These spheres of inquiry do not exhaust the networks that produce a particular form of a politics of recognition but their selection is not arbitrary. The

⁹ Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory, viewed as an extension of this Foucauldian epistemology and ontology, has had strong influence on my approach as well. See: Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

¹⁰ Foucault, *Birth of Biopolitics*, 36.

decision to focus on the academic, state, and military/security networks is motivated by their dominance in the discourse that works to comprehend the Israel-Palestine conflict. How does each lend stability to a politics of recognition based on an ontology of identity that risks reproducing the very violence that it promises to eliminate?

For the state, the politics of recognition is reproduced by recourse to *civitas*, that purportedly real and established collective-self-identity subject to common law and speaking in a single sovereign voice. As explained above, the annunciation of a group identity is hardly satisfying grounds for justifying a bifurcation of the social and political world.¹¹ Proclamation of a grounded identity appears more as truism than epistemic foundation. Those who speak in the voice of the state often take recourse in an unverifiable foundational identity or a myth of origins. It is no mistake, after all, that Plato's foundational Noble Lie is that of the peoples springing forth from the soil. This need to bind a peoples so that they could be bound to the state was appreciated by many of the Great Political Thinkers. Machiavelli understood the necessity of a civic religion, as did Hobbes, as did Rousseau. The noble lie is absolutely necessary for the state to function *as if* it were a collection of individuals sharing a common identity. But we should not mistake the noble lie for truth.

The State's insistence on crafting and determining the *relevant* history that would establish belonging – typically in ways that make the narrative most amenable to technocratic control and political planning – reveals the conceit involved in speaking of

¹¹ As Marx demonstrated, national identity could be viewed as a false consciousness usefully disseminated by elites (the bourgeoisie) in order to bind the common man (the proletariat) to a submissive system of economic and social reproduction, distracting them from their common interest by promoting superficial difference.

States and Nations as steady, stable, relatively unproblematic objects (unproblematic once put in their proper place). Moreover, the very production (both practical and discursive) of States and their national histories reveals itself to be *transnational* in character, further undermining the ontology of discrete and autochthonous collectivities (i.e., peoples, nations, states). This argument is developed and demonstrated in Part One.

For the academy, the politics of recognition is reproduced by recourse to historical texts, anthropology, archeology, geography, and the like. The field of international relations, which concerns itself with theorizing the organization of peoples into nations, nations into states, and states into geopolitical actors, is arguably implicated in the politics of recognition more than any other academic discipline. With its origins in race theory, a racist corpus of knowledge by definition, international relations theory has not yet escaped the more insidious effects produced by its knowledge/power claims.¹² Central to the claims made in international relations is the concept of the national interest.

In order to lend coherence to state action, political scientists refer to the pursuit of the national interest by policymakers. This national interest is not a mere whim of policymakers, but is thought to have some true content and form, the understanding of which is deferred to politicians and intellectuals, who in turn make the national interest their property to define, defend, and protect. In light of this, one would hope to find some basic agreement on the concept of the national interest, but upon examination, we find this not to be the case. As I argue in Part Two, the decisive decision on the national

¹² For a history of the field of international relations and its origins in imperialist race theories, see: Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015); Robert Vitalis, "The Graceful and Generous Liberal Gesture: Making Racism Invisible in American International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29, 2 (2000), pp. 331-356.

interest – never fully achieved – defines the very contest of political practice. The national interest is not a final and stable bi-product of theory, a culmination of history, or an agreement reached via a social contract. It is a void at the heart of politics, one never quite filled by academic discourse but made nonetheless productive for certain networks of knowledge/power that aspire to control and dictate political society.

For the military/securities networks, on the other hand, the politics of recognition is reproduced by recourse to security practices, discourses and ideologies that work to mold and sustain group differences. These practices and the discourse on which they depend are hardly internal to the military institutions subordinated to the sovereign power of the State. Those institutions, including the state military, private arms manufacturers, and private security consultancy firms, display characteristics of what Deleuze and Guattari identified as the War Machine. While the State continues to appropriate these forces toward its ends by necessity¹³, the irreducible and irascible nature of these forces is continually revealed. At the same time, the embodiment of these forces relies on a common mode of veridiction based on the successful performance of identity. In this case, the identity relies in part on a dividuation of characteristics and in part on an ontology of the abstract enemy.¹⁴

¹³ By necessity because they are the necessary condition for the State project of securing sovereign claims over territory, people, and language. To be more accurate, there can be no separation between these tendencies – State sovereignty and the War Machine. They logically entail and entangle one another.

¹⁴ Dividuation here refers to the vivisection of the individual or social body into constituent parts, characteristics, or “independent variables” made amenable for calculation, regulation and control. Gilles Deleuze, identifying this tendency that portends a “Society of Control” explains how “We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become ‘*dividuals*,’ and masses, samples, data, markets, or ‘banks.’” The Society of Control – which bears similarities to Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion on the State or “royal” sciences – “substitutes for the individual or numerical body the code of the “dividual” material to be controlled.”

Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October*, Vol. 59 (Winter 1992), 3-7.

Whether in their embodied manifestations as bullets and bombs; their imaginative manifestations in blueprints, statistical models, Grand Strategies, and not-so-grand tactical playbooks; their discursive manifestations that define “enemy” or “target;” identity is necessary for the meaningful and legible operations of these political networks. And yet, the untethered nature of the War Machine’s movement result in the State project losing some of its ability to legitimate the power exercised in its name. Unable to enfold these forces that always point outwards, the State can only perform its unity with more-or-less success, unable to assert it now and forever. Part Three provides a historical account of the War Machine in relation to Israel, offering a perspective that destabilizes the already tenuous sovereign identity of the Jewish state.

Together, these networks of veridiction work to construct the notion of ethno-nationalism as a necessary political logic that holds the promise of everything put in its right place: Us here, Them there. But this form of recognition, of recognition as “separate-but-equal,” is on the surface a commitment to ontological violence. It can bind individuals to community identities from which they would then assert their rights and duties or from which they would be subject to discriminations and incriminations.¹⁵ Once these categories are established, they can also serve as areas of exclusivity, denying access as well as voiding duties to some while providing others with a range of exclusive “club goods.” Against this concept of recognition, I advocate for (re)cognition, an iterative practice that opens in face-to-face interactions.

¹⁵ As I argue elsewhere, Muslims in “the West” have been subject to all sorts of incriminations and tasked with special responsibilities by governments who view them as part of a discrete and uniquely dangerous community. Donald Trump’s call for temporarily banning all Muslims from entering the U.S. is a particularly stark example of this threat. See: Eyal Bar (2015), “The Nexus of Enmity: Ideology, Global Politics, and Identity in the 21st Century,” *CrossCurrents*, Vol. 35 Issue 3, DOI: 10.1111/cros.

Influenced by the philosophy of Emanuel Levinas, and supported by the works of Alphonso Lingis, Wendy Brown, Jacques Derrida, Patchen Markell, and others, I show the ways in which our current politics of recognition is best read as violence. By tracing three discursive networks of knowledge/power implicated in our modern politics of recognition, I demonstrate forms of symbolic violence waged against the entire complex of the Israel-Palestine conflict in ways that preclude a just resolution based on mutual empathy, acknowledgment, and (re)cognition.

Before entering into my case study, I will now turn to an exegesis on the concept of recognition, followed by a more detailed explication of my use of the term (re)cognition. After presenting the above-mentioned case studies (the discourse of the State, Academic, and Military-Security networks), I end the project with some speculative theorizing on an ethics of epistemology on recognition.

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CHAPTER 1

FROM RECOGNITION TO (RE)COGNITION

As a modern political concept, recognition is characteristically used in reference to the nation-state system. The United Nations, for example, recognizes some 193 states, who in turn recognize one another, as well as several other non-state groups. In the post-Westphalian system, two states must exchange recognition before they can secure their independence from one another.¹⁶ This is the ideal of internal and external sovereignty, an ideal more often revealed as “organized hypocrisy,” but a functional one nonetheless.¹⁷ Even if states intervene regularly in the affairs of other states, either overtly or covertly, the general view is that esteem for the principle of sovereignty provides for relative stability.

As a political tool, the discourse on recognition serves to legitimate modern forms of political organization (i.e., the nation-state system) and helped to escape the previous age of imperialism. It is important not to forget how truly modern is the nation-state system. In the first decades of the previous century and up until decolonization in the 1960s, the world was divided into several empires whose scope of powers was not limited by ethno-linguistic borders (e.g., the Ottoman, French Colonial, British, Prussian, German, Spanish, American, and Soviet empires). It was only after the Second World War that the nation-state norm overtook the Imperial powers and began to dominate, and then only in a lagging and partial manner. Within this new system, states and smaller

¹⁶ Tracing the origin of this mode of state sovereignty back to the Westphalian system has been challenged by some. See, for example: Andreas Osiander, “Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth,” *International Organization*, Vol. 55 No. 2 (2001), 251-287.

¹⁷ Stephen Kraser, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

political groups are granted recognition after meeting some generally agreed upon guidelines that served to legitimate their power and actions. This recognition amounts to an invitation to the figurative and literal round table of international politics (e.g., the United Nations).

Mirroring the politics of recognition at the interstate level was a domestic politics of recognition. Following the Second World War, an increasingly popular but by no means universal requirement for state legitimacy was the exchange of recognition between the institution of the state and the people placed under its putative authority and care. In order for a state to sustain its power and achieve stability and longevity, the governing regime had to face its people – at times all of the people but more often a “selectorate” or “winning coalition” – and receive their tacit approval, consent, and deference.¹⁸ However, in this process of facing and representing “the people,” the state is met with a definitive challenge which threatens an existential crisis. The mythic unity of the state is met with plurality and disunity; multiple languages, religions, cultures, values, and “peoples” exist within a state. Desiring to speak in a single voice, the state is met with an irrepressible cacophony. Even if a single privileged voice emerges or is violently asserted, what is the state to do with all of those other voices calling from the balcony, sidelines, or within the crowd?

It was in this context of internal upheavals within states across the globe that Charles Taylor published his 1992 essay “The Politics of Recognition.”¹⁹ Since then,

¹⁸ For a review of selectorate theory, see: Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

¹⁹ Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25-73.

many academics have turned their attention to the process by which states might reconcile their unified national ideal with the reality of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity (i.e., cultural pluralism). All states, like Taylor's Canada, include multiple ethno-national communities and a diversity of cultures, each with their unique histories, beliefs, languages, or traditions, who often seek state protection in order to sustain their heritage in the face of homogenizing social forces (i.e., the educational institutions, public services, the media, the workplace, etc.). These groups seek recognition by the state, whose powers and institutions extend privileges and grant legal protections to said groups.

In a similar vein, the recognition discourse was rallied for the purposes of securing the rights of women, the LGBTQI community, and disabled persons. Taken up by post-structuralist scholars like Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, and Nancy Fraser, who introduced a deconstructionist ethic to questions of sovereign identity, this politics of recognition presented a challenge to the ontological positivism of Taylor's politics of recognition.²⁰ Pointing to the social constructivist and performative aspects of identity in the politics of recognition, these authors exposed the political logic that implicates the state in the production of identity. This relation between the state and identity often manifested itself in an invasive and violent register, revealing state-maker's insatiable desire to assert sovereignty over the constitution and order of things, including identity.

²⁰ See: Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Judith P. Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition?: A Political-philosophical Exchange* (New York: Verso, 2003); Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

Like Taylor, these writers demonstrated the difficulty in reconciling presumptive universal rights with normative differences and the diversity of values, lifestyles, or cultures found within single political units (i.e., states). But more than that, they challenged the very presumption of ontology as the grounding of a politics of recognition.²¹

The variants of a politics of recognition mentioned above – interstate, civic republican, and identity-based – focus on ensuring legal protection, ensuring the rights of one community against some other community, or else rectifying injustice done unto particular identity-holding subjects. More often than not, and with the important exception of the above-mentioned post-structural and post-modern theorists, these variants approach the problem of recognition from a technocratic and problem-solving register. These approaches – emanating from the 18th century Liberal tradition that continues to run through the modern politics of recognition – sought to ground rational politics within the framework of a social contract, tying together an ideal view of man as both inherently free and inherently social. It would be a mistake, however, to view recognition merely as a technocratic form of political organizing. In order to understand

²¹ Without developing an exhaustive genealogy, it is worthwhile to mention the “hermeneutics of suspicion” that helped to inspire these thinkers and resuscitate a concern for ethics. These post-structural political theorists took inspiration in large part from the phenomenology of Hegel and later Heidegger, Nietzsche’s explosive brand of existentialism, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, critical Marxism, the language theory of the late Wittgenstein, Levinasian ethics, and Derridean deconstruction. Exposing the technocratic impulse in the history of philosophy up to that point, these writers sought to reinterpret the state and its objects of concern by way of exploring – as Hegel did before them – the operations of consciousness. Hegel, performing a philosophy that seemed to resurrect dimensions of an earlier Platonism, worked to trace consciousness from the granular level (the individual consciousness) to a grand scale (the State). This movement, discerned within the *Phenomenology of Spirit* itself, could be more fully apprehended when that text is placed in the context of Hegel’s later political writing, *Philosophy of Right*. Depending on how one read Hegel, they could either view the state as a natural culmination of consciousness – a kind of metaphysically-rendered teleology or telos of the subject – or else a constant struggle, also natural, but unbounded, unsettled and unsettling. Here, a new kind of liberty could be discerned, but it was not the liberty of Liberalism.

the ethical kernel that gives movement and legitimacy to the concept of recognition in the first place, it would help to review the strange history of Liberalism and the State.

The Liberal State

The liberalism that emerged in the 18th century, in its classical as opposed to reform variant, was marked by a concern with the individual as the locus of liberty, a bearer of natural rights, and a rational agent who consented to being governed. By the 19th century, liberalism underwent a significant “reform,” focusing on the individual as a perfectible and ever-changing being. While the notion of the inherent dignity of man might have existed throughout history, it was not the dominant *political* view until the 19th century, and did not appear in political philosophy but with some exceptions in theological works.

The distinction is often made between ancient and modern philosophy in that the former was concerned with the body politic while the latter became concerned with man as an abstract, universal agent. Individual rights are rarely the focus of ancient and medieval texts on politics and philosophy, unless of course that individual were a king or *The Prince*. Justice – the foundational question in philosophy – was that which served to guarantee the health and survival of the principality or city-state. The individual, if he was mentioned at all, was a subject who had duties but not rights. Take for example Socrates who, for all his virtue and genius, nonetheless submitted to the unjust dictates of

his city, ingesting the hemlock rather than fleeing as his closest friends had urged him to do.²²

It was with the Liberal turn of the Enlightenment that individuals became subjects of greater, even universal, depth. It was here that a higher form of recognition found its foothold, establishing itself as a necessary condition for justice. Until one could recognize the universal and inherent value of other individuals, one could not expect to escape relations of domination and violence – amoral relations that had acquired nominal legitimacy from ancient times to the present.²³ Until one opened to the face of the other, the other would remain an object, abstract and separate, a means and not an ends.²⁴

The emerging Liberal ideology soon provided a new ground from which the State could establish its sovereign presence. Taking up the language of the liberal subject, the State could begin to demand a similar recognition – a recognition of its unity, sovereignty, and universal right. Recall that through the 19th century, most governments were monarchic in form – the divine right sitting comfortably in the not-yet-severed head

²² The common reading of Socrates' action is that he could not betray the laws of the city that raised him, even if the judgment of the Senate was ill-founded and amounted to a miscarriage of justice and truth. To the credit of this view, Socrates says as much himself. Still, I should note here that I have my own reading of Socrates' choice, viewing it as a political act without which his thought, all his work, his philosophy would not have reached across the centuries to our modern times. Socrates as the crucified Jesus – before that figure emerged – who could only propagate his messianic message by accepting the role of martyr. For a similar argument that has influenced my reading, see: Jay Haley, *The Power Tactics of Jesus Christ, and Other Essays* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1969). See also: Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992); Plato, *The Apology and Crito*, trans. Hugh Tredennick, in *The Last Days of Socrates* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1954).

²³ This is reference to the “realist” tradition characterized by the logic of “might makes right,” that has been reproduced since the Melian dialogues through to Nietzsche’s (a)morality and into the modern realist school of international relations theory.

²⁴ I am referring here to first philosophy as outlined by Emmanuel Lévinas (i.e., an ethics dictated by a phenomenology of alterity in the face of the Other). See: Emmanuel Levinas, “Is Ontology Fundamental?,” *Basic Philosophical Writings*. Eds. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 6.

of the King (soon to be replaced by the Head of State – the honorific title itself is telling). The State could proclaim its presence as a natural extension of God on earth with the King having been hand-chosen by divine ordinance. Asserting its authority, demanding allegiance and tribute, capturing and disciplining the individuals within its orbit, the State could demonstrate through force – using the arms of the State – its rightful place in the political and social space.

With the Enlightenment, the divine right of kings began to erode, and with the aid of developments in industrialization and bureaucratization (i.e., technopolitics), a new ontology began to develop. States persisted as the great moral agents of history much in the same way as the ancient city-states were conceived – this time not because the king or prince had special communion with the divine, but because the survival of the social body demanded it. Constitutional law could provide a strong scaffolding on which the State would hang its decisions and expand its powers to sites previously left to the management of the church, civil society, or the family. Like Marx turning Hegel on his head, the Liberal tradition helped to turn the Right of Kings on its head, placing at the moral center of the state not the head of the king but an agglomeration of divine individuals: the people, *ethnos*, or *volk*. As the 19th century gave way to further technologies of discipline and control, the people as a category became less a collection of individuals and more a social body unto themselves.

Foucault observed how the growing capillary powers of the state and their concern with the management of the population-as-a-whole – what he termed bio-power and bio-politics – created a logic of the State that would necessarily fall to racism. This racism – but let us call it nationalism – treated the people as a natural category that could

fit within a single and complete identity. The state form could now present itself as a natural political extension of the people, a being who had an identity rather than an institution wielding a sword and exercising control through sheer and brute force. As states became republics, and some even approached forms that could be described as more or less democratic, the performance of unity became all the more believable.

The abstraction of the nation-state allowed for a kind of legitimation that proved highly adaptable; it proved to be a veritable evolution in international politics. The principle function of the United Nations would be to establish a politics of recognition based on the nation-state model, introducing terms like “self-determination” into the common lexicon, and providing a venue where the mutual exchange of recognition between these abstract entities could gain legitimacy and public acknowledgement. In this context, the number of those natural categories – States – began to proliferate, from a measly 51 states in 1945 to 193 in 2016 (South Sudan being the most recent member in 2011).

The State of Being and Recognition

Liberalism allowed for a transmogrification of the State that pushed this form of political organization beyond an order instituted by power and toward one that could claim ethical presence. The State, however, much like the liberal individual, did not shed its desire for sovereignty. In the statist conception of recognition, adaptability and flux are viewed as destabilizing forces that must be restrained. The relation to the core virtue of empathy that recognition might have served in statecraft was pushed to the background. Now

states could achieve recognition, but it was not the recognition of affection, empathy, or universal depth. Instead, it became a political tool – a vise and chisel – that if wielded properly allowed statesmen (policymaking elite) to carve and hold the world in such a way as to manage it.

Throughout this project, I argue that the modern variant a politics of recognition, based as it is on the ontology of a transmuted state, has led many to lose sight of the affective, ethical, and intersubjective nature of recognition which provides the grounds for sociality in general. It is this aspect of recognition – its affective, empathetic, and ethical connotations – that I would like to retain and reintroduce as central to contemporary politics, all despite submersion of these aspects of recognition in the increasingly *practical* and *problem-solving* approaches that dominate modern political thought.

As a word that recurs in continental philosophy since Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, recognition entails ethics and the concept of respect, whether formally through declarative statements and inscription in text, or informally through personal dispositions and human interaction.²⁵ This view has gained such purchase that the modern colloquial use of the term recognition implies deference and just deserts. People are told to recognize the authority of the police and disperse in an orderly fashion lest they be arrested or subject to a barrage of teargas canisters. We are impelled to recognize the brutal history of slavery when discussing race and politics in the United States. We are compelled to recognize the struggles that women face on a daily basis, from workplace discrimination to harassment on public sidewalks or in bars. The chair recognizes the

²⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baille (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967).

Senator from Vermont for 15 minutes, granting him the right to speak uninterrupted, if only for a moment. In this way, the colloquial use of “recognition” reveals its origin as a concept imbued with the values of respect and due deference. This is, however, only one aspect – and an arguably more advanced form – of the practice of recognition.

Recognition is often used to convey the psychological or phenomenal act of apprehension. The term conveys some sense in which an individual affirms the content and quality of some object, whether tangible or intangible, sentient or non-sentient. The question then becomes, what is it that is being recognized and how? In Axel Honneth’s essay, “Reification,” recognition indicates a “stance of empathetic engagement in the world, arising from the experience of the world’s significance and value.”²⁶ This can be applied broadly to individual apperception of the contents found “out there,” but also implies a feedback process between what an individual experiences and some pre-existing content of their psyche. In this register, recognition is firstly an apprehension of some external stimulus: it is the phenomenological impact of some outside force on the unwitting consciousness of the individual.

This recognition is empty of any rich concepts that emerge from cognition. It is the catalyst for onto-genesis, the first instance wherein that which is thought of as outside of the self-contained body or consciousness impresses upon this self the requirement that the stimulus be interpreted, ordered, inscribed in some network or matrix that would lend it meaning. In this context, “recognition comes before cognition.”²⁷ The individual is

²⁶ Axel Honneth, *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 38.

²⁷ Honneth, *Reification*, 40

violently confronted with the outside and only then can the individual begin to order these bits of information, to exert its own symbolic violence on the stimulus.

And yet, Honneth appears to lend to the act of recognition some pre-existing value; namely, empathy, which itself arises from “the experience of the world’s significance and value.” So that, while recognition is conceptualized as preceding cognition, it nonetheless requires an emotional disposition or a state of “empathetic engagement.”²⁸ Recognition, beyond being a refraction of the external world, is invoked as a necessary condition for ethical life. Recognition involves a relation between at least two enclosed bodies, or as it is often characterized, between a *self* and an *other*. Whether this recognition is conceived of as distinctive and separate from cognition (i.e., Reason) as Honneth implies, or whether it develops through morphogenic play with Reason (i.e., Sittlichkeit) is a point of contest. Furthermore, whether this initial binary opposition of self and other is justified as something other than a heuristic remains contested. In either case, recognition is given some content or is linked to certain values that are granted to one by another. One recognizes beauty or enmity or cowardice or freedom in some other. In other words, recognition in this context makes little sense unless there is *something* that is said to be recognized.

Beginning with Hegel, that *something* that would be recognized was the mutually constructive relation between the individual consciousness and what lay outside it,

²⁸ Withholding for now a dialogue on what cognition might entail, a forced break between “emotion” and “cognition” appears unjustified, as has been demonstrated by Martha Nussbaum and Karen Fierke, among others. See: Karen M. Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Karen M. Fierke, “Links across the Abyss: Language and Logic in International Relations” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 46 No. 3 (2002): 331-354.

whether that outside is the world or another individual. Against the view that an individual is whole unto itself and independent, Hegel introduced the metaphor of the Lord and Bondsman to develop the concept of intersubjectivity. Hegel describes the encounter this way, worth quoting at length:

Self-consciousness is primarily simple existence for self, self-identity by exclusion of every other from itself. It takes its essential nature and absolute object to be Ego; and in this immediacy, in this bare fact of its self-existence, it is individual. That which for it is other stands as unessential object, as object with the impress and character of negation. But the other is also a self-consciousness; an individual makes its appearance in antithesis to an individual. Appearing thus in their immediacy, they are for each other in the manner of ordinary objects. They are independent individual forms, modes of consciousness that have not risen above the bare level of life (for the existent object here has been determined as life). They are, moreover, forms of consciousness which have not yet accomplished for one another the process of absolute abstraction, of uprooting all immediate existence, and of being merely the bare, negative fact of self-identical consciousness; or, in other words, have not yet revealed themselves to each other as existing purely for themselves, i.e., as self-consciousness. Each is indeed certain of its own self, but not of the other, and hence its own certainty of itself is still without truth. For its truth would be merely that its own individual existence for itself would be shown to it to be an independent object, or, which is the same thing, that the object would be exhibited as this pure certainty of itself. By the notion of recognition, however, this is not possible, except in the form that as the other is for it, so it is for the other; each in its self through its own action and again though the action of the other achieves this pure abstraction of existence for self.²⁹

It is important to note that Hegel's Lordship/Bondsman relation is not a struggle between two individuals, but rather, between two "modes of consciousness."

In this experience self-consciousness becomes aware that *life* is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness. In immediate self-consciousness the simple ego is absolute object, which, however, is for us or in itself absolute mediation, and has as its essential moment substantial and solid independence. The dissolution of that simple unity is the result of the first experience; through this there is posited a pure self-consciousness, and a consciousness which is not purely for itself, but for another, i.e. as an existent consciousness, consciousness in the form and shape of thinghood. Both moments are essential, since, in the first instance, they are unlike and opposed, and their reflexion into unity has not yet come to light, they stand as

²⁹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, 232

two opposed forms or modes of consciousness. The one is independent, and its essential nature is to be for itself; the other is dependent, and its essence is life or existence for another. The former is the Master, or Lord, the latter the Bondsman. The master is the consciousness that exists *for itself*; but no longer merely the general notion of existence for self.³⁰

From this passage it is clear that the Master is self-consciousness as Ego, the part of the psyche that seeks mastery and control. The interaction between Lord and Bondsman, however, reveals to both their mutual dependence. With this new awareness, an inescapable responsibility begins to emerge. The self, having recognized its very being as intimately tied-up with that of the other (including its internal other), can no longer exist purely for itself. A pure self-existence can only be achieved through violence and even then, the attempt will always be disturbed by the recognition of an *I* outside the self – whether that *I* is a repressed aspect of the self, another individual, the external world, or metaphysical and ontotheological forces (e.g., *Geist, the Idea, The Forms*).³¹

Despite the recognition of the intersubjective character of existence, the impulse toward self-sufficiency, self-existence, or sovereign agency (*being for itself*) is readily visible in every action at every moment for every consciousness. Control is sought, if not achieved, by holding everything outside oneself in place long enough so that the self can take some confident and assertive steps. This desire for control, however, is inherently violent and ultimately thwarted at every step in light of intersubjective being. The desire for independence is consistently foiled by the reality of mutual interdependence.

³⁰ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, 234

³¹ There is more to say about the reading of the Lord as Ego. The image recalls Plato's tripartite soul as well as categories of the psyche in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. I will undertake a more full explication of these relations in the future.

Where, then, does this leave the human individual and that new transmogrified individual of State? According to Emmanuel Levinas, “the other is not an object of comprehension first and an interlocutor second. The two relations are intertwined. In other words, the comprehension of the Other (autrui) is inseparable from his invocation.”³² This process of comprehension and insight into its operations can similarly be found in Judith Butler’s discussion of Althusser’s *interpellation* – the way in which a subject is constituted in language.³³ If we are to follow Levinas’ insight, we have comprehension and the other as mutually constituted, as a process by which invocation and comprehension work to construct and isolate an *other*. No longer a case of some outside reality imposing itself on one’s consciousness, recognition now appears as an engaged activity. Recognition is given agency. Once again, the foundations of recognition are disturbed by the prospect that what is recognized did not exist before its recognition, could not exist before being invoked. To add to the confusion, recognition now appears less like comprehension of some other’s essence and more like a one-sided imposition of identity over what might be a recalcitrant agent.

Levinas, before Derrida’s popularization of the theme of ontology-as-violence, wrote that “comprehension...does not invoke these beings but only names them, thus accomplishing a violence and a negation.”³⁴ The violent act of naming and therefore, enclosing, stabilizing, making static some system of content that might then be inscribed into an order seems to deprive recognition of its conceptualization as an innocent, natural,

³² Emmanuel Levinas, *Is Ontology Fundamental?*, 6.

³³ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London: Routledge, 1997).

³⁴ Levinas, *Is Ontology Fundamental?*, 9.

and unproblematic occurrence. As Foucault pointed out in *The Order of Things*, the logic of a system depends first on containing and then organizing phenomena. When we look to recognition as an act or process that lends ethical and affective content to the objects being recognized, we are met with the question of how a system is organized such that particular logics develop into ethical categories, a question on the episteme and ethics of recognition.

Here, we arrive at what distinguishes between the recognition-as-phenomenology and recognition-as-ethics. Ethics is a system that depends on logic, parameters, rules, and instructions on how the agents and the structure interact. What might be possible, whether these possibilities reflect an inherent core or source of values (e.g. affection, empathy, universal being, the Forms, or God), and the process by which values are crafted and then organized all depend on the objects that are presupposed in a system of ethics and their positioning within that system. Naming might represent the initial step (onto-genesis) which then allows for order and, consequently, applied logics and ethics.

Thus far, we have moved from recognition as a phenomenological, perhaps violent, confrontation between a subject and some content external to its subjectivity (at least initially), to recognition that includes (either inextricably, by logical necessity, causally or probabilistically) practices of naming, ordering, and cognition from which ethical claims might emerge. It seems as though recognition cannot escape the demand to give identity to its *other*. Is there a way to escape this ontological violence? As I argue, recognition may be released from this desire and return to an ethics of relationality if it were viewed as an iterative practice that always destabilizes the identity of its objects of concern.

My view of (re)cognition is similar to Patchen Markell's writing on *acknowledgement* in *Bounded by Recognition*.³⁵ While there are small differences in our approach, possibly emerging from differences in our literary influences and intellectual histories, both our works cautiously test the recognition discourse against the promise that gives it purchase. For Markell, recognition as it has been addressed by dominant figures in the literature – most notably Charles Taylor – fails to grasp an internal contradiction. As Markell describes it, “there is a profound irony involved in the ideal of recognition: the desire that makes that ideal so compelling – the desire for sovereign agency, for an antidote to the riskiness and intermittent opacity of social life – may itself help to sustain some of the forms of injustice that many proponents of recognition rightly aim to overcome.”³⁶

Markell's solution is to introduce a distinction between *recognition* and *acknowledgment*, the latter overcoming the contradiction by introducing the concepts of *temporality* and *sovereignty* to the recognition discourse. In so doing, he admirably preserves what we might value in the concept of recognition – the promise that it holds for autonomy, intersubjectivity, positive liberty, and companionship to which one may even include love.³⁷ Temporality, for Markell, frees one (whether an individual or collective) from the inherent bind of

³⁵ Patchen Markell, *Bounded by Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

³⁶ Markell, *Bounded by Recognition*, 5.

³⁷ An optimism that finds support in the writings of Alphonso Lingis, himself heir to the principled thought of Emmanuel Levinas, and others. See: Alphonso Lingis, *The First Person Singular* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007); Brian Schroeder, *Altared Ground: Levinas, History, and Violence* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

recognition – the demand that one pronounce, affirm, cosign, or insist on their identity. As he rightly points out, this bind may exist whether the identity being recognized is “positive” or “negative.”

My own approach, no doubt similar but with some difference, focuses on viewing recognition as an iterative performative practice guided by an ethic of deference and vulnerability toward the *other*. One way to highlight this view of recognition as an iterative practice is to follow what has become a mark of poststructural thought, influence in large part by Derrida’s playful and substantially meaningful approach to language, and alter the standard inscription of the word: to speak of (re)cognition in place of recognition. The language of temporality, while implicit in my argument, is not the approach taken here. Instead, the language of performativity will be central. Where Markell turns to Arendt, I turn to Levinas. Where he turns to Marx, I turn to Foucault.

In order not to test the reader’s patience, a discussion of these differences is deferred to a later date. Having grounded this study in classic and contemporary literature on recognition, I now turn to an application of these insights directed toward three knowledge/power networks – the State, the Academy, and the Military/Security networks.

In politics, people look to solutions that will fix things once and for all, provide a stable and secure being, some peace and with it peace of mind. The desire for recognition is driven by the same sense of promise. Finally, once and for all, we or I will be given a space where I can get down to my autonomy, freedom and true being. The State is thought to provide the space where that promise of liberation can flourish but a closer

look at statecraft reveals its nervous reproduction achieved by exercising flagrant exclusions and violent confinement of persons and ideas. It is to the practices of the State network that I now turn.

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PART ONE: THE STATE NETWORK

Chapter Two: States of Mind – The Politics of Recognition in Israel-Palestine

This project began with a simple observation on the Israel-Palestine peace process. In recent years, a new condition for a final status agreement between the relevant parties has emerged. This condition – that the Palestinians recognize and affirm Israel’s existence *as a Jewish State* – is political significant for several reasons. First, it appears to have emerged in earnest only in the last decade, at a time when Israel has achieved its highest level of security since its founding. Threats from Israel’s neighbors and former belligerents – Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia– had subsided for the most part by the time Israel signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. Border skirmishes with terrorist organizations, occasional mortar fire and kidnappings continued (e.g., Hezbollah, Hamas, PIJ), but these did not reach the level of existential threat faced from surrounding armies in 1948, 1967, and 1973. The internal security threat brought on by waves of terror during the Second Intifada was more serious but the scope and scale of these events had subsided with the introduction of security barriers, closure policies, and reinforced internal security measures of the mid-2000s. Around the time that Israel began its separation policy in relation to the Palestinians, the problem of Israeli identity reemerged in a new, security-laden format.

Second, this condition of recognition is arguably the most contentious and difficult issue to resolve, even in the face of ongoing questions on the final status of Jerusalem, the settlement projects in the West Bank, sovereignty in the Jordan Valley, and the Hamas government in Gaza. The demand for recognition appears to have

trumped “rational,” realist-oriented political concerns (security, economy, deterrence), introducing an element of idealism into the diplomatic process.

Third, whether this condition of recognition has been met can never be resolutely verified. Israeli policymakers do not want to merely hear the Palestinian leadership utter “we recognize Israel as a Jewish State;” they and a large segment of the Israeli public need to *believe* that this utterance is genuine. Alternatively, the Palestinians need to perform this utterance in such a way that Israeli policymakers and the Israeli public cannot question its veracity. However, political performance depends upon agreeing to the same script, establishing trust among participants, and making the performance visible to the audience. As I demonstrate, Israeli-Palestinian negotiations often lack these elements.

The new condition of recognition in the peace process has been read by most political pundits as a cynical move by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, undertaken in order to stall negotiations with the Palestinians and maintain the status quo. Understanding the political risks to Palestinian policymakers in affirming Israel as a Jewish State (i.e., the domestic political costs they would incur, their legitimacy in the face of other factions like Hamas, and the loss of support of the Palestinian people), Netanyahu could expect a deadlock while continuing to build settlements in the West Bank and expanding Israeli control over the Palestinian economy and social life. Counter to this perspective, I argue that the demand for recognition reflects a serious concern at the heart of the Israel’s state-making project, a concern that had been deferred for nearly a century.

Casting the State

As I argue in the Introduction, the politics of recognition operating in Israel-Palestine are a veiled extension of violence – an iron fist in velvet glove. Israel-Palestine as a case study for the dissimulation of ongoing, violent, state-building practices is ideal: first due to the contemporary nature of developments central to the current political concerns and secondly due to the as-of-yet partial fulfilment of the state-making project. A brief look at the modern history of Zionism shows how this project might have looked different, the other possible paths that might have been taken before Israeli policymakers ultimately cast the state in a stifling mold accurately described as “ethnocracy” by Oren Yiftachel.³⁸

The establishment of a unified ethno-linguistic community based on Judaism and the Hebrew language is a recent development in the scope of a history of the Hebraic and Judaic people. The process by which we came to speak of a Jewish people let alone a Jewish State is more complex than many give credit and owes much to the artifice of 19th century scholars from Western and Central Europe. As Shlomo Sand demonstrates in his *The Invention of the Jewish People*, the concerted effort to develop a unified Jewish national identity emerged in Western Europe beginning in the 19th century. Efforts at tracing the origins of the Jewish nation to the Hebrews of the Bible and unifying the disparate communities into a single historical narrative was subject to not a little debate among the first modern historians.

³⁸ Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

As nationalism began to spread throughout the continent, scholars – many of them German-Jewish – had sought ways to secure the rights of Jews as equal citizens in their respective states. While adopting the language and historiography of the emerging nationalism in the region, unanimity over the place of Jews in Europe was lacking. Early Jewish historians primarily argued for recognizing the distinctiveness of the Jewish people toward the ends of better integration and even assimilation within their respective states. It was only later, toward the end of the 19th century, that advocates for Jewish nationalism began to consider a state of their own for the Jewish people.

As a diasporic community whose people spoke many languages, had adapted to a minority status in their given states, and had assimilated to many of the customs and culture of the places where they resided, the “Jewish people” were in want of a unifying element. Many German Jews, for example, were well-assimilated, urban, and secular, having little connection to the devout Jews living in Eastern European shtetls or with those tight-knit Orthodox communities that attended synagogue, sent their children to a *cheder* (a Jewish seminary), and donned religious garb.³⁹

The emergence of Zionism (Jewish nationalism) in the late 19th century, especially in its cultural mode, brought with it the resurrection of the Hebrew language and a biblical genealogy. As cultural Zionism gave way to political Zionism, the goals of Jewish nationalism changed, from a solidarity movement to a political program. By the early 20th century, when Zionists began to migrate to Israel in increasing numbers, the Hebrew language helped unify the diasporic community, with Jews coming from places as diverse as Yemen, Poland, the Soviet Union, and in later years, Argentina and

³⁹ See: Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, trans. Yael Lotan, (Verso: London, 2009).

Ethiopia. To this day, Israeli culture, like most cultures exposed to the centrifugal forces of modernity, continues to evolve with the introduction and development of new styles of music, dress, colloquial language, and other cultural artifacts alongside changing values. In light of these forces and despite them, many Jewish Israelis display a nervous desire to justify and ground their belonging in the land. As mentioned before, this desire is understandable even if the methods toward achieving its ends are unjustifiable and unrealistic.

Calling upon a myth of origins and citing surface level similarities to establish unity has thus far proven insufficient to fulfilling the desire for full, uncontested, sovereign presence. The social body still displays signs of its prior mythic dispersal and the real variation in its origins, the moving parts are not yet seamlessly integrated and smoothly coordinated. Difference remains ever-present. However, as part of the project of developing legitimacy in the region, the representatives of the Government of Israel continue in their attempts at establishing unity in the face of the diverse communities and lifeworlds found within the borders of the state.

The demand for recognition in recent years exposes a break, fracture or gash that needs to be reset, cast, or cauterized before the State of Israel can put its state-making project to rest and claim its secured presence and belonging in the Middle East. Universal recognition of the state as it would like to be recognized could lend the legitimacy that would allow the state to enter a new phase, one in which violent self-assertion would be replaced by the unmistakable presence of the state – its hegemony unchallenged, its existence natural, its place rooted. While this aspiration is sincere and legitimate insofar as it concerns itself with the bodily security and social well-being of millions of people,

the current strategy toward its attainment is aggressive, counterproductive, and exclusionary due to a misapprehension regarding the source of legitimacy in the practice of recognition.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the force that lends to recognition its near-universally accepted esteem is less that which provides for stability in the objects of social inquiry than it is that which engenders appreciation for the qualities most valued in the human individual and species – its freedom, creativity, and engaged exploration of the mysteries of consciousness in communion with others. It is this aspect, the internal ethical relation that opens in the face-to-face encounter, that first gave recognition its force – coming out of the enlightenment era and developed into the ideals adumbrated in the emerging Liberal school of thought. When transposed into the politics of state – its contemporary form following an ancient, more violent, more aggressive, and more assertive “Realist” school of thought that predated what would later be called “civilization” (i.e., Hobbes called the “State of Nature”) – the concept of recognition entered into dangerous terrain from which it might never escape. If the ethical core were to persist, then recognition would have to polish off the patina of positive political *being* it had accumulated in modernity.

There is a risk in removing that protective layer of the State (i.e., the presumption of ontological being) that state-makers found necessary to guarantee the continuity of their power in history. Power in the hands of the statesman – whether monarch or oligarch (are there any other kinds?) – may persist so long as the kabuki mask of State remains firmly in place. So long as the participants (performers) are able to operate *as if* their social production affects the creation of a true ontological *beingness*, the artifice can

persist.⁴⁰ In order for this performance to succeed, two other matters have to be taken into consideration: clearing the set and silencing or marginalizing the “bad actors” – those who either refuse to play their part or actively work to undermine the performance. However, this action must remain cloaked. Any appearance as brute violence is displayed at the risk of legitimizing those *others* who refuse to play their assigned roles. It must retain the appearance of legitimacy as if nothing in the world were more natural than States speaking as one voice from out of a single body.

If some voices have to be silenced, others have to be projected loudly and confidently. The conjuring whereby speaking of the State brings the State into existence is aided by an ever-important script. This script, or text, is viewed as the noblest construct that political man – and before them God – had ever created: the Law.⁴¹ Here, a problem arises; Law is instituted for the purpose of serving and representing the dictates of Justice, but in its very institution, reveals that Justice has no grounds but those composed and imposed by force of Law. As Derrida explains, and here he is worth quoting at length:

The very emergence of justice and law, the founding and justifying moment that institutes law implies a performative force, which is always an interpretative force: this time not in the sense of law in the service of force, its docile instrument, servile and thus exterior to the dominant power but rather in the sense of law that would maintain a more internal,

⁴⁰ For more on the indeterminacy, performativity, and deferred identity of the state, see: Richard Ashley, “The Poverty of Neorealism,” *International Organization*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring 1984): 225-286; Richard Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, “Conclusion: Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 34 (1990): 367-416; Richard K. Ashley, “Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique,” *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, 17 (1988): 227-262; Roxanne Lynn Doty, “Desire all the way down,” *Review of International Studies*, 26 (2000): 137-139; Roxanne Lynn Doty, “Aporia: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 3 (1997): 365-392.

⁴¹ This could also be read as “the Word” or the sovereign.

more complex relation with what one calls force, power or violence. Justice – in the sense of *droit* (right or law) would not simply be put in the service of a social force or power, for example an economic, political, ideological power that would exist outside or before it and which it would to accommodate or bend to when useful. Its very moment of foundation or institution (which in any case is never a moment inscribed in the homogenous tissue of a history, since it is ripped apart with one decision), the operation that consists of founding, inaugurating, justifying law (*droit*), making law, would consist of a *coup de force*, of a performative and therefore interpretative violence that in itself is neither just nor unjust and that no justice and no previous law with its founding anterior moment could guarantee or contradict or invalidate. No justificatory discourse could or should insure the role of metalanguage in relation to the performativity of institutive language or to its dominant interpretation. Here the discourse comes up against its limit: in itself, in its performative power itself.⁴²

This leads Jacques Derrida to conclude that, “since the origin of authority, the foundation or ground, the position of the law can’t by definition rest on anything but themselves, they are themselves a violence without ground.”⁴³ Looking to the origin of the Law, whether through Hobbes or Derrida, helps reveal its necessary relation to violence. Similarly, looking to the origin of the demand for recognition exposes the same otherwise overlooked relation; that in the project of state-building, violence is very real, very present, on-going, and upon close inspection, absolutely necessary. This necessary violence is not unique to Israel; rather, it is observed in all cases where a state is asserted. The State is, through and through, an institution of violence.⁴⁴

⁴² Jacques Derrida, “Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority,” trans. Mary Quaintance, *Cardozo Law Review*, 11 (1990): 941-943.

⁴³ For more on the foundational, law-making, and law-maintaining violence of the State, see: Walter Benjamin “Critique of Violence,” *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings Volume 1 1913-1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002); Jacques Derrida, “Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority,” trans. Mary Quaintance, *Cardozo Law Review*, 11 (1990): 919-1045.

⁴⁴ In using the word violence, I am not referring primarily to corporeal or subjective violence, but a more expansive understanding of violence that operates through symbolic, structural, ontological, and discursive

Turning from abstract theory and metaphor to practical reality, we can think of the entire separation principle enacted by Ariel Sharon as evidence of this violence, the demonstration of strength which reveals a deep-seated weakness.⁴⁵ Using U.S. State Department cables released by Wikileaks, I trace the development of the recognition discourse, trying to find the major inflection points where the concept develops and begins to gain greater attention. In order to understand how the recognition discourse is implicated in the current diplomatic process, we should trace the networks that have transmitted, altered, developed, or performed this discourse. As the reader will notice, the act of tracing networks requires some agility and a willingness to cross-over into new networks. A few more words are necessary to orient this demand in the modern history of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Tracing Recognition in the Diplomatic Network

The logic of Netanyahu's demand for recognizing Israel as a Jewish State appears to be in-line with the principle of excision of impurities, of separation rather than

registers. Put another way, my primary focus is on what Zizek terms "objective violence." It is here that the discourse and practice of recognition reveals itself as violence. Slavoj Zizek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, (New York: Picador, 2008).

The authority of the state grounded in the exercise of violence appears throughout political philosophy. See: Max Weber, *Politics as Vocation*; Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*; Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976); Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," *Bringing the State Back In*, eds. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁴⁵ This is an oblique reference to Hannah Arendt's view of Violence not as a sign of strength but rather one of weakness. Power, for Arendt, exposes its lack when it can only bend the will of others through brute force. It also recalls Gramsci's discussion of cultural hegemony. See: Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1969); Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*.

integration. Netanyahu's demand for recognition can be read as a refusal to recognize the internal other. Whether you set your gaze toward the security barrier built along the West Bank, the hermetic closure and shifting technologies of governance in Gaza, or the new calls for a Palestinian population transfer plan by right-wing parties *Israel Baitenu* or *Habayit Ha'Yehudi*, you see a desire to avoid all contact with the other. Less dramatic but equally demonstrative is the attempt to pass legislation during the 2009 election that would require a loyalty oath from members of the Knesset, explicitly targeting outspoken Arab-Israeli legislators like Haneen Zoabi and Ahmed Tibi. If only this other could just disappear, or at least quiet down, or barring that possibility, have the decency to announce that the Jewish character of the state is rightfully dominant, that political Zionism is a morally just and ethically sound project, and that she is an aberration, an Other, then maybe Israel could fulfil the dream of a Jewish State.

The demand for recognition as a Jewish State was not always central to negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians although the principle of Israel as a Jewish State does extend back to the creation of the State, first inscribed in Law in the years following the Second World War. U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181, passed on November 29, 1947 called for the partition of Palestine into two states: a Jewish State and an Arab State. Similarly, Israel's Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948 declares the establishment of the Jewish State in *Eretz Israel* (The Land of Israel). Both documents also affirm the rights of the Arab minority in the State though in the case of Israel, the principle of equal rights was hardly followed.

Following the 1948 War, Arabs in Israel were under military administrative rule until 1966. In addition to this, the Law of Return in Israel recognizes the right of Jews

from across the world to make Aliyah. No similar “right of return” is extended to the Palestinians who fled after the war or their successive generations. Indeed, and as the diplomatic documents indicate, the demand to recognize Israel as a Jewish State is understood by both sides to imply the revocation of the right of return to Palestinian exiles and refugees.⁴⁶

The claim could be made that, given the text of the Declaration of Independence and UN 181, Israeli demands that Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish State is pro forma and not at all controversial. It would be a mistake, however, to read the contemporary demands for recognition from the vantage point of the mid-20th century. This is true for at least two reasons.

First, colonialism and a politics of racial segregation were still dominant at that time of the U.N. vote and Israel declaration. Africa and Southeast Asia had not yet undergone their waves of decolonization. Segregation was a widely accepted practice throughout the U.S. The legitimation of ethnically-defined states by the U.N. and Israel, even with reassuring words toward respecting minority communities, must be read in light of the ideology of the time. In addition to this, the demand for recognition as a Jewish State was not necessary for much of the 20th century because Israel had never recognized the Palestinian national movement as legitimate. It was not until the Oslo

⁴⁶ As a Kuwait News Agency report cited in the Stratfor cable dump reported, Netanyahu, in front of the Israeli Knesset in 2011, “stressed the ‘the necessity of Palestinians' recognition of Israel as the national state of Jewish people, and that any peace agreement should lead to ending dispute, capping Palestinian demands, and resolving the Palestinian refugees' issue outside the borders of Israel.” Wikileaks, *Stratfor Cables*, “ISRAEL/MIDDLE EAST-Netanyahu Links Peace To Palestinians” Recognition of Israel as Jewish State,” June 6, 2011, Accessed on April 28 via: https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/30/3030614_israel-middle-east-netanyahu-links-peace-to-palestinians.html

Accords that the Government of Israel accepted the Palestine Liberation Organization as a negotiating partner.

Second, the demand for recognition as a Jewish State is fairly recent in the diplomatic history. The Declaration of Principles of the Oslo Accords (1993), for example, make no mention of the PLO recognizing Israel as a Jewish State. The word Jewish is nowhere to be found, nor is that of a Palestinian or Arab State.⁴⁷ This is to say that from the U.N. Resolution until the first decade of the 21st century, peace was not conditional on recognition of a Jewish State. A search of diplomatic cables released through Wikileaks further demonstrates the novelty of this demand.

Isolating the phrase “Jewish State” and searching documents that also contain either “recognize” or “recognition” yields only 7 matching documents between the years 2000 and 2005. These documents, as I will explain further below, do not yet place recognition of Israel as a Jewish State as a central condition in the negotiations. Repeating the same search for 2005-2006 yields 10 matching documents. For 2006-2007, 29; 2007-2008, 69; 2008-2009, 33; 2009-2010, 154; 2010-2011, 541; 2011-2012, 2647; 2013, 3.⁴⁸ This rough accounting reveals that after 2005, the demand for recognition as a Jewish State gained purchase, with a spike in 2007 and again in 2009 onwards. We can now turn to a closer reading of the cables, discerning some inflection points and their

⁴⁷ “Text: 1993 Declaration of Principles,” *BBC News*, last modified November 29, 2001, accessed on May 5, 2016,

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/israel_and_the_palestinians/key_documents/1682727.stm

⁴⁸ The drop-off in 2013 is due to the limited files authored in 2013 that were released via Wikileaks though the demand for recognition as a Jewish State was ubiquitous in 2013 and since. It should also be noted that the number of documents changes as new leaks are made and new files are processed.

corresponding events that would explain the sharp rise in the prevalence of the recognition discourse in the diplomatic network.

“Israel for the Jewish People and Palestine for the Palestinians”

The earliest mention of Israel’s demand for recognition as a Jewish State in cables obtained through Wikileaks (covering the years 1985 to 2010) appears in May of 2002.⁴⁹ The cable recounts a series of meeting between PolCouns and two Jordanian religious leaders, the Mufti of the Kingdom, Sheikh Said al-Hijjawi and the Chief Justice of the Sharia Court, Sheikh Izzeddine al-Tamimi:

Why is it that Jews demand a "Jewish state" in Jerusalem, Hijjawi asked, when there is no archeological proof that a Jewish temple ever existed under the Haram al-Sharif (the Muslim complex containing the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque on top of Temple Mount)? From there, Hijjawi wove a familiar web of suspicion of Israel based on half-truths and popular misconceptions. Tamimi, as well, criticized "Zionist extremists" for perpetuating the "Jewish occupation" of the West Bank and Gaza, and cited verses from the Quran advising that Muslims use great caution in dealing with Jews. PolCouns responded that Arabs and Muslims would have to deal with Jewish beliefs just as they asked Israel to deal with Islamic beliefs (02AMMAN2432, May 16 2002, italics added).⁵⁰

What is interesting about the above passage are the quotes around Jewish State. They are in the original cable but it’s not clear how these quotations are operating. Did Hijjawi put those words in quotations? Was it PolCouns who added these markings? The author of the Amman embassy cable appears to be U.S. Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm; perhaps

⁴⁹ Wikileaks Cable Gate, www.cablegatesearch.net.

⁵⁰ The cable goes on to characterize the two religious clerics as "moderate, establishment Islamic figures who represent mainstream Jordanian Sunni thought. Both expressed admiration for the piety and freedom of Americans, are strong advocates for Muslim-Christian understanding in Jordan, and publicly condemned (and continue to condemn) the September 11 attacks as un-Islamic.”

he placed these indicators over the words. When noticing the quotation marks around “Zionist extremists” and “Jewish occupation,” it appears as though Gnehm (did he author the cable?) placed the quotation marks to indicate a construction that he is calling into question. Was the author of the cable incredulous at the use of this term “Jewish State,” as if this construction reveals the unsophisticated way in which these clerics think and speak of Israel (“Jewish State,” “Zionists extremists,” “Jewish occupation”)?

This is not a trifling matter because without knowing the author of the quotations, we can’t be sure what or whose purpose they were meant to serve. This is a good starting point not only because it is the first mention of the demand for a Jewish State (though in this case they do not mention a diplomatic demand for “recognition” and appear concerned with Jerusalem in particular), and not only because the reference is volunteered by these Jordanian clerics rather than Israeli representatives, but also for its very ambiguity. If we were to establish a law based on this text, who could we interrogate to discern its meaning? Will it always be the same person/people and will the ruling as to its meaning remain consistent over time?

In June 2003, a U.S. Cable from the Amman Embassy reported on media reactions in the Arab World toward the Sharm al-Sheik and Aqaba Summits. On June 3rd, Al-Rai columnist Sultan Hattab wrote the following in an article titled “Will the Aqaba Summit Succeed in Describing Sharon As An Occupier?”:

Those who meet at Sharm and in Aqaba should wrench two issues from Sharon: The first is that the territories on which his forces have been stood since 1967 are occupied territories. The second is that his government should commit itself to a vision of two neighboring states on the historical land of Palestine, namely, Israel and Palestine. *This should be done before Sharon wrenches from the meeting, particularly from the Palestinians, the recognition that the State of Israel is a*

solely Jewish state, which means writing off the Palestinians right of return
(03AMMAN3233, June 3 2003, my emphasis).

This is the first instance in the U.S. Cables from Wikileaks where recognition of Israel as a Jewish state is mentioned as central to the negotiations. Still, it is referred to as a concession that Sharon would try to elicit from the Palestinians during the summit, and not a condition already central to the Israeli position. It seems to be more a conjecture than anything else. Once again, the concept is inscribed into the U.S. State Department cables not by Israeli policymakers but by the reaction of Arab commentators.

A memorandum from Bannerman & Associates (a D.C. lobbying firm) recounting an informal conversation at the Brookings Institution in Washington dated June 20th, 2003 revealed this emerging demand, but not from Israel. The memo was released by Al-Jazeera as part of the Palestine Paper leak in January of 2011, the largest dump of internal documents relating to the Israel-Palestine peace process from 1999-2010. The author of the cable, long-time diplomat Ed Abington, writes that “a former U.S. Government official, who until recently was at the National Security Council, provided an off-the-record account of the policy debate within the Bush Administration as the Road Map was being formulated.”⁵¹ According to this former government official, “Bush’s commitment to Palestinian statehood stems in part from his personal commitment to Israel’s physical safety and its identity as a Jewish state” and that Bush “accepts and has internalized the argument that Israel cannot continue to occupy indefinitely the West Bank and Gaza and at the same time remain a democratic, Jewish state.”

⁵¹ “US Lobbyist Memo: Evolution of the Road Map – An Insider’s Accounts,” *The Palestine Papers*, June 20, 2003, Accessed on April 29, 2016 via:
<http://transparency.aljazeera.net/en/projects/thepalestinepapers/201218233446421714.html>

This condition began to disseminate and secure a central position in the discourse on the conflict. A State Department cable from August 21st of 2003 reports on an editorial in Canada's conservative *National Post* which mentions that peace will not be achieved with the Palestinians until they "accept the existence of a Jewish state in their midst" (03OTTAWA2389). This comes from a Canadian editorial board, and is not yet a reference to Israeli policy. There is also room for debate here as to whether the mention of "Jewish state" is just a trope or is meant to emphasize the Jewish character of the state; however, the earlier unverified statement by Bush (according to the former government official in the Stratfor Cable) soon became official policy.

Recognition of Israel as a Jewish State received a substantial boost in a statement released by U.S. President George W. Bush on April 14, 2004 in support of Ariel Sharon's Gaza disengagement plan. In the public exchange of letters between Bush and Sharon, the president explains that "the United States is strongly committed to Israel's security and well-being as a Jewish state." This statement is bolder than that inscribed in the Sharon Plan, which only mentions "the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people."⁵² This language did not pass without notice. The Vatican, for example, questioned whether President Bush's reference to Israel as "the Jewish State" could have implications for religious freedom in the state (04VATICAN1548).

In 2005, the concept of recognizing Israel as a Jewish State was bandied about in greater frequency during the public and diplomatic debates on Sharon's withdrawal from

⁵² The difference between these two pronouncements was referenced in the Introduction. The former lends the State itself an identity as a single embodied form, reflecting the transubstantiation of the State aided by Liberalism. The latter maintains a legalistic vision of the State, separating it from the body of the people (the Jewish people) though offering them protection.

Gaza. This is telling because it is precisely here – when the Israeli government began to implement its separation principle in earnest – that policymakers appear to have become conscious of the identity issue that could not be resolved by disengagement.⁵³ The principle of security on which Israeli governments had based their actions (in rhetoric if not in actual fact) was about to shift to a principle of identity. Identity, in turn, would soon become the focal point of securitization.

Throughout, the production of the discourse regarding identity and the Jewish State was transnational in character. A report by the American Research Initiative on demographics in Israel/Palestine helped demonstrate the nervous character of the debate that had serious implications not only for Israel’s identity but also its final borders and the concessions that it should (not) be willing to make to the Palestinians. The report claimed that previous demographic studies had over-counted the Arabs in Israel. These findings provided support to those who argued that Sharon’s Gaza disengagement plan could not be legitimated based on the threat of a “demographic time-bomb.”⁵⁴ This threat was one rhetorical tool used to legitimate the Sharon Plan, unpopular as it was within his own Likud party. Indeed, Sharon had to create a new political party, Kadima, in order to institute his plan. Placing the demographic threat at the center of its logic would increase

⁵³ Neve Gordon, in writing on the shift from a colonization to a separation principle, focuses on the events of the Second Intifada as the inflection point (200). Israel’s decision to build the security fence around the West Bank in 2002 is a major turning point. However, the 2005 disengagement from Gaza, soon followed by the hermetic closure of Gaza and the shift in the resource supply chain there (from truck convoys traversing the border to the institution of drop-points, trans-border conveyor belts, and the tunnel economy), is an equally dramatic turning point and one that appears more immediately related to the development of the recognition discourse.

⁵⁴ The “demographic time-bomb” is the notion that within a few decades, the number of Palestinians in Israel (or in the territories under Israeli sovereignty – Gaza, West Bank, and Israel Proper) will outpace the number of Jews.

the likelihood of securing the support from right-wing constituents otherwise averse to ceding any territory to the Palestinians.

The American Research Initiative Report, presented at the American Enterprise Institute (an ideologically conservative D.C. thinktank) and published by the Begin-Sadat Center For Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University, purportedly demonstrated that the threat of a demographic time-bomb was overblown.⁵⁵ In other words, according to this report, there was no urgent need to cede territory to the Palestinians. Palestinian autonomy was not a pressing issue. The U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv added to its analysis of the demographic problem a question about the ideological leaning of one of the financiers of ARI report:

the U.S. businessman who financed the ARI report denied to poloff that he has any political agenda, he is known to support settler groups and is the founder of the "American Friends of the Golan." (05TELAVIV633, February 2 2005).

The businessman is Bennett Zimmerman, who is described in an article by Ha'aretz editor-in-chief Aluf Benn as:

A businessman who runs a small fund for investing in shares of Israeli high-tech companies. He votes Republican and loves the old songs of Elton John. He got into politics a few years ago when he established American Friends of the Golan and fought against the withdrawal plan of former prime minister Ehud Barak... Zimmerman is part of a group of Jewish activists from the West Coast who bypassed the traditional Jewish establishment and launched aggressive pro-Israel activity during the intifada.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Bennett Zimmerman, Roberta Seid, and Michael L. Wise, "The Million Person Gap: The Arab Population in the West Bank and Gaza," *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, No. 65 (2006); Bennett Zimmerman, Roberta Seid, and Michael Wise, "Arab Population in the West Bank & Gaza: The Million and a half Person Gap,"

Presented at American Enterprise Institute, January 2005. Accessed on May 1 2016 via: www.acpr.org.il/resources/050110Demographic-Study.ppt

⁵⁶ Aluf Benn, "You Can Count on Them," *Haaretz*, January 28, 2005, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/objects/pages/PrintArticleEn.jhtml?itemNo=533294>.

Bennett Zimmerman was also a Strategic Consultant for Bain & Company, the management consulting firm best known for its connection to 2008 U.S. Presidential Candidate Willard Mitt Romney. It was also the former employer of a 28 year old Benjamin Nitay (Benyamin Netanyahu), as he was called then, following his graduate education at MIT.⁵⁷ As Aluf Benn explains, Mr. Zimmerman first became concerned about the demographic issue in 2003, writing an article in November of that year entitled “Time for a Recount.”⁵⁸ For an interest that would represent a unified people within a bounded territory, it is surprising how Israeli identity politics were being played outside of the state, finding their ways into diplomatic knowledge, and altering the discourse within policymaking circles.

The politics of recognition continued to gain traction and spread across the expansive State Department network. In June of 2006, the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires cited an article on the state of the Israel/Palestine conflict. The article mentions “the latest incident, which was triggered by the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier, occurred precisely when Hamas agreed to implicitly acknowledge the existence of a Jewish State” (06BUENOSAIRE1454, June 23 2006). No other mention is made in the cables of Hamas’ implicit acceptance of a Jewish State and it’s not clear whether the journalists conflated previous concession by Hamas with this more serious concession. Hamas, for example, have expressed a willingness to accept Israel on the 1967 borders, to recognize

⁵⁷ This is not to say that there was a direct connection between these individual. It does, however, point to the transnational networks of power and knowledge that can at times undertake responsibilities and actions traditionally associated with the State. What sort of personal networks and ideological positions are rendered through these firms is a worthwhile avenue for future research.

⁵⁸ Bennett Zimmerman, “Op-Ed: Time for a Recount,” November 27, 2003, *Arutz Sheva*, Accessed on April 27, 2016 via: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/3014>.

the legitimacy of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and to abide by previous agreements between Israel and the PLO on the condition that these terms are ratified by a public referendum. My research has not uncovered any other mentions of Hamas recognizing or acknowledging Israel as a Jewish State as such a concession would likely risk Hamas' support, based as it is on taking a more hardline position than that of Fatah and PLO "collaborators."

The cables throughout the mid-2000s often reflect the older demand put on the Palestinians since Oslo; namely, the recognition of the State of Israel. As late as May 2009, in talks with Jeffrey Feldman and National Security Council Middle East and North Africa director Dan Shapiro, there was an insistence that Hamas "recognize Israel" and "renounce violence." Up until this point, U.S. diplomatic cables obtained by Wikileaks have few mentions of recognizing Israel as a Jewish State, and never as a condition for negotiations or even as a required utterance. Until the disengagement, reference to Israel as a Jewish state was marked as a basic principle that the Palestinians would have to accept. Even with President Bush's annunciation of Israel as a Jewish State, the demand for recognition was not yet a central to negotiations. Part of this reflects Ariel Sharon's unilateral approach but as I argue, it was only after Sharon's separation policy that Israeli policymakers appeared increasingly nervous about the future identity of the state. The negotiations with the Palestinians, even if they culminated in a final status agreement and an end to hostilities, would still leave the issue of Israel's internal other unresolved.

In this context, the narrative began to focus more intently on how the issue of settlements and Israel's Arab population might be resolved, giving Israel a secure and stable identity as a Jewish State. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, in 2006, proposed a

consolidation of the settlement population in settlement blocs closer to the Green Line (the Convergence Plan), a move that could create final status borders that might retain Israel as a “Jewish state” next to a Palestinian state (06TELAVIV1600). But even here, it was not the case of Olmert initially demanding that Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state. Rather, it was something to be pursued, the end goal of all negotiations, and perhaps something that Israelis could affirm without the aid of the Palestinians. But slowly, the concept became entangled in the negotiations, until such a point that Israel would need to secure the *utterance* by Palestinian representatives that Israel is recognized as a Jewish state. The negotiations leading up to the Annapolis conference in 2007 had finally seen the demand made explicit and a central sticking point.

A February 13, 2007 Memorandum from the Palestinian Negotiation Support Unit (NSU) headed by longtime diplomat Saeb Erakat, released as part of the Palestine Papers leak, reveals the concern with Israel’s wish to extract this concession.⁵⁹ The memo enumerates the concerns mentioned above – the novelty of this demand in comparison to previous rounds of negotiation, its implications for the right of return, the lack of precedence in international law, the repercussions for Israel’s non-Jewish minority, and the internal debate among Israelis as to the interpretation of “Jewish” in law and society. The demand became one of the primary sticking-points of the negotiations leading up to the Annapolis Conference, and was pushed adamantly by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni,

⁵⁹ “NSU Memo Re: Precondition of Recognizing Israel as a “Jewish State”,” *The Palestine Papers*, February 13, 2007, accessed on April 29, 2016 via: <http://transparency.aljazeera.net/en/projects/thepalestinepapers/20121823145359921.html>

who described the concept as “Israel for the Jewish people and Palestine for the Palestinians.”⁶⁰

Saeb Erakat, in a one cable reporting his meeting with an EU delegate – the EU were a member of “The Quartet” which oversaw the Bush “Road Map” – is quoting as saying:

My negotiations with the Israelis are so complicated. The last thing to do is to fall in the trap of discussing the nature of the religion of their state and get involved in their internal debates. It’s not my business what their religion is, what their flag is, or nation or symbols, or identification. But they cannot ask me to become a member of the Zionist movement. I told Livni ‘‘how can you say Jewish State when 20% of your population is non Jewish’’?⁶¹

In the end, the Annapolis Conference, like so many other attempts at peace, went nowhere. Several months after the meeting, Prime Minister Olmert, plagued by accusations of corruption for which he would later be indicted, was defeated by Tzipi Livni for leadership of Kadima. Livni, however, was unable to hold together the governing coalition of parties triggering another election. In February of 2009, Benjamin Netanyahu, whose Likud party earned slightly less mandates than Kadima, was nonetheless able to form a majority coalition and return to his previous post as Prime Minister. This time, he had a new implement – cast by a complex network of advocates that included the U.S. President, former Prime Minister Sharon, and the Kadima party under the direction of Olmert and Livni – that he would leverage in negotiations with the Palestinians whose right to a state he had not yet been officially recognized.

⁶⁰ “Meeting Minutes: 3rd Negotiation Team Meeting,” *The Palestine Papers*, October 19, 2007, accessed on April 29, 2016 via: <http://transparency.aljazeera.net/en/projects/thepalestinepapers/20121823646781998.html>

⁶¹ “Meeting Summary, Saeb Erekat and EU Heads of Mission,” *The Palestine Papers*, November 13, 2007, accessed on April 29, 2016 via: <http://transparency.aljazeera.net/en/projects/thepalestinepapers/201231314177637205.html>

Between the time of Sharon's Gaza disengagement plan and Netanyahu's Bar-Ilan speech in 2009, the concept of recognition went from a secondary concern (secondary to security) to a primary concern. Part of this has to do with the success of Israeli security forces in the intervening years, which since 2006 were relatively non-violent. Israeli casualties from terror peaked in the years before the implementation of the Sharon Plan and have steadily declined since then. The separation fence and redeployment from Gaza appeared to have worked. However, now the more serious existential question had to be asked, a question that was put on hold from the 1937 Peel Commission until the first decade of the 21st century. What is the identity of the State of Israel? How can it be secured? The Obama administration would prove to be a useful ally in this project.

Chapter Three: Frames of Mind – U.S. State Department Perspectives on the Israel-Palestine Conflict⁶²

In January of 2013, following Barack Obama's re-election and just before the Israeli election, Jeffrey Goldberg of *The Atlantic* revealed President Obama's disappointment with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.⁶³ Obama, despite his many public statements supporting the State of Israel and avoiding political confrontation with the Netanyahu regime, was reported to have stated in private that the Israeli Prime Minister was a "political coward" who did not know the best interests of his country. For those who have become accustomed to the U.S. Government's consistent support of the Israeli government in both word and deed, this came as a surprise. During the 2013 Operation Pillar of Defense, Obama publically supported the IDF assault on Gaza, restating Israel's right to defend itself against militants who indiscriminately attack the homeland. At the same time, the U.S. administration seemed largely mute on Israeli settlement expansion, and directly opposed Palestinian bids for UN non-state member status.

Following John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's highly critical and controversial study on the Israel Lobby and its influence on U.S. policy, one would expect the president to avoid public denunciations of Israeli policies, and indeed, this seemed to have been the case throughout the 2012 election cycle. While the "leaked" conversations

⁶² An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, April 3-7, 2013.

⁶³ Jeffrey Goldberg, "Obama: 'Israel Doesn't Know What Its Best Interests Are'", *Bloomberg Online*, (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-01-14/what-obama-thinks-israelis-don-t-understand-.html>, January, 14, 2013), March 27, 2013.

beg several questions on the character of U.S. strategy, politicking, and the beliefs of U.S. policymakers, definitive answers to such questions are difficult to establish. Unable to enter the world inside leader's minds, political analysts are left with only words and deeds to uncover intent and perspective.

In this chapter, I explore the representation of the Israel-Palestine conflict through texts created by the executive and the legislative branches of government. In doing so, I wish to undergo a (con)textual analysis that might illuminate the construction of both the actors and the structure of the conflict, focusing on issue-framing, the sublimation of contradiction, and expressions of empathy. My contention, before beginning my analysis, was that both executive and legislative policy documents – meant to be unbiased and impartial – would exhibit traits of framing, naturalization, and differentiation between Israel and Palestine, favoring the former by relying on a grammar of victimhood. Sticking to best-practices in a discourse analytic methodology, I attempt to consider the broader historical context of the conflict using my prior knowledge and engagement in the literature, and turn an ear toward both spaces of silence and of amplification.⁶⁴ Put another way, this chapter pursues “the bias implicit in the absent” and the delicate message buried in the cacophony of recited clichés.⁶⁵

Following the example of Karen Fierke's work on the Cold War, I initially sought out to uncover the general grammar within which recurring metaphors and tropes would be prominently recited. Grammar here refers to “how boundaries are established in

⁶⁴ Yoshiko K. Herrera and Bear Braumoeller, “Symposium: Content and Discourse Analysis,” *Qualitative Methods*, Spring (2004), 16.

⁶⁵ Marda Dunksy, “Missing: The bias implicit in the absent” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 23 No. 3 (2001), 1.

practice by the subjects of analysis, that is, what are the objects populating their world and what are the possibilities of these objects.”⁶⁶ Going beyond the issue of whether the U.S. is an unbiased negotiator – a topic explored in various studies on the U.S. media and government practices – the interest here is on how the U.S. policymakers perceive the conflict and potential solutions. Rather than taking U.S. government representations as reflections of objective fact, I focus on the *power as productive* approach, investigating how the “subject, object, and interpretive dispositions” are “socially constructed such that certain practices [are] made possible.”⁶⁷

Here, there is the expectation that both subject and structure are prematurely concretized and naturalized through a process of casting out new information as aberrant or impotent in changing the identity of the actors, structure, or “game.” Doing so requires multiple close readings of the documents. As Timothy Mitchell observes, “objects of analysis do not occur as natural phenomena, but are partly formed by the discourse that describes them. The more natural the object appears, the less obvious this discursive manufacture will be.”⁶⁸ As I will demonstrate in the following pages, the surface features of the U.S. discourse – including tone, tropes, and demands – offer important yet arguably superficial insights. More interesting are the contradictions and cognitive dissonance that are at times explicitly excised and other times deferred.

⁶⁶ Karen Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 46.

⁶⁷ Roxanne Lynn Doty. “Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines,” *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 37 No. 3 (1993), 298.

⁶⁸ Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Technopolitics and Modernity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 210.

Acknowledging my role as analyst, I do not claim to reach unequivocal conclusions. However, the analysis reveals new ways of viewing the conflict, the actors, and the realm of possible actions by the United States. Lastly, my interest in this chapter is less a question of “why” such and such relations exist, but rather, “how” these relations are constructed, reflected or imagined in text.

Methods

Being unable to dig into the minds of policymakers, we must rely on words and deeds which represent tendencies and dispositions. While words and phrases might represent particular dispositions, we are met with the difficulty of differentiating between signals that are “true”, those meant to deceive, and those with little import. Doty’s study on *Imperial Encounters* offers a good template for approaching this topic. For Doty, an important question is *how* the subject is created and positioned, and *how* it is possible for these constructions to come about. She has two concerns; the formation of the subject and its field of movement, and the positioning (focusing on hierarchy in particular) created through discourse. Similarly, my interest is not in what language *reveals*, but in what it *does*.⁶⁹

In order to get a view of what language *does*, I collected documents authored by members of the State Department and Congressional Research Service. There was a conscious decision in choosing documents that were intended for internal circulation

⁶⁹ Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

rather than public release. This decision is based on the desire to eliminate the potential “noise” that one is likely to find in documents meant to address the public. Those sorts of documents or speeches might be targeted toward particular audiences, might appear more opaque in their rhetorical strategy, or might be situated within a multilevel complex of political calculations.

Documents meant for internal circulation, on the other hand, are more likely to express the official position and decision-making framework of the relevant department. While several of the documents contain talking points and serve as briefing memos, these are intended for the use of diplomats during consultation with government and intergovernmental organizations (the UN in particular). Whether an appreciable difference between these documents and those statements addressed to domestic audiences differ is a matter deferred to a later date.⁷⁰

Several of the documents from the State Department were classified as “secret” or “confidential” and were leaked by Wikileaks, others were eventually de-classified for public distribution and still others were unclassified (though still unavailable through official channels). Selection criteria for these documents were as follows: (1) the document must be primarily concerned with each actor in relation to the conflict (i.e. a document discussing Israel in the context of the Iranian nuclear program would not be included) (2) the document must be authored during the Obama administration (3) the document should not be redundant (i.e. several documents might address the same topic within a short span of time, using the same paragraphs of earlier drafts) (4) the documents

⁷⁰ The literature on Operational Code Analysis directly addresses this concern. See, for example, the edited volume: Stephen G. Walker, Akan Malici, and Mark Schafer, *Rethinking Foreign Policy Analysis: States, Leaders, and the Microfoundations of Behavioral International Relations*, (New York: Routledge, 2010).

should not be minutes or summaries of dialogue with some other nation, but should instead only take the form of internal deliberation and communication.

To understand how the Executive Branch constructs the Israel-Palestine conflict, I use Wikileaks documents from the State Department, under the authority of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. These documents are authored and disseminated by the State Department between January of 2009 and February of 2010. There are 23 documents from the office of the Secretary of State in total which fit the abovementioned criteria. These represent the population of available documents through Wikipedia's cablegate.net website at the time of the analysis.⁷¹ Some of these documents include "action requests" to either UN representatives or embassy officials. There is an issue with the selection criteria insofar as only those documents that have been released (leaked) are analyzed. The extent to which these documents represent the population of documents, or the percentage of leaked documents to those still under classification cannot be determined. Furthermore, relying on leaked documents constrains the analysis of the executive branch to the years 2009-2010, excluding much of the administrations tenure to date.

To understand how the Legislative Branch constructs the Israel-Palestine conflict, I use both leaked and public documents authored by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). The CRS is known as Congress' think-tank, and provides reports to any congressperson at their request. The CRS prides itself in being an unbiased source of information from which congresspersons can make informed decisions on pertinent issues. These reports, 16 total, span from December 2008 to January 2013, and are not intended for public distribution *ex ante*, though many are later released. The reports

⁷¹ New documents have continued to be released since this analysis took place in 2013.

gathered are authored by several different analysts, which might result in different frames, metaphors, or grammars.

The extent to which continuity between these documents will be found lends further support to the analysis, highlighting the extent to which particular framings disseminate and diffuse throughout the system. With additional time, each authors framing could be differentiated. Here, the documents are taken as part of the same population. Those documents authored contemporaneously with the available State Department cables were given priority in close reading. Subsequent documents were used to find key words but not combed for emergent patterns.

Following a grounded theory approach, this chapter allows for some induction if particular patterns begin to emerge from the reading. As will be evident in the Results and Discussion section, the inductive insights offer more novel readings while the deductive insights evince more apparent biases in representation. The framework that emerges from the documents is analyzed in light of event histories, showing what sorts of actions, words, or events are necessarily excluded in order for the actors and system to appear *natural*, whole onto themselves, or unbiased.

Expectations

I had general expectations prior to analyzing the data that are worth mentioning. As will be discussed in the result section, these general expectations proved to be oriented in the right direction but represented in unexpected ways. The prior expectations were largely guided by a content analysis methodology which proved to be poorly suited

for what became a largely hermeneutic approach. In other words, this chapter initially began as a content analysis but soon gave way to a discourse analysis which offered novel explanations grounded in both the history and contemporary context of the conflict. The expectations are included here in the spirit of full disclosure and help raise methodological questions on the appropriateness, benefits, and potential setbacks of close reading toward emergent patterns as opposed to hypothesis testing and word frequency counts.

I had expected the documents to resurrect the difficult and tragic past of the Jewish people, exiled throughout ancient history and the victims of calculated, routinized extermination during the horrors of the Holocaust. I had also expected to encounter discussion of the Palestinian “Nakhba,” the plight of those Palestinians scattered throughout the Middle East in dilapidated refugee camps and their perpetual status of second class citizens in surrounding states, and perhaps allusions to South African apartheid as a metaphorical, if not substantive, analog for the occupation of the Palestinian territories.⁷² These expectations were largely due to my familiarity with the corpus of texts on the conflict. Whether we look to Benny Morris’ history of the conflict in *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*, Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens edited volume, *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*, or Jimmy Carter’s book, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid*, the discussion of the conflict appear to be quite often placed over a background of tragic history.

⁷² To be clear, I find the comparison to apartheid unhelpful due to its simplified application. I mention this because it recurs in journalistic accounts, private conversations, and most famously in Jimmy Carter’s political memoir.

While the works referenced inhabit a space outside of what is commonly considered the discipline of political science and might be more comfortably placed within the disciplines of history, journalism, or political memoirs, they nonetheless reflect a popular framing of the Israel-Palestine conflict as one of competing victimhoods. These texts are not unique in this regard; they reflect the common narratives and cultural practices of the relevant societies.

The shadow of the past is ever-present in Israel culture and woven into regularized practices. For Israeli Jews, the end of Passover is quickly followed by *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day), which leads into *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day) one week later, immediately followed by *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* (Independence Day). The logic of this chain of holidays, from exile, to persecution, to struggle and finally liberation, is not lost on many Israeli Jews. In the case of Memorial Day and Independence Day, the latter begins after sundown of the former; the mood in the country turns from mourning to jubilation instantaneously. For Palestinians and Arab Israelis, the *Nakhba* (Catastrophe) is remembered on May 15th as well as during *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*. *Yom Al-Ard* (Land Day) also carries the shadow of history, with annual commemoration of the 1976 strike by Arab Israelis in the Galilee against land seizures by the Israeli government. Both are often met with counter-demonstrations by Israeli Jews. When speaking to Palestinians, Arab Israelis and Israeli Jews about the Israel-Arab conflict, the conversation quickly turns to collective memory and the lessons of past victimization.

My aim, then, in undergoing a close reading of U.S. diplomatic documents was to understand whether and in what way these frames entered into the foreign policy process and to develop some plausible and novel interpretations of how these might enclose,

constrain, guide, or direct the American approach to the conflict. As will be seen shortly, the close reading of the documents not only overturned some of my expectations, but also presented new analytical postures that might help to clarify the ways in which history and affective positions guide foreign policy framing.

While some acknowledgement of responsibility for both Israelis and Palestinians was likely to appear in the documents, I expected different characterizations of rationality, agency, and intentionality toward the two sides. More specifically, both the executive and legislative would likely characterize the “Palestinians” as irrational, affective, impotent, ambiguous, speaking with many voices, and emitting mixed signals. “Israel”, on the other hand, was more likely to be characterized as rational, calculating, effective, unambiguous, uniform and emitting intelligible signals. These representations would be consistent with a generalized character of Western historiography toward the Middle East, wherein the West (Israel) is portrayed as “rational, developed, humane, superior” and the Orient (Palestine) as “aberrant, undeveloped, inferior.”⁷³ This differs in important ways from Edward Said’s Orientalist thesis in the expectation that Israel (“the West”) would be viewed as uniform while the “Oriental other” (Palestine) will present an irreconcilable challenge to ontologization. To put it another way, I expected that Israel would be unproblematically represented while the Palestinians would be presented as resistant to a stable classification.

Between the two groups of documents, I expected a similar grammar of victimhood but with a greater emphasis on Israeli suffering. Borrowing from Israeli

⁷³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 300.

historian Benny Morris, I expected the image of Israel to cohere with that of “Righteous Victims.” I also expected both the executive and legislative documents to use similar tones and present similar affinities, with Israel being a part of the U.S. “family” (terms like “common bond”, “shared commitment”, etc.) and Palestinian actors being something of “paroled criminals” (terms like “acknowledge responsibility”, “prove”, “demonstrate,” etc.). Lastly, I expected that both the legislative and executive documents would more often “speak for” Israel while “speaking about” Palestine. That is to say, phrases such as “according to the Palestinians...” would be more likely than “according to the Israelis,” while phrases such as “Israel can’t...” would be more prevalent than “the Palestinians aren’t able to.” This further strengthened the expectation that Israel would be positioned closer to the U.S., while the Palestinians would remain at a distance.

With these prior expectations laid out, it is important to detail the theoretical underpinnings of this chapter. This is helpful for several reasons. Firstly, this chapter fits within a social science tradition and a subsection of the political science discipline which, though outside the mainstream, has nonetheless contributed important insights. Secondly, grounding the chapter in theory allows me to make clear the scope and limits of my claims and to avoid possible misunderstanding on the part of the reader. Thirdly, explicit orientation within the field of methodologies helps open potential avenues for thinking about multi-method and cross-discipline communication and collaboration. Lastly, this exercise serves as a series of sign posts for this author toward developing future research agendas.

Theory

There are two potential handicaps in social science research which this chapter attempts to address and avoid. These can be organized in their relation to temporal space as follows: (1) premature ontologization of the objects of analysis may occur *before* any empirical investigations are brought to bear and (2) an insufficiently theorized teleological view might be set such that the analyst presupposes a denouement thought to resolve the conflict being addressed. Put into the context of this study, I attempt to problematize the characterization of both Israel and Palestine by revealing empirical observations which are minimized, excluded, or “unseen” within the text. I also leave open the possibility that a two-state solution, the most often ascribed goal of the Israeli government, Palestinian Authority, and the U.S. government, is neither the necessary nor desirable target, a stable and knowable destination, or an optimal and realizable end. As I show later, these possibilities are not discounted, but rather treated as necessarily open questions which tend to be neglected in the examined discourse. Consideration of these open questions is aided by grounding the analysis in theory.

As Karen Fierke has pointed out, the linguistic turn in social science and the poststructuralist challenge to scientific realism, though initially shaking the foundations of the discipline, was eventually consolidated into what she terms “conventional constructivism.”⁷⁴ While investigations of language and intersubjectivity were given a place at the table of political science orthodoxy, they often were only granted entry if

⁷⁴ Karen M. Fierke, “Links across the Abyss: Language and Logic in International Relations,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 46 No. 3 (2002), 332.

holding firm to positivist assumptions. These approaches, while laudable in their efforts to take language seriously, remain wedded to predictive models, formal games, and econometric analysis. Implicit in these approaches is a concern with “what” policymakers might do “when” and “why.” These approaches fit within a paradigm populated by what Robert Cox has called “problem-solving theory,” which takes for granted the stability of actors and structures, as opposed to “critical theory,” which tends toward addressing the shifting characterizations of the social world as *ideology*.⁷⁵

While it is not the case that policymaker’s identities or beliefs are presupposed within the “conventional constructivist” approach, there is nonetheless an expectation that utterances correspond in a one-to-one relationship with beliefs or attitudes. If a policymaker indicates distrust through an utterance, then our narrative is necessarily constructed along dimensions of distrust. This distrust becomes an explanatory variable. It is here that a problem arises. What distrust might mean, how it frames the horizon of possible actions and interpretations, or how the concept itself is constructed are left as either uncomfortable theoretical discussions that must be deferred to some later date, or else are marked as outside the frame of rational discourse or useful analysis. If these suppositions are not made explicit, they risk giving the analysis a false stability which might be overturned in light of different cultural or historical contexts.

Taking this example further, let us consider an utterance of distrust (e.g., “the U.S. is unsure whether or not Netanyahu’s recent settlement moratorium represents sincere efforts toward peace”). Does the actor distrust the other in the way that one might

⁷⁵ Robert W. Cox, “Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory,” *NeoRealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert Keohane, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 208.

distrust a used car salesman? A convicted felon? A pathological liar? A jealous lover? Each of these assumes a different intention on the part of the distrusted other. The salesman is untrustworthy because he is trying to extract more money than the product is worth, not for the purpose of injury, but for the purpose of bolstering his own utility. The pathological liar is untrustworthy because he cannot be anything but that, leaving no recourse to negotiating trust. The felon, depending on the crime, might be untrustworthy because of the position she is in (e.g., stole a loaf of bread because she is in poverty), or because she exhibits traits of psychopathy which might indicate a desire to injure (unlike the used car salesman). The jealous lover might be untrustworthy because he might withhold information that reflects poorly on him, not out of the desire to injure, but out of the desire to be loved.

How one approaches the distrusted other is context dependent, with the context created through language and implying a closed set of solutions. One would not try to assure a psychopath that they love them in order to turn them into a trustworthy friend, nor would one chastise an untrustworthy salesman for his role as a profit-maker in hopes of changing his interests. For the above reasons, a focus on isolated utterances is not sufficient for an understanding of what “game” leaders are playing and how they conceive of the other-in-context.

Beyond the potential for compacting otherwise expansive and manifold vantage points of particular social constructs or labels, an analyst takes a gamble in defining their endgame or that of the actors who are represented in their analysis. One of the more trenchant critiques of the rationalist approach to social science is the tendency to take as a given the preferred outcome or stable resolution of the object or system under analysis.

Put in the cynically romantic words of Michel Foucault, “the great dream of an end to History is the utopia of causal systems of thought.”⁷⁶ To use the ethnic conflict literature as an example, analyses often seek to uncover ways of mitigating conflicting ethnic identities through assimilation, segregation, the granting of partial autonomy, or the development of consociational governing structures.

In establishing the preferred outcome and assigning the relevant variables of analysis (available resources, structural constraints, path dependencies, etc.), there is a risk that new information will not be able to enter into the prescribed resolution. This is not to say that positivist studies necessarily shackle themselves; a good analyst should be open to changes in circumstance and how they might alter the veracity of their analysis. Rather, the intention here is to pose the always recurring possibility and risks of imbuing structure and agent with a stable “beingness” that relies on non-reflective ahistoricity.

This practice is least problematic when the analyst makes explicit the conceptual gamble involved in such methods. When these practices are employed in a non-reflective manner, the risk of naturalized ontologies increases at the same time that analytic and pragmatic flexibility decreases. As I will discuss later, the framing of Israel as a Jewish State and the goal of “two-states for two peoples” betrays a grossly simplified perspective on the ethnic, religious, geographic, and demographic makeup of the land between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. It also assumes that “two-states for two peoples” means identical things to all sides. Lastly, even in the case of a single, pure, and shared

⁷⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), 263.

interpretation amongst all parties, the goal leaves itself open to the flux of perception through history.

This work also offers some important insights that arise from engagement with the literature on Operational Code Analysis. In order to strengthen the veracity of this approach of foreign policy analysis, there is the need to take seriously the literature on language as a constitutive and not merely reflective. To echo a previously articulated concern,

The question is what is gained or lost in the translation [of text and its patterns] into numbers. What is gained is credibility within a world of science that values quantification over other forms of analysis and one in which the word formal has acquired the meaning of using quantification. What is potentially lost is the very human social and political processes by which actors call the world around them into question.⁷⁷

Most importantly, what is potentially overlooked in quantitative analyses of language are complex metaphors, deliberate word choice, and qualified phrases which might reveal political concerns otherwise overlooked in deductive hypothesis-testing approaches. Though I do not develop the specific ways in which discourse analysis and operational code analysis might contradict or complement one another, I pose this question here, opening a space and deferring its exploration to the future, sticking a figurative place-marker for the time being. All that said, my hunch is that such an exploration would yield a conclusion that both methods provide useful insight into political processes, giving support to a pluralistic methodology in the field of foreign policy analysis.

⁷⁷ Karen Fierke, "World or Worlds? The Analysis of Content and Discourse," *Qualitative Methods* (Spring 2004), 38.

It should be stressed that the above position is not a wholesale critique of the rationalist research paradigm; in fact, such a critique would likely occupy the rest of this paper and several additional volumes if it were to be attempted. Besides, these issues have received substantial treatment in journals of political science along with special issues and symposia. Rather, this brief and admittedly cursory treatment of the philosophy of social science is pronounced in order to highlight the analyst's responsibility to be keenly aware of potentially debilitating analytical presuppositions. In order to counteract the potential for such reflexivity to become subsumed to efficiency and problem-solving approaches, this study seeks to open a space for careful scrutiny of the American perspective toward the Israel-Palestine conflict. With that, I turn to the Israel-Palestine conflict as represented by the Obama administration during the first year of his presidency. The peace process can be summarized (though not fully grasped---and indeed problematically obscured) by a particular set of frames and conveniences which appear and reappear in both State Department cables and Congressional Research Service Reports.

Results and Discussion

History and Suffering. My initial engagement with the materials was directed at isolating significant words relating to a victimhood grammar. Contrary to my expectations, the words "Holocaust" and "Nakba" were entirely absent from the State Department cables. Furthermore, Operation Cast Lead was only mentioned once in the cables emanating from the Secretary of State, despite its onset and cessation in the month prior to Obama's

inauguration. When it was mentioned, it was in reference to PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's message that the PA will be receiving EU funding to "help restore private sector activity and bolster local markets" that were debilitated in the three-week conflict (09STATE100749). The word "suffer" appeared in the State Department cables 8 times, 5 referring to the suffering on both sides, and 3 referencing the suffering in Gaza (one of which placed the blame solely on Hamas). The word "history" did not appear in reference to either the Palestinians or the Israelis. These results were an initial surprise, especially in light of several cables being directed at UN diplomats to use as talking points (5 out of the 22). Contrary to my expectations, it seems as if the history of the conflict and of the parties was largely put aside.

The CRS Reports were slightly different in this regard. During the same time period (2009-2010), the available CRS Reports mention history-as-object twice. Both relate the history of the Jewish people.

President Obama told an Arab audience that America's bond with Israel "is unbreakable. It is based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied" (RL33476).

And again;

On April 14, Sharon acknowledged that Israel would have to part with some places bound up in the history of the Jewish people, but insisted that the Palestinians recognize the Jewish people's right to its homeland and abandon their claim of a right of refugees to return to Israel (RL33530).

A later CRS Report authored in December of 2010 entitled *Hamas: Background and Issues for Congress* provides a chronology of key events relating to the Hamas organization. In what appears to be an uncharacteristic narrative of the conflict, this

timeline describes Baruch Goldstein's 1994 rampage at the Mosque of Abraham in Hebron, which killed 29 innocent Palestinians. The event was followed by the first suicide bombing in Israel. According to the report, the bombing was an act of retaliation precipitated by the massacre (CRS41514). This narrative appears uncharacteristic in that Hamas are described as responding to violence rather than initiating violence.

Some CRS reports mention the historical background of Israel, focusing on the Nazi holocaust, invasion by Arab armies in 1948, and Palestinian terrorism. However, these are placed in subsections and, with the exception of the above two quotes, are not mentioned in relation to the current conflict. References to Jewish historical ties to the Land of Palestine often exclude the mentioning of Palestinian historical ties to the same land. Though the historical ties are implied – there *are* Palestinians there after all – they do not receive explicit mention nor are they framed in terms of an affective bond to the land.

To summarize, the State Department cables by and large avoid a victimhood narrative. Suffering, when mentioned, is attributed equally to both sides, though Gaza receives special mention. The key events of the Nakhba and Holocaust are absent from State Department cables though the CRS report do reflect this history. If one compares these results to public statements by President Obama, a substantial difference is noticed. Though I have not undergone a careful analysis of public statements, President Obama's 2013 speech in Israel is demonstrable, with several mentions of Jewish history and tragedy.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ In the same speech, Obama states that "Palestinians must recognize that Israel will be a Jewish state." Barack Obama, "Remarks of President Barack Obama to the People of Israel," March 21, 2013. Accessed

Although victimization receives no mention in the State Department cables, the CRS reports contain several explicit and implicit references to the Jewish people's affective ties to the land. These references are not mirrored in relation to the Palestinians who have occupied the land for centuries. A reader familiar with the issue of Palestinian nationality might recall the famous statement by Golda Meir that "there is no such thing as Palestinians." The glaring absence of Palestinian history in the CRS reports is significant. It helps establish an image of a Jewish people with a rich history and rootedness in the Land of Israel and a Palestinian people whose existence is acknowledged yet contains little depth.

These results are lent significance when put into the context of two telling quotes in the State Department cables and CRS reports. The first, dated from June 23, 2009, states:

The Arab-Israeli conflict must become a spur for *looking forward, not back*. Arab states must help the Palestinian people develop institutions that will sustain their state, recognize Israel's legitimacy, and choose progress over a *self-defeating focus on the past*. (09STATE64642, *emphasis added*)

A similar message is found in a CRS Report:

In the closed-door session of the September 2009 trilateral meeting in New York, President Obama reportedly laid out the following vision for negotiations to Netanyahu and Abbas:

There's an historical record of the entire past negotiations and there are principles. We won't start the negotiations from scratch, we will not take the historical record and toss it aside. Nor will we wait for the perfect formula.... *It's difficult to disentangle ourselves from history but we must*

on April 28, 2016 via: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/21/remarks-president-barack-obama-people-israel>

do so. The only reason to hold public office is to get things done. We all must take risks for peace. (CRS40092)

Far from making an effort to only look forward and disentangle the process from history, it appears as though Jewish history was given priority in U.S. discourse and deliberations. As I explain in the next section, this call to move beyond the messy past and “get things done” is further problematized by one of the primary demands by Israel from the Palestinians which has become part of the American perspective.

Security, Economy, and Recognition. There are three primary concerns from the perspective of the U.S. in relation to the Palestinians and Israelis which arise from the sampled cables and documents: security, economy, and recognition. *Security* is represented in one of three ways (1) as a public good which the Palestinians must deliver to the Israelis (2) as a set of Palestinian institutions to be developed with the aid of U.S. financing and training (3) as a final stable condition. *Economy* appears subsumed to security, with the cables describing American practices relating to the Palestinian Territories (mostly in the West Bank) through the disbursement of foreign aid and providing funds for the training of PA security forces in Jordan. Restrictions on movement and access, when mentioned in regard to the West Bank, are framed in terms of their effects on the economy. Lastly, *recognition* is represented as an assurance that the Palestinians must deliver to the Israelis.

Beginning with security, the term often appears within a context of Palestinian responsibilities and obligations to fight terrorism and end *incitement*. The sources of

insecurity emerge from the Palestinian Territories and its population. The direction of insecurity is always projected outward toward Israel. This relation is never inverted:

The Palestinian Authority must combat terror and *incitement* against Israel. The United States and its partners have provided funding and training for a reformed Palestinian security force, which has impressed everyone with its recent demonstrations of professionalism and effectiveness. Israel should not expand settlements, dismantle existing outposts, and should allow the Palestinians freedom of movement and access to economic opportunity and increased security responsibility (09STATE46591, *emphasis added*).

Palestinian obligations include continuing with security cooperation and reforms, strengthening the rule of law, and ending *incitement* (09STATE86157, *emphasis added*).

The Palestinians also have responsibilities to create the environment for peace. These responsibilities include continuing to improve security, ending *incitement*, and dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism. They also include refraining from actions and speech that make negotiations more difficult, including support for one-sided criticism of Israel in international fora (09STATE95932, *emphasis added*).

That's why we've urged the Palestinians to expand and improve their security efforts and to take strong and meaningful action on *incitement* (09STATE122214, *emphasis added*).

These excerpts are representative of the general tone and content of the State Department cables in regard to security. Incitement is only attributed to the Palestinians, though the content of this incitement is never explicitly defined. Incitement appears to reference attempts at shaming Israel through UN resolutions in some cases, but might be a broad reference to any activities that highlight the occupation, whether these are protests, public statements, or violent actions. The expansion of settlements, housing

demolitions and eviction, Israeli raids and detainment sweeps, settler violence, and restrictions on movement do not appear in relation to incitement. There are no mentions of Israel ensuring Palestinian security nor is there any mention of Israel threatening Palestinian security. A vague reference to the security of the Palestinians appears once in the sample:

We must show tangible support for Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority now; their budget is facing a critical point. - The PA's need for immediate budgetary assistance is acute. The PA will not be able to meet the education, health, and security needs of its people (09STATE122214).

The security needs of the Palestinian people remain ambiguous. There are also references to Hamas and weapons smuggling into Gaza as security threats:

Hamas' continued rocket attacks against southern Israel constitute a serious and immediate threat to regional peace and security, putting innocent lives at risk and threatening to set off another deadly round of violence (09STATE28850).

I mention this not to argue that Hamas, the PIJ, and other organizations that indiscriminately attack civilians are not security threats. The actions of these organizations, in the opinion of this author, are brutal, unjust, and morally reprehensible. However, this view should not preclude a contextualization of these actions. What appears to be lost in the cables is a treatment of a chain of reactions or actions placed within a series.

All other mentions of security reference the "security wall" bordering the West Bank, the actions of the UN Security Council, the training and funding of PA security forces, as well as one mention of "the lack of clear and consistent procedures" in

accessing the West Bank affecting the “safety and security of USG personnel” (09STATE117652). A similar concern is not explicitly extended to the Palestinians.

Insecurity, then, appears to come from two sources; first, from within the Palestinian population in the West Bank. This threat is addressed in large part by U.S. funding and training of the PA Security Forces. The second source of insecurity comes from Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza. While this would not be surprising from internal cables of the Israeli government, whose concern is to protect the livelihood and bodily security of its population, it does appear at odds with the mission of the U.S. as mediator. What these cables lack is a sense in which Palestinian insecurity might arise from occupation. Israeli raids meant to detain suspects and transfer them to Israeli prisons, Israeli military strikes, restrictions on movement which affect access to health services and have resulted in food insecurity in Gaza, and the vivisection of Palestinian lands by security fences, Israeli-only roads, and settlement projects are not part of the security discourse. Nor are any of these actions identified as *incitement*. As mentioned in the previous section, victimization was not found to be addressed directly by the cables; however, the analysis of security in the discourse does seem to represent an imbalanced perspective. Namely, Israelis are insecure, and the cause lies directly with the Palestinians.

Interestingly, this characterization appears to be at odds with the messages contained in cables emanating from the Jerusalem Consulate and Tel Aviv embassy to the office of the Secretary of State. A partial reading of those cables revealed that the above concerns *were* being addressed and relayed at the local level. In 9 sampled cables from the Consulate in Jerusalem and Embassy in Tel Aviv, the word “arrest” appeared 14

times in total and the word “raid” appeared 12 times in total. These words appear in reference to IDF cross-border raids, arrests of activists demonstrating against the separation barrier in the West Bank town of Bi’lin (these demonstrations occur weekly), and IDF arrests in Area A (those areas of the West Bank wherein PA forces are recognized as having security autonomy as stipulated in the Oslo Agreement). In the 23 cables from the Secretary of State, however, the word “arrest” appears once and “raid” does not appear at all.

It may be relevant that the Secretary of State at the time was Hillary Clinton. If her exchange with Bernie Sanders in an April 14, 2016 debate held in New York City was any indication, it is no surprise that references to Palestinian suffering were avoided or excised under her State Department.⁷⁹ The network of cable dispatches, transfers and readings contains structural elements that may also determine how and what information gets passed along, what is considered useable, actionable, or relevant. The combination of structural characteristic, ideological presuppositions, and domestic pressure groups (e.g. AIPAC) all lead to silences and redactions that demonstrate a partial and contingent understanding of the conflict.

Turning to the economy, references to the Palestinian economy are prominent in the State Department cables and mostly relate to American foreign aid. “Economic growth”, “economic development”, “the Palestinian economy” and variations of these phrases appear 23 times in the sample. When the cables indicate a concern for Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank and the siege on Gaza, it is placed in the context of the

⁷⁹ Patrick Healy and Amy Chozick, “In Democratic Debate, Clinton and Sanders Spar Over Judgment,” *New York Times*, April 14, 2016. Accessed on April 28, 2016 via: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/15/us/politics/democratic-debate.html?_r=0

effects on the Palestinian economy. This might not be surprising for those familiar with Netanyahu's focus on an "economic peace" with the Palestinians, but is telling in its political implications. So long as the Palestinian economy is growing, other issues can be deferred. Referring to a strong Palestinian economy echoes earlier phases of the Israeli occupation wherein Israel carefully recorded household, labor, and agricultural statistics toward promoting prosperity in the territories. As Neve Gordon explains in his detailed analysis of the history of the occupation;

The one feature that stands out as almost completely unique when comparing the occupation's first decade with those that followed is Israel's attempt to manage the Palestinian population through the promotion of prosperity. A series of practices were introduced to increase the economic utility of the Palestinian inhabitants, both as a way of harnessing the energies of Palestinian society to advance Israel's economic interests, but also as a way of raising the standard of living in the OT.⁸⁰

The concern for raising the Palestinian standard of living eroded as Palestinian nationalism gained in strength and especially following the first Intifada. As Gordon recounts, Israel soon transitioned from a logic of integration to that of separation. During this transition, Netanyahu refused to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to a state of their own – until 2009 and then with great hesitation – and instead promoted an "economic peace" as the path to resolving the conflict.⁸¹

While security and economy appear to be part of a realist approach to foreign policy, amenable to balance of power strategies and rationalist empirical testing, there is

⁸⁰ Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 62.

⁸¹ Raphael Ahren, "Netanyahu: Economics, Not Politics, Is the Key to Peace," *Haaretz*, November 20, 2008, Accessed on April 28, 2016 via: <http://www.haaretz.com/netanyahu-economics-not-politics-is-the-key-to-peace-1.257617>

one other primary focus in the documents which appears out of place. The call for Palestinians, and Hamas in particular, to “recognize” Israel has been paramount in public discussions as well as in the sampled documents. The language differs from utterance to utterance, calling for the Palestinians to “recognize Israel’s legitimacy” (09STATE64642), “recognize Israel’s rightful place in the region” (09STATE86157), and most often “recognition of Israel.” Interestingly, the demand to “recognize Israel as a Jewish State” was not mentioned in the State Department cables from 2009-2010, though it is described as the “goal” of the peace process and “our [the U.S.] clearly stated goal” (09STATE118799). The cables do mention the U.S. view that a resolution to the conflict must include a “Jewish State and an independent State of Palestine,” and the Israeli demand for recognition of Israel as a Jewish State was one of the reservations written into the 2007 Road Map by Israel (CRS 40092).

The demand for recognition is curious given Israel’s distrust of Hamas. Generally, the view of Hamas is that of conniving terrorist who can’t be trusted. At the same time, there is a demand for Hamas to “give Israel its word”, so to speak. Why would a Hamas statement of recognition eliminate the perceived nefarious intentions of the organization? Perhaps Israel views such utterance as a credible signal. Indeed, public recognition of Israel by Hamas might weaken the latter’s domestic base which views the organization as a resistance movement against Israeli aggression. Recognition of Israel might signal a willingness to take a hard hit for the prospect of peace.

This view, however, is problematic insofar as it takes Hamas to be an isolated organization whose policies appear to materialize out of the ether and whose statement of recognition would do away with Palestinian grievances. It fails to consider how Hamas’

recognition might weaken the organization and drive hardliners toward rival groups such as the PIJ. There is no evidence that either the State Department or CRS consider this outcome as likely. The role of the population, the pressures on Hamas, and its representation of Palestinian discontent is not considered. This simplification and focus on Hamas works to cover the underlying conditions that lend the organization support; namely, the occupation and episodic violence. Hamas' policies are not seen as a reaction to pressures, whether internal or from Israel, but rather untethered, non-rational and incomprehensible.

The demand for recognition of Israel as a *Jewish* State also contains an important political consideration already mentioned in the previous chapters:

Palestinians contend that recognition of Israel as a Jewish state would negate Palestinian refugee's "right of return" and would be detrimental to the status of Israel's Arab citizens. On April 27, Palestinian Authority (PA) President Abbas said, "It's not my job to give a description to the state. Name yourself the Hebrew Socialist Republic—it is none of my business." According to his spokesman, in his meeting with [Special Middle East Envoy George] Mitchell, President Abbas stressed the commitment of the Palestinians to a two-state solution and signed agreements and obligations, particularly freezing settlement activities, including natural growth, stopping house demolitions, and not building in E-1 (a corridor of land between Israel and the Ma'ale Adumim West Bank settlement), and demanded that the same criteria be applied to Israel (RL33530).

Deferring a discussion on the "right of return," I would like to briefly focus on that of Arab citizens of Israel.

The insistence that Israel is a Jewish State is at once obvious and inaccurate. It is obvious because of the state's origins in the Zionist movement, in the display of its national symbols (e.g. the flag), the identity of a majority of its citizens, and its

perception by most of the world. It is inaccurate because over 20 percent of Israel's citizens are Arab (Christian and Muslim), most Israeli Jewish refrigerators carry hummus and pita bread, Israeli popular music is infused with Arabic scales and aesthetic qualities ("Mizrahi" music), and Arabic remains one of the three national languages (appearing on road signs and official government documents), among other things. That is to say, to identifying Israeli culture as Jewish is an oversimplification.

If it is an oversimplification, efforts have been made to make reality reflect this dream. For example, Prime Minister Netanyahu's political party Likud, the largest in the governing coalition, merged with Avigdor Lieberman's Israel Bietenu in the 2012 election. The latter party had expressed its desire to "transfer" the Arab population of the Galilee to the future Palestinian state, or else carve the borders in such a way that a maximal number of Arabs would be left outside of Israel. In this way, a pure Jewish State might become reality. Perhaps the desire by some Israelis to create such a situation is understandable, but why would the U.S. take up this language?

"Two states living side-by-side" and settlements. When describing the end-goal of a negotiated resolution to the conflict, the phrase which most often appears is "two states living side by side in peace and security." The phrase is repeated so often that one tends to glance over it without giving it much thought. This goal has been the basis of negotiations since the Annapolis Conference but is on close inspection not easy to reconcile with the realities on the ground. How can the call for "side-by-side" pass without notice?

Figure 2. Map of Palestinian West Bank Enclaves Surrounded by Israeli Settlements, et al. (as of July 2007)

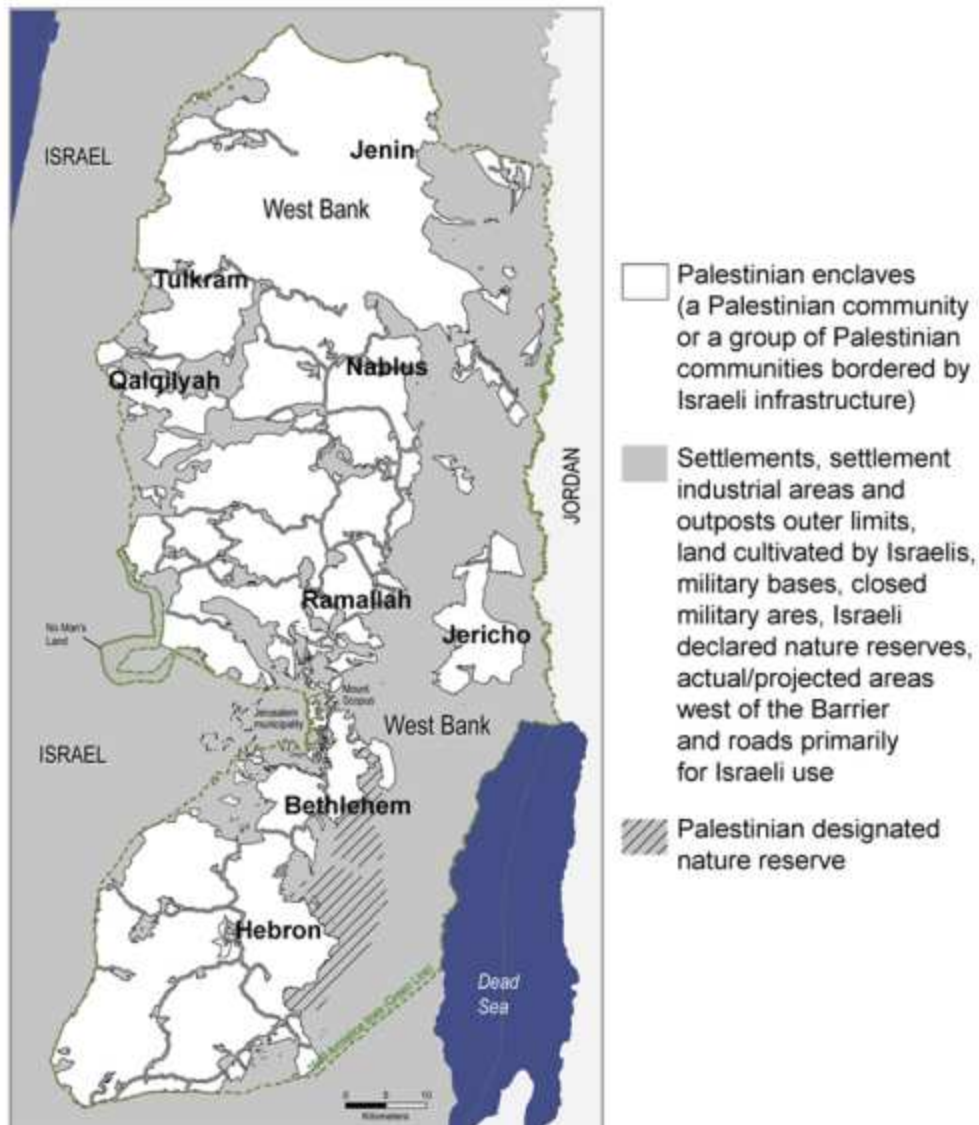


Figure 1. (CRS-R40092)

As the above map shows, the extent to which two states side-by-side can be conceived requires not a little imagination. Recall that Gaza, to the West and outside the frame of the above map, is also meant to be part of the Palestinian state. A more accurate but no less helpful description of the final status might be “two states side by side by side

by side.” The point here is not that the Israeli settlements are necessarily permanent fixtures which may not be dismantled and relocated during negotiations; rather, the most often repeated phrase contains a contradiction which elicits a sense of cognitive dissonance or else requires something of a double-think approach. The U.S. repeats “two-states side by side” in full knowledge of the architecture of power and the orientation of the physical space being considered.

The desire for a clear division of political space, with pure entities existing on each side of a clearly demarcated border, is overturned by the empirical realities. Along with the problem of purifying the identity of Israel mentioned above, there is the issue of conceiving political space in a two-dimensional framework. The “side-by-side” concept needs to exclude or excuse not only the existence of settlements, but also put aside the field of power surrounding the West Bank and Gaza Strip both in the air and below the terrain. As Benjamin Netanyahu’s 2009 Bar-Ilan speech explained:

To ensure peace we don't want them to bring in missiles or rockets or have an army, or control of airspace, or make treaties with countries like Iran, or Hizbullah. There is broad agreement on this in Israel. We cannot be expected to agree to a Palestinian state without ensuring that it is demilitarized. This is crucial to the existence of Israel - we must provide for our security needs.⁸²

The above map doesn’t capture the full field of power over a territory. If the Gaza Strip is any indication, Israel seeks to retain power over the electro-magnetic field, and airspace alongside elements of internal politics (i.e., treaties and diplomacy). Adding to this

⁸² Benjamin Netanyahu, “Full Text of Netanyahu’s Foreign Policy Speech at Bar-Ilan”, *Haaretz Online*, (<http://www.haaretz.com/news/full-text-of-netanyahu-s-foreign-policy-speech-at-bar-ilan-1.277922>, June 14, 2009), May 2012.

disparity the desire of Israeli policymakers to retain access to aquifers in the West Bank, the notion of two states side-by-side begins fracture.

The consideration of power in three-dimensional space has been explored by some, most notably Eyal Weizman in *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*. Practical examples relating to these concerns can be found in the discussions over the control of the Temple Mount (surface and subterranean holy sites), as well as at archeological digs in the Silwan Neighborhood of East Jerusalem (also known as “City of David”) outside the walls of the Old City in Jerusalem. Lastly, the movement of peoples and economic ties between the territories challenges the extent to which two discrete entities can be conceived. These considerations, far from being abstract, relate to empirical practices on the ground, under the ground, in the air, and at the borders. Whether these complexities are actively removed from policymaker’s considerations, or whether they exist in the proverbial blind spot of the vehicle riding along the Road Map, remains an open question.

When discussing the settlements, the U.S. State Department cables contain revealing qualifiers:

settlement *activity* is unhelpful and we call on Israel to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001 (09STATE28850, *emphasis added*).

Israel's obligations include stopping settlement *growth* (09STATE86157, *emphasis added*).

Israel *should not expand* settlements, dismantle existing outposts, and should allow the Palestinians freedom of movement and access to economic opportunity and increased security responsibility (09STATE46591, *emphasis added*).

We appreciate Israel's stated intent *to place limits on settlements*, and will continue to discuss this issue with Israel (09STATE95932, *emphasis added*).

Whether or not the U.S. is resigned to the continued presence of Israeli settlements in perpetuity is difficult to answer, both because the true intentions of policy-makers is not entirely represented in the cables and also due to shifting pressures, interpretations, or readings of the political field that might occur at present and in the future.

What the above excerpts do show is that the U.S. State Department is reluctant in issuing unequivocal statements on the illegitimacy and illegality of settlements, statements otherwise common in the international community. More importantly, there is no evidence of a cognizance of the irreconcilability of settlements with the “two states living side by side” cliché. Settlement growth, expansion, and activity are deemed unhelpful; the language used to express this is for the most part anodyne. Not a little cognitive dissonance arises when these State Department representations are taken seriously. “Two states side by side” appears hostage to the reality of Palestinian cantons and Israel’s current control of a three-dimensional field as well as the stated future intentions of the sitting Prime Minister.

Conclusion

This chapter begged two important questions which deserve careful consideration. First, does the apparent partiality of the U.S. make it an unhelpful mediator in the Israel-

Palestine conflict?⁸³ As was shown, several Israeli positions are not only well-represented in the State Department cables, but appear to have merged into the U.S. position on the conflict. At the same time, an understanding of the conflict from the perspective of members of the Palestinian community is largely absent from the cables. Although CRS reports better represent these concerns, and while cables from the consulates and embassies on the ground might relay these concerns, they do not appear to have entered into the State Department framing of the conflict.

The second critical question is whether the pursuit of a grand bargain in the form of the two-state solution is the only, preferred, or viable goal. As was shown, a two-state solution increasingly appears to neglect empirical realities. It is also handicapped by the position that an all-or-nothing agreement can be reached. Might a focus on daily practices be a more effective way to deal with Israel-Palestine? Could we imagine a step-by-step approach, concerned first with security for both sides, then with legal autonomy, then property rights, and so on? How might such an approach look? Are there historical analogs?

The focus on cables from 2009-2010 leaves open the question of change and continuity in relation to U.S. State Department and Executive Branch perceptions of the conflict. The veracity of the analysis might be aided by the inclusion of public speeches as well as the leaked cables that have appeared since this research took place.

The expectation of a grammar of victimhood in the cables was met, though not in the expected ways. The tone toward the actors, the recited demands, and the blinkered

⁸³ For more on the history of U.S. mediation in Israel-Palestine and Third-Party Mediation, see: Jeffrey Z. Rubin, *Principles of Third Party Mediation: Kissinger in the Middle East* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981).

view of events and issues significant to the parties to the conflict indicate the perception that Israel is insecure and needs reassurance. This appears to come at the expense of a similar reading toward the interests and concerns of the Palestinians. Rather than merely indicating a bias toward one party and against the other, these representations indicate a stubborn or else calcified (il)logic. The desperate recitation of Israel's Jewish character, the nervous repetition of "two states living side by side", and the superficial and ahistoric representation of the Palestinian people all work to construct something of a paper tiger peace process.

The peace process, a grand design, appears hollow and feeble, unable to address the rich context and complexity of the conflict, choosing instead to simplify, to disentangle, to purify so that we can "get things done." Alternatives, including a bi-national state or regional federation, have been discussed for decades but have been largely marginalized, as have alternative voices on both sides. There is reason to doubt that these exclusions help to simplify the process and improve the chances of reaching a practicable resolution to the conflict. The occupation is entering its 49th year.

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PART TWO: THE ACADEMIC NETWORK

Chapter Four: The Academy and the National Interest⁸⁴

“Political actors will no doubt continue to make extensive use of the national interest in their thinking about foreign-policy goals and in their efforts to mobilize support for them.

And, to the extent that they do, political observers must take cognizance of the national interest. In other words, while the national interest has little future as an analytic concept, its use in politics will long continue to be a datum requiring analysis.”

–James Rosenau, 1968⁸⁵

In June of 2009, Israel’s newly re-elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered his Bar-Ilan speech, outlining his government’s foreign policy position on a range of issues, and perhaps most importantly, the Israel-Palestine question. For the first time, Netanyahu publicly announced his support for a two-state solution, alongside a set of conditions meant to address what he viewed as the core of the conflict. According to Netanyahu, “the simple truth is that the root of the conflict was, and remains, the refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own, in their historic homeland.” Netanyahu continued: “[t]he Palestinian leadership must arise and say: ‘Enough of this conflict. We recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own in this land, and we are prepared to live beside you in true peace.’”

Summarizing his view of the conflict, Netanyahu explained that “a fundamental prerequisite for ending the conflict is a public, binding and unequivocal Palestinian

⁸⁴ An earlier version of this chapter was presented at ISA Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA. February 18, 2015.

⁸⁵ James Rosenau, “National Interest,” *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, 1968).

recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people.”⁸⁶ This condition, now central to deliberations between Israel, the PLO, and the U.S., has received little critical inquiry from the fields of foreign policy analysis and international relations theory. The demand for recognition by Israel is notable because it indicates a pivot away from the traditional concerns surrounding the conflict – territory, security, sovereignty – toward concerns that fit within the broadly defined field of identity politics. In effect, policymakers are asking their adversary to recite back to them their preferred identity that they have, up until now, failed to secure within their own sovereign territory.

To be clear, this shift toward identity is overdrawn insofar as identity politics have been ever-present in nationalist struggles and social movements. What is new, in the case of Israel, is the bringing into relief those aspects of nation-building that were otherwise left implicit, relegated to the domestic realm, or allowed to lay dormant within the international political realm.⁸⁷ It is not uncommon for states to enact domestic nation-building practices or privilege certain identities over others, whether through public discourse or by recourse to discriminatory legal frameworks. States attempt to construct a

⁸⁶ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Address by PM Netanyahu at Bar-Ilan University”, Available at: http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2009/Pages/Address_PM_Netanyahu_Bar-Ilan_University_14-Jun-2009.aspx

It should be noted that another translation of the speech appears in Haaretz’s website with some important differences. Regarding the final quote, Haaretz’s translation refers to “the fundamental condition” rather than “a fundamental prerequisite.” The second quote reads as follows in Haaretz: “we need the Palestinian leadership to rise and say, simply ‘We have had enough of this conflict. We recognize the right of the Jewish People to a state its own in this Land. We will live side by side in true peace.’”

Benjamin Netanyahu, “Full Text of Netanyahu’s Foreign Policy Speech at Bar-Ilan”, *Haaretz Online*, (<http://www.haaretz.com/news/full-text-of-netanyahu-s-foreign-policy-speech-at-bar-ilan-1.277922>, June 14, 2009), February 2015.

⁸⁷ For a more developed critique of the tendency to falsely represent identity politics and the role of identity in political discourse and social movements as new-in-kind, see: Axel Honneth, “Redistribution as Recognition: A Response to Nancy Fraser” in Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition: A political-philosophical exchange*, (London: Verso Books, 2003), 123.

common identity through legal means, cultural symbols, holidays, public events, or other nationalist trappings. What is striking in the case of Israel is an attempt by the dominant power to re-frame, outsource, and internationalize a project of domestic identity politics and to do so in the name of security.⁸⁸ My claim is that the demand for recognition as a Jewish state reflects a desire to end, once and for all, the nation-building project and settle into a stable, representable, unified, and privileged identity. This desire, however, can never be sated without abandoning principles of democratic pluralism and can only be pursued by means of manifold forms of violence.

The heightened attention to identity politics, I argue, presents a challenge to the pretensions of many political-analytic productions that have long benefited from a largely unnoticed, unrecognized, or utterly ignored void at the center of their analytic frameworks. The void at the heart of mainstream international relations theory and foreign policy analysis is best demonstrated through the concept of national interest, a concept that has managed to uphold the hegemony of the realist-rationalist paradigm in the field despite not having any definable and consistent form or content. As the epigraph to this essay indicates, and as I will demonstrate shortly, political analysts have long been aware of the indeterminate nature of the concept of national interest. Despite this, and perhaps because of this very indeterminacy, the concept has lent both analysts and policymakers substantial room for rhetorical manipulation.

⁸⁸ One notable analog, and one that is far from flattering, could be South Africa's attempt to inscribe ethnocentric principles in law throughout the Apartheid regime and to seek international legitimation despite growing pressures against that system. Comparisons might also be drawn to the politics and history leading to consociational frameworks in Lebanon and the republics of former Yugoslavia, though consociationalism is by definition pluralistic, and the degree to which these conflicts were internationalized from within (rather than having been imposed upon from without) is a complicated matter.

In what follows, I demonstrate the uncritical reproduction of a form of statecraft rooted in the concept of national interest. This tendency, ubiquitous in mainstream political science, works to close-off otherwise productive paths of theorizing that might be rallied toward resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict. In the case of Israel, the identity of a unified Jewish nation that stands in contradistinction to the Palestinian nation is reproduced uncritically and with the predictable result of foreclosing paths toward binationalism and democratic pluralism. A review of scholarly attempts at grappling with the concept of national interest further reveals that the concept is too indeterminate to serve as an analytic category and, despite a long history, has failed to capture a consensus within the discipline of political science. Despite confusion as to what the national interest might be, the term serves an important ideological function. Here, Walt and Mearsheimer's Israel Lobby thesis can serve as a foil – for lack of a better term – in order to demonstrate the process of assigning status and privilege to some interests over others.

Walt and Mearsheimer, despite their self-identification as realists, sneak in values otherwise relegated to idealist approaches to international politics. These values, which manifest themselves in the ideological positions of American exceptionalism and Jewish nationalism, provide the content on which Walt and Mearsheimer's realist perspective is parasitic. The selection of those values spirited into an otherwise realist conception of the national interest expose an unavoidable site of contestation, as revealed by the 2005 dissolution of the editorial board at the fortuitously named journal, *The National Interest*. I end the chapter by reintroducing the concept of recognition as a first principle in international politics which can paradoxically serve both democratic and authoritarian political projects.

The View from the Tower

Careful attention needs to be paid to the way descriptions of Israel operate in mainstream academic productions. Most often, scholarship on the conflict works to erase the aforementioned historical process by uncritically referring to Israel as the Jewish State. These seemingly apolitical descriptions of an already stable, fully formed, uncontroversibly Jewish state are imbued with powerful political meaning. They prematurely proclaim an end to identity politics, and in so doing, implicitly support a particularly conservative vision of Zionist hegemony. There are a number of possible sites toward which to direct our gaze, but for the present analysis, I will focus on the academic discourse surrounding the U.S.-Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Part One of the dissertation demonstrated the central function of U.S. policy networks – in the Department of State and the Executive – in helping create an incontrovertible essence from which the State of Israel projects its voice and power. Along with the overwhelming U.S. military support to the Israeli military and preferential political support in international fora like the U.N., networks of power that traverse the physical and discursive fields of the U.S. work to define the boundaries of legitimate debate and dictate the policies that are deemed rational. Here in Part Two, I once again include the U.S. as a central component, this time with tacit acceptance of the view forward in Walt and Mearsheimer's Israel Lobby thesis.

Walt and Mearsheimer carefully draw out some of the aforementioned networks of power, aggregating them to what they call the Israel Lobby, "a loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively works to move U.S. foreign policy in a pro-

Israel direction.”⁸⁹ The authors conclude that the Israel Lobby has successfully steered U.S. foreign policy in the so-called Pro-Israel direction. They further argue that a resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict will remain elusive until the lobby can be reined in by more rational networks – presumably those identified with the arms of the State – who are better suited to determine and pursue the U.S. as well as Israeli national interest.

And it is precisely here – at the national interest – that Mearsheimer and Walt abandon their otherwise scrupulous analysis. As I demonstrate, U.S. and Israeli foreign policy rely on an identity politics that only functions properly if it can be maintained as unquestioned, implicit, or taken-for-granted. This identity politics, discreetly spirited into the realist/rationalist paradigm, and patiently lying dormant in concepts like “the national interest” and “recognition,” creates a common core of assumptions that work to support the policies, establish the hierarchies, and entrench the rhetorical structures of dominance recited by those who would claim to speak in the voice of both the State of Israel and the United States of America.

Walt and Mearsheimer’s Israel Lobby thesis elicited reactions from all corners of the political map. Politicians, pundits, public intellectuals and academics all weighed in. Some denounced the work as classic anti-Semitism, recalling the old myth of a shadowy cabal of Jewish financiers who manipulate politicians and utilize a sophisticated propaganda machine to turn all would-be critics into complacent yes-men. Others praised its boldness and perspicuity, offering a clearheaded analysis of U.S. foreign policy during a time of heightened national security concerns emanating from the Mideast region. It is

⁸⁹ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 5.

exceedingly rare for an academic work to resound out from the ivory tower into the halls of Washington, through the mainstream media and down to Main Street in the way that Mearsheimer and Walt's work was able to do.

Part of the purchase of the work no doubt relates to its subject matter, long viewed as something of a third rail in American politics, with Democrats and Republicans proudly stating their support for the State of Israel and taking exception to all attempts at altering the "special relationship". One could, of course, challenge specific aspects of a given policy, just so long as the "special relationship" between the two states was allowed to stand as an unshakable pillar of enlightened, rational politics guided by moral conviction.

The reactions to Walt and Mearsheimer's study, diverse as they were, nonetheless failed to address several problematic and foundational assumptions in their Israel Lobby thesis. As I argue, these assumptions, rooted in the belief of a positive national interest, have been central to the project of 21st century statecraft and have allowed for various abuses that have emerged from its rationalist/realist paradigm.

The authors insist that the U.S. national interest and the policies advocated for by the lobby are incongruous. What, then, does the national interest entail? While the authors provide examples of the national interest and the general interest of the U.S., they fail to develop a theory of the national interest that would lend the requisite stability to the concept. Whether this omission is an oversight on the part of the authors, whether it was consciously excised from the argument, or whether the authors believe that this does not deserve consideration (because consensus has been reached as to the form, content, and meaning of the national interest) is an interesting but largely immaterial question.

Regardless of the author's intention, the void at the center of their thesis functions as a highly productive, and arguable necessary, component. National interest serves as the *point de capiton*⁹⁰, a nodal point around which the entire discourse revolves despite its lack of positive meaning. As such, it offers little in the way of an analytic concept and can only function properly as a political concept if left over-determined.⁹¹

Too rigid a definition of the national interest would eliminate democratic political practice – the process of achieving consensus through dialogue on issues of policymaking – pushing a pronouncement of the national interest into a brutish realm often relegated to authoritarian regimes. Too loose a definition of the national interest would open critical space for political deliberation but would leave the term utterly useless for analytical, positivistic, problem-solving political science.

The susceptibility for both analysts and laymen to simplify social life along Cartesian dimensions – establishing clear demarcations between inside and outside such that pure categories can be discerned and made governable – has been demonstrated

⁹⁰ “It is true that each signification refers to another one and so on and so forth, and that both metaphoric substitution and metonymic combination can, in principle, be described as infinite, but, for Lacan, this endless movement of signification is stopped by the prominent role attributed (retroactively) to certain signifiers. These signifiers he calls *points de capiton*: the *point de capiton* is the signifier which ‘stops the otherwise endless movement (*glissement*) of the signification’ (E: 303)...[I]t is clear that the *point de capiton*, this quilting point, is the point with which all concrete analysis of discourse must operate (III: 267). These signifiers fix the meaning of whole chains of signifiers....The *point de capiton* fixes the signifier to a signifying knot and not to an object. Although without the retroactive (and retrospective) function of the *point de capiton* there would be no meaning, on the other hand, the existence of *points de capiton* never produces an eternally stable meaning, only a relative and temporary – albeit necessary – fixation; nevertheless, this fixation is, most of the time, mythically invested with the properties of the final one.”

Yannis Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 60.

⁹¹ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Second Edition (London: Verso, 1985, 2001), 111-3; Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

elsewhere.⁹² The observation rings especially true when we are speaking of communities of identity wherein discrete units (e.g., state, nation, ethnic group) are thought to contain uniquely representable and singular unifying characteristics, or put another way, are thought to demarcate spaces within which difference has been expelled and identity has been achieved.

Walt and Mearsheimer's Israel Lobby thesis is just one of the more prominent theses among many others which rely on an implicit assumption that states have representable identities. Once state identity is taken for granted, analysts are able to present deductive statements on what actions the national interest dictates.⁹³ It bares mentioning that implicit assumptions are not in themselves problematic; however, there are many cases in which they tend to do a lot of work below-the-surface or behind-the-scenes, like stagehands in a Broadway production. This allows the performance, in this case statecraft, to proceed with the illusory impression that it reflects reality, that it operates according to the way things really are, that the practices undertaken at any given moment are enclosed within a stable structure that dictates by deduction the realm of the possible.

Those involved in the practice of social science might do well to heed the advice of Bruno Latour, who implores analysts to be explicit when it comes to the leg-work

⁹² See: R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁹³ Friedrich Kratochwil, "The Embarrassment of Changes: Neo-Realism as the Science of Realpolitick Without Politics," *Review of International Studies* 19 (1993), 63-80; Stephen D. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 36-42.

being done by social concepts, or to use Latour's phraseology, entelechies.⁹⁴ In the realm of social science, the construction of the social objects of inquiry must be made explicit if we are to understand political action at its various levels. This is especially important given the many cases in which the work of social construction is submerged in ideology and where moral, ethical, or generically normative insights are offered in the form of empirical, rational things. Pointing out these operations is an uncomfortable task. Revealing the underlying ideological structures of political practice risks ruining the performance and undoing the palliative effects of socially acceptable abstraction.

With that in mind, I now turn to the concept of the national interest and investigate how it has functioned in the academic literature and among policymakers. In so doing, I intend to retrieve both the *political* dimensions of the political science field that have been erased or submerged by claims of scientific rationality as well as retrieve the *scientific* aspects of political science that have been similarly neglected despite the pretensions toward an objective analysis of foreign policy invoked by scholars throughout the history of the field.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry Into Modes of Existence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling The Social* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁹⁵ The claim that political scientists, and especially structural realists, have undermined political analysis with their emphasis on science is not a new insight. As Rey Koslowski and Friedrich V. Kratochwil point out in their 1994 piece, "Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System":

Ironically, in the attempt to meet the ideal of science, neorealists have cut themselves off from some of the important insights of George Kennan and other realist practitioners who shaped nineteenth- and twentieth-century politics.

Rey Koslowski and Friedrich V. Kratochwil, "Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System," *International Relations Theory and The End of the Cold War*, eds. Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995): 134.

The Integrity of the National Interest

The concept of the nation is most often described as a modern form of political legitimation, typically traced back to the 19th century. Early political scientists were well aware of the tension developing from new political configurations and the strain between the growing technologies of statecraft on the one hand and the change of values entailed in the march toward modernity on the other. Max Weber most famously pointed out the emerging bureaucratization and rationalization of social life – already well-developed in the first decades of the 20th century – that issued a challenge to both the scientific study and control of human society and later, the social study of science. The eminent scholars associated with the Frankfurt School, in large part indebted to Weber, Georg Simmel, and Karl Marx, further highlighted the relation between scientific knowledge and power. No longer able to speak of science as value-neutral, these thinkers demonstrated how two processes associated with the scientific endeavor since the Enlightenment – understanding and control – implicated one another in ways not fully appreciated in the natural sciences up until that point. What were the attendant risks involved in studying or treating human relations as clockwork? What were the implications of the growing valorization of efficiency, calculability, and rationality in human relations?

These were not entirely new concerns – recall J.S. Mill’s attempts at distancing ourselves from Bentham’s utilitarian dictum that “push-pin is as good as poetry” – but their implications were newly discovered. In a world where technologies of control and death were developing alongside increased economic integration and a constriction of “distance” between life-worlds (i.e., nations, cultures, peoples), how were we to

determine who “we” were and what where our rights and privileges? How could we maintain social cohesion and act in ways rational while caught in this systemic whirlwind?⁹⁶ In the world of international politics, the development of the concept of national interest proved to be one of the more effective strategies for answering these questions, or so it appeared.

One of the seminal works on the concept of national interest, written by Charles Beard and published in 1934, reminds us that if “soldiers are to die for it, and foreign policies are to conform to it, what could be more appropriate than to ask: what is national interest? An inquiry into the substance of the formula becomes a pressing task of political science.”⁹⁷ Note the desire in this passage, the normative insistence and faith in the concept of national interest; “a pressing task” that, if successful, seems to hold the promise of salvation and clarity for those seeking meaning in a world of deathly horror and confusion. Beard, however, like those who followed him, was never quite able to complete this task. Rather than achieving greater clarity on what is the national interest, all of the works that I present here end on similar notes; namely, the national interest is important, even if we can’t be sure what it is exactly.

Early American political scientists grappling with the concept – whose methods were more in line with the tradition of historiography and less with the behavioral turn that was beginning to take place – often turned to the foundation of the American

⁹⁶ It is curious to note that now, many modern political scientists utilize Weber’s definition of the state (the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within a bounded territory) for the parsimony it lends to their analyses while ignoring the critique embedded in his concept of rationalization.

⁹⁷ Charles Beard, *The Idea of National Interest: An Analytical Study in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1934), xxiii.

Republic and the great debates occurring at the time.⁹⁸ The protagonists of this debate, Hamilton and Jefferson, each represented differing visions of the nascent global superpower and in turn, drastically dissimilar conceptions of the national interest.

As Michael Joseph Smith has observed, ‘How one defines the national interest depends on the values he espouses and the way he ranks them.’ Contemporary political scientists, including some realists, largely either assume or ignore this question, but based on their experience and their reading, the leading thinkers of the American Revolution had a lively sense of the different forms republican government – with clearly different foreign policy implications – could take.⁹⁹

Both of these impressive minds wrote political essays that were rich in moralistic language and in defense of a particular set of values. For Hamilton and Jefferson, “‘National interest’ . . . was opposed primarily to ‘sectional interest,’ not necessarily to moral principle. Yet, each had a distinct vision of what kind of country – regime? – the United States should be, and this affected their assessment of the national interest.”¹⁰⁰ The differences between the two views held by these great American political thinkers are described through various metaphors by later scholars: Rome vs. Sparta, expansionism vs. isolationism, Machiavelli v. Montesquieu, industry v. agriculture, and

⁹⁸ See: Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* Fourth Edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1948); Hans Morgenthau, *Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951); Kenneth W. Thompson, “Beyond National Interest: A Critical Evaluation of Reinhold Niebuhr’s Theory of International Politics,” *National Interest: Rhetoric, Leadership, and Policy Vol. 13 Exxon Education Foundation Series on Rhetoric and Political Discourse* ed. W. David Clinton (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988), 23-38.

⁹⁹ Arnold Wolfers, cited in: Daniel G. Lang, “Assessing the National Interest: Jefferson and Hamilton,” *National Interest: Rhetoric, Leadership, and Policy Vol. 13 Exxon Education Foundation Series on Rhetoric and Political Discourse* ed. W. David Clinton, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988): 10.

¹⁰⁰ Lang, 10.

so on.¹⁰¹ Throughout history, each side of these apparently opposing terms and perspectives had been offered as being coextensive with the national interest. Given this contestation, it appears as though policies themselves can tell us very little about what it means to secure the national interest. Instead, it seems incumbent upon us to discern some underlying value guiding the particular policies, some principle that could be recovered from the cacophony of events and decisions. The most sustained effort to rise above the mass of historical detail in this way was put forth by the father of modern political realism, the German-Jewish refugee, Hans Morgenthau.

Morgenthau, whose *Politics Among Nations* famously defined the realist approach to international politics as a concern with “interest defined in terms of power,” attempted to establish clarity in the realm of international politics, providing a single source from which to judge the wisdom of a given foreign policy. States are concerned above all else with survival and control over other states which can only be guaranteed by wielding sufficient power. Power, which itself is defined as control over others, becomes the vital (national) interest of all states. “When we speak of power” Morgenthau tells us, “we mean man’s control over the minds and actions of other men. By political power we refer to the mutual relations of control among the holders of public authority and between the latter and the people at large.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ See: W. David Clinton (ed), *National Interest: Rhetoric, Leadership, and Policy Vol. 13 Exxon Education Foundation Series on Rhetoric and Political Discourse*, Lanham: University Press of America (1988).

¹⁰² Morgenthau, *Politics*, 26.

Morgenthau, echoing insights by Carl Schmitt, explains that politics is “an autonomous sphere of action and understanding apart from other spheres, such as economics...ethics, aesthetics, or religion.”¹⁰³ These other spheres become political as soon as a struggle for power over the minds and actions of other men are observed. From this perspective, politics is more closely associated with decisionism than it is with morality, more closely related to Weberian rationality than Platonic dialectic.¹⁰⁴ But this division itself is overdrawn.

Throughout, Morgenthau’s argument reads more normative than empirical, with the focus on ideology (i.e., Idealism) in political science serving as his archrival. Morgenthau asks us to imagine ourselves looking over the shoulder of the statesman as he writes his dispatches, to place ourselves at a privileged vantage point where the statesman’s actions can be observed from without, free of the motives and ideological preferences that may cloud the statesman’s own mind. As he puts it, “as disinterested observers we understand his thoughts and actions perhaps better than he...does himself.”¹⁰⁵ And yet, a few pages later, Morgenthau explains that:

Realism does not endow its key concept of interest defined as power with a meaning that is fixed once and for all...[and] the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated...The same observations apply to the concept of power. Its content and the manner of its use are determined by the political and

¹⁰³ Ibid, 5; Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*.

¹⁰⁴ It bears mentioning, because it is too often overlooked, that Weber had lamented rather than celebrated this conception of politics. For Weber, rationalization was an unfortunate if inevitable development in post-Enlightenment thinking and not a celebrated “end of history.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 5.

cultural environment. Power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains control of man over man.¹⁰⁶

Accepting Morgenthau's analysis for the time being leaves us with an understanding that power is the elusive ends to which statesmen, and in turn states, aspire.¹⁰⁷ When it comes to means, however, the analysis is left wanting. Morgenthau appears to indicate that the means depend heavily on political and cultural context. The mediating role played by culture and values that interject themselves between the statesman's mind and his pen is acknowledged before being swiftly marginalized. The disinterested observer is asked to view the inscriptions of the statesman's parchment as ordinary and decontextualized from the process of history and the practice of mediation – the text appears as an unmoored and self-sustaining ontological being. However, and despite Morgenthau's best efforts, the meaning of the text cannot exist independent of a context – both in the mind of the reader and the mediating world. Values are sewn into the text and continue to *haunt* it; they continue to exert influence on the possible interpretations and implications of the political decision as well as the intention behind it.¹⁰⁸ In spite of Morgenthau's attempts, power cannot be decontextualized from ideas if it is to retain any meaning whatsoever.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰⁷ The anthropomorphization of the state – the notion that it is capable of a conscious pursuit of power – is itself deeply problematic. I defer a detailed explication of this to another place and time.

¹⁰⁸ My use of this metaphor is largely credited to the works of Jacques Derrida. See: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (1974); Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* trans. Samuel Weber, Evanston: Northwestern University Press (1988); Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).

Morgenthau gives us little by way of isolating a discrete ontological conception of power. He explains that power cannot be simplified as material capabilities, nor any other single sphere, and could be acquired and maintained through imperialist policies, status quo policies, or prestige-seeking policies, all depending on the historical and political conditions at a given time. Still, we can understand that whatever the national interest might be in practice – whatever state-guiding actions and discursive constructs it includes – it will always aim toward acquiring power *over* others. Most importantly, it should be differentiated from motives and ideology, from what leaders claim to aspire toward or whatever rhetoric is used to gain public support and lend an air of legitimacy.

Morgenthau was well-aware that ultimately, the national interest is a site of political contestation, not an objective measure that could be dropped into political analysis without reflection. He even concedes that perceptions of the national interest, and the means used to achieve the national interest, have undergone several phases in American history.

Three types of American foreign policy have emerged: the realistic – thinking and acting in terms of power – represented by Alexander Hamilton; the ideological – thinking in terms of moral principles but acting in terms of power – represented by Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams; and the moralistic – thinking and acting in terms of moral principles – represented by Woodrow Wilson.¹⁰⁹

For Morgenthau, the Monroe doctrine in the Western Hemisphere and policies aiming at a balance of power in Europe are the best approximations of America's national interest.¹¹⁰ All other formulations of the national interest – those that would emerge after

¹⁰⁹ Morgenthau, *The National Interest*, 13.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

the initial pure Hamiltonian variant to corrupt the aims of policymakers with ideals or moralistic considerations – are unrealistic and dangerous to boot.

Morgenthau's *Defense of the National Interest* indeed reads as a political treatise, urging the reader to dispense with moral platitudes and recognize the power political nature of international politics. Of course, the effort to establish the primacy of power politics and extinguish any remaining doubt is an indication that the national interest has never been clear, and this is true just as much after Morgenthau's work as it was in previous centuries. Each of Morgenthau's historical readings is open to challenge and some claims (that popular revolutions are all but over, for example) have proven to be misguided. Morgenthau's attempt to once and for all clear the ideological landscape in order to get to the heart of international politics reads as a work that is itself rich in ideological suppositions. Rather than giving a reader comfort in the knowledge that the national interest has been discerned once and for all, these works demonstrate that the definition of national interest is a site of political contestation.

My first point – that the national interest is the site of politics – is too obvious for an analyst to take much pride in pointing it out but also too widely ignored for a field of political analysis with pretensions toward representing *the world as it really is*. “National interest” may serve as a stand-in for interests that some could see as counter to, competitive with, irreconcilable with, or distinct from the interest of the broad citizenry or nation. “National interest,” even when defined as power acquisition, is radically indeterminate in both form and content. Stephen Krasner indicates this same tension:

Both the strength and weakness of Morgenthau's dictum is that it lacks specific content. Power for what is always the puzzling question. The clearest answer is: power to protect the core objectives of the state, its

territorial and political integrity. When these goals are threatened, the theory does give fairly precise explanations and predictions about state behavior.

This approach is less potent, however, in dealing with situations in which core objectives are not at stake, either because of a country's position in the international system or because there is only a tenuous connection between core objectives and a particular policy problem. A logical-deductive approach to the problem of the national interest is not of much use when dealing with a hegemonic or imperial state whose territorial and political integrity is completely secure.¹¹¹

Krasner's attempt to define the core objectives of the state as territorial and political integrity is hardly convincing when one considers the prevalence of coup d'états, revolutions, annexations, and disengagements undertaken by those who speak for the state. The political and territorial upheavals are always invoked as actions concerned with the securing the state "from enemies both foreign and domestic." Moreover, in the case of Israel, the political contestation over what exactly *is* the state's territory and which *values* represent its political integrity are impossible to ignore, leaving Krasner's attempt at grounding both "power" and the "objectives of the state" (i.e., the national interest) a noble but meaningless effort.

And yet, despite its myriad inflections in differing contexts and its opacity as an analytic concept, the concept of the national interest persists. To quote the introductory paragraph of Joseph Frankel's book, *National Interest*:

'National interest' is a singularly vague concept. It assumes a variety of meanings in the various contexts in which it is used and, despite its

¹¹¹ Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 41.

fundamental importance, these meanings often cannot be reconciled; hence no agreement can be reached about its ultimate meaning.¹¹²

And once again, this time from Robert Keohane:

When commentators wish to justify policy prescriptions on ethical grounds, they smuggle their ethics into the ambiguous and elastic concept of “the national interest.”¹¹³

The relevant question to ask, then, is how certain sectors conceive of the national interest and the political forces and power structures that craft, manipulate, or alter these conceptions. Within the American academy, the national interest is often conceived as democracy promotion, regional or domestic stability, and security. Rarely is the national interest described as the pursuit and practice of hegemony, imperialism, or aggression. The privileged position held by the former series is telling but the latter series, harsh as it might sound, should not be read as hyperbole.

American academics who have lived through the Vietnam War, witnessed U.S. covert interventions of the 1980s in Central and South America, and are aware of the whole series of government sponsored terror and acts of sabotage against secular nationalism in the Middle East (which continues to this day), and who nonetheless persistently espouse a benevolent version of American foreign policy should be commended for their idealism if nothing else. One is hard pressed to find a rosier pair of lenses than those donned by U.S. foreign policy analysts when it comes to representing the history of U.S. foreign relations. The ability to minimize the chasm between the historical record and the ideological pretensions of American policymakers – and to

¹¹² Joseph Frankel, *National Interest*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 15.

¹¹³ Robert Keohane, *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 9.

proclaim the later as the true foundation of American foreign policy – perhaps testifies to the power of education to discipline the elite class along nationalist lines.¹¹⁴

Looking back at the literature on national interest is somewhat refreshing. The further back you go, the less ideological cover-up and confusion, the more direct the analysis. Let us briefly return to Charles Beard's book, *The Idea of National Interest*. Harold Lasswell, quoted in the preface to Beard's study, explains, "Often the phrase 'national interest' is used when what is meant is that a certain bank wants the State Department to do something."¹¹⁵ Beard offers a similar view of the "national interest" as the most recent form of legitimizing government practice, following earlier models based on the divine right of kings or dynastic interest. This modern form appears to have emerged at the intersection of capitalism and popular governance (i.e., liberalism), though in the interest of clarity, it often concerns itself with those social objects that lend themselves to a 'felicific calculus.'

Unlike the abstractions and vagaries of the old formulas, national interest seems to bear a clear and positive relation to the tangibles which are the major concern of the modern world, especially to economic operations that can be cast or reflected in particular and general balance sheets.¹¹⁶

A similar, though more nuanced formulation is presented by Stephen Krasner in his 1978 book, *Defending the National Interest*. According to Krasner, the national interest can be viewed as "the preferences of central decision-makers that are related to enduring general

¹¹⁴ The point was made most recently by popular American satirist Stephen Colbert, who reported on CIA torture allegations by explaining to his audience that America does not torture, continuing: "I'm not talking about the actual country. I'm talking about the *idea* of America. The idea of America would never torture." *The Colbert Report*, Dec. 15, 2014.

Noam Chomsky makes a similar point throughout his writings since the 1960s.

¹¹⁵ Beard, xxiv.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 22.

goals.”¹¹⁷ These goals must meet a few basic conditions; “first, they are concerned with the general interest of the society (they do not persistently benefit some groups or classes and harm others); second, they maintain the same transitive ordering over time.”¹¹⁸ After securing the primary goals of territorial and political integrity, the U.S. national interest, according to Krasner, is most convincingly demonstrated in policymaking concerned with securing raw materials markets.

[T]he preferences of American central decision-makers, revealed by their actual behavior toward foreign raw materials investments, suggests that their most important goals have been related to broad foreign policy objectives, their next most important to insuring security of supply, and their least important to increasing competition and reducing prices.¹¹⁹

There are two important points to note regarding Krasner’s thesis. First, his invocation of the terms “broad foreign policy objectives” and “general foreign policy goals”¹²⁰ reflects an ambiguity similar to that of Walt and Mearsheimer’s invocation of “national interest” (a point we will get to shortly). Despite his observation that a “logical-deductive approach to the problem of the national interest is not of much use when dealing with a hegemonic or imperial state whose territorial and political integrity is completely secure,”¹²¹ Krasner falls back on a logical-deductive gambit, positing the existence of some consistent and unproblematic national interest that is reflected in the pursuit of general goals, the characteristics of which do not appear to require serious explication.

¹¹⁷ Krasner, 89.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 53.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 36.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 128.

¹²¹ Ibid, 41.

When Krasner does provide details, they tend to contradict the purported broad, resilient, or uncontroversial nature ascribed to these goals. The particulars range from “preventing a communist regime in Iran”¹²² to addressing the threat to security of the supply of rubber¹²³ and addressing the threat to “the economy in general and naval capabilities in particular”¹²⁴ presented by possible petroleum shortages. That these goals are “concerned with the general interest of the society (they do not persistently benefit some groups or classes and harm others)” and “maintain the same transitive ordering over time” is by no means a given. Krasner, to his credit, admits that his analysis could lend support to Marxist, liberal-pluralist, or statist approaches, and while he maintains the latter to be most convincing, it is neither logically entailed from his analysis nor is it convincingly demonstrated by his selective empirical investigation.

The second point, and the more critical one for the present purposes, is that Krasner identifies the importance of economic considerations to policymakers who are said to concern themselves with the national interest. That is to say, while Krasner remains an avowed statist, he often makes no distinction between the interest of the state, the interests of society, the interest of financial or economic centers, and interests as perceived by policymakers. Though Krasner does not develop “enduring general goals” as a discrete analytic category, his analysis clearly indicates that the national interest is largely comprised of economic concerns determined by elite policymakers.

¹²² Ibid, 128.

¹²³ Ibid, 99.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 107.

Beard's conflation of the national interest with the financial and banking sector, and the association made to a utilitarian methodology that casts the national interest in terms of "particular and general balance sheets," is arguably a more profane or brute variation than that which emerges from Krasner's more nuanced approach. Both views nonetheless fall back on the national interest as defined by policymaking elites who are largely concerned with economic and material considerations. As it turns out, the notion that national interest serves as stand-in for elite interests is not all that controversial in the scholarly literature.

Whereas most investigations into the national interest determine the concept to be a stand-in for elite interests, the interests of uniquely powerful networks (industries central to the pursuit of the aims set forth by elite state policy makers), and highly contested, Mearsheimer and Walt return to the naïve conceptualization of the national interest as indicating the interest of the general public. Of course, the authors do not eliminate the presence of powerful and interested networks who work to shape state policy; their focus is precisely on these actors (i.e., The Israel Lobby)! Whereas earlier analyses of the national interest could not avoid the process by which the national interest is defined (pluralism, ideological debate, elite competition), Mearsheimer and Walt somehow manage to elide all of this. Using a strategy that would best be described as *estrangement*, Mearsheimer and Walt accept the idea that the actions of the United States government do not meet the needs of the general public and instead represent the interests of powerful elite networks. However, and in order to preserve the concept of the national interest, they *estrange* these networks, thereby ensuring that the pure concept of the national interest can remain uncorrupted.

I am making reference here to the Georg Simmel's concept of the stranger. Simmel describes the stranger as "fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself."¹²⁵ In the next section, I demonstrate how this concept of *estrangement* accurately describes the strategy undertaken by Mearsheimer and Walt toward "The Israel Lobby" and how this ultimately shields the history of U.S. foreign policy – and the elites affiliated with its projection – from serious criticism. Having shown that the national interest is a powerful rhetorical tool that lacks conceptual and formal integrity, we can now turn to how the term national interest functions in the context of the Israel Lobby thesis.

National Interest and The Lobby

At the heart of Mearsheimer and Walt's Israel Lobby thesis is their view that "using American power to achieve a just peace between Israel and the Palestinians would help advance the broader goals of fighting extremism and promoting democracy in the Middle East."¹²⁶ These broader goals are offered as being consistent with the U.S. national interest and are meant to pass without comment. In this section, I discuss the authors'

¹²⁵ Georg Simmel, "The Stranger," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* trans. Kurt Wolff, (New York: Free Press, 1950), 402-408. Available at: http://www.infoamerica.org/documentos_pdf/simmel01.pdf.

¹²⁶ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* (2006), Vol. 8(3): 62.

ambiguity regarding the form and content of the national interest, challenge their uncritical reproduction of a largely fictitious history of U.S. foreign policy, and focus on several inconsistencies found in the finer points of their argument.

To begin, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the way the authors' above statement undermines the very methodology they employ and the central argument that they make. The authors want to demonstrate, on the one hand, that U.S. policymaking in the Middle East is subject to consistent subversion by interested parties (i.e., the Israel Lobby). At the very same time, they argue that the U.S. is uniquely capable of bringing a more just political order to the Middle East. The reader is expected to concede at the outset the legitimacy of U.S. regional hegemony and accept on faith the ability (or desire) for the U.S. to implement a more just order.

The authors provide a number of historical case studies meant to demonstrate U.S. foreign policy failure: the premature cessation of U.S. counter-terror cooperation with Syria and Iran in the early years of the Bush administration's War on Terror, U.S. failure to limit the mistreatment of Palestinians at the hands of the Government of Israel (GOI) after 2001, and U.S. failure to prevent the Second Lebanon War in 2006. In all of the above cases, Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the U.S. government, for all its power and prestige, had been duped and outpaced by a small and loosely-bound network of power, the "Israel Lobby."

If the authors question the ability for the U.S. to pursue rational policies that would secure the national interest, they do not question the benevolent intentions of U.S. policymakers. The intended goals of the U.S. government are taken for granted even if they do not comport with the historical record. These stated goals – fighting extremism

and promoting democracy – function as strong ideological justifications for all manner of interventions throughout U.S. history. The openly avowed quasi-imperial desire to achieve regional and global hegemony passes without mention.

To be clear, Mearsheimer and Walt do not expressly condone all interventionist foreign policy decisions undertaken by U.S. administrations – the authors had voiced strong opposition to the invasion of Iraq and more recently have argued against indirect military involvement in Ukraine.¹²⁷ However, their argument works to perpetuate a myth of generic benevolence on the part of U.S. policymakers and as such, keeps intact the ideology of American exceptionalism. American foreign policy, for all its faults, seemingly has the potential to be guided by benevolent intentions. In light of this, the authors' search for a corrupting force should not be all that surprising.

Back when the Israel Lobby piece was first published, I found the work to be bold in its claims, well-researched, and for the most part convincing. The piece was refreshing not only for its unabashed criticism of Israeli and U.S. foreign policy – a point on which mainstream American political science remains largely mute – but also for the historical context in which it was published. Following the puzzling and illegal U.S. intervention in Iraq, the American public and academic community seemed hesitant to push against the grain of conventional wisdom. Walt and Mearsheimer wrote a piece that challenged American foreign policy orthodoxy, implying that American foreign policy is crafted in ways that subvert the democratic will of the people, minimize the oppositional role and

¹²⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, “An Unnecessary War” *Foreign Policy* (Jan/Feb 2003): 50-59.

capacity of their elected representatives, and oftentimes produce suboptimal outcomes.

But as Christopher Hitchens wrote in response of The Israel Lobby essay:

The essay itself, mostly a very average "realist" and centrist critique of the influence of Israel, contains much that is true and a little that is original. But what is original is not true and what is true is not original.¹²⁸

None of the forgoing discussion is intended to take credit away from Walt and Mearsheimer for publishing an auspicious piece that helped to open a critically important space for dialogue.¹²⁹ Still, their analysis, convincing as it appears to be, has only taken us half of the way toward understanding and addressing the role of U.S.-based networks of power in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The Pro-Israel Position

In both the original essay, the expanded version and in their book version, Mearsheimer and Walt's analysis stands or falls on the concept of "national interest." Curiously enough, the authors forego a sustained discussion on the contours and content of the national interest until the concluding section of these works. Delaying a discussion of the national interest also allows for the label of "Pro-Israel" to pass without comment.

¹²⁸ Christopher Hitchens, "Overstating Jewish Power: Mearsheimer and Walt give too much credit to the Israel Lobby," *Slate*, March 27, 2006. Available at: (http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2006/03/overstating_jewish_power.html)

¹²⁹ Those familiar with the publication history of the Israel Lobby thesis are likely aware of the reactions to the piece. Those who have a superficial familiarity with the argument can guess as to the various reactions the piece elicited, ranging from sober critical analyses to intellectually dishonest and vindictive assaults. Jerome Slater's "The Two Books of Mearsheimer and Walt" offers an exhaustive accounting of the full range of responses, so rather than reciting these here, I direct the reader to Slater's comprehensive review piece. Slater's piece, it turns out, is a good example of the effectiveness with which Walt and Mearsheimer gloss over the lynchpin of their thesis. Jerome Slater, "The Two Books of Mearsheimer and Walt," *Security Studies*, 18 (2009): 4-57.

These two issues related to positioning require some attention before moving forward. The first – the position of their description of the national interest within the larger text – suspends a critical reading of their thesis. The second – the position of the Israel Lobby in relation to the U.S. and to Israel – allows the authors to participate in the promotion of an ideological trope seemingly without realizing it themselves.

In an expanded version of their original London Review of Books piece, Mearsheimer and Walt write the following: “The U.S. national interest should be the primary object of American foreign policy.”¹³⁰ This normative and under-specified claim is followed by: “no lobby has managed to divert U.S. foreign policy as far from what the American national interest would otherwise suggest, while simultaneously convincing Americans that U.S. and Israeli interests are essentially identical”¹³¹; “In fact, they are not” add the authors in the book version of *The Israel Lobby*.¹³² They continue to explain, again in the book version, that:

Specifically, we have to convince readers that the United States provides Israel with extraordinary material aid and diplomatic support, the lobby is the principal reason for that support, and this uncritical and unconditional relationship is not in the American national interest.¹³³

Throughout their piece, the authors scatter implied and at times explicit (though underdeveloped and tangential) conceptions of the national interest following what could best be described as an adventitious rather than a rigorous method. This strategy, not

¹³⁰ Mearsheimer and Walt, “The Israel Lobby,” 30.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*, 6.

¹³³ Ibid, 14.

surprisingly, brings with it all manner of attendant inconsistencies and promotes a reading strategy that must sacrifice clarity and suspend disbelief if it hopes to sustain a narrative. We are left with a text that appears to derive much of its strength from the partial and sporadic invocation of the national interest alongside grand if cliché statements on benevolent intentions. Given that Walt and Mearsheimer pose their thesis in terms of national interest, why do they relegate the (not so) detailed accounting of the national interest to a subsection in the concluding chapter of their book (“What are U.S. Interests?”)?

Returning to the abovementioned description of the national interest that appears in the concluding section of their essay, the authors explain that: “using American power to achieve a just peace between Israel and the Palestinians would help *advance the broader goals of fighting extremism and promoting democracy in the Middle East*”¹³⁴ (*emphasis added*). On the face of it, Mearsheimer and Walt’s implied and uncritical ascription of democracy promotion to U.S. interest in the Middle East is unconvincing at best given the history of U.S. policy in that region. The authors themselves acknowledge as much.¹³⁵ Like the article, their book delays an accounting of the U.S. national interest until the concluding section. This delay serves a strategic function by deferring an

¹³⁴ Mearsheimer and Walt, “The Israel Lobby,” 63.

¹³⁵ “The United States has overthrown democratic governments in the past and supported dictators when this was thought to advance U.S. interests, and it has good relations with a number of dictatorships today. Thus, being democratic neither justifies nor explains America’s support for Israel” (“The Israel Lobby”, 35). While democracy promotion doesn’t justify support for Israel, and while the authors acknowledge that the U.S. national interest often demands both autocracy promotion and antagonism toward democracy, they nevertheless believe that democracy promotion is a broad goal pursued by the U.S. as indicated in their conclusion. It is unclear which of these two views we should take to be the correct one or how we might reconcile the two.

explicit accounting of what turns out to be the weakest – and at the same time the most central – element of their argument.

Another important problem emerges when the authors attempt to position the Lobby in relation to both the State of Israel and the U.S. Their efforts meet with a number of seemingly unsurpassable contradictions. They complicate their general theoretical position when they state, for example, that:

Pro-Israel forces surely believe that they are promoting policies that serve the American as well as the Israeli national interest. We disagree. Most of the policies they advocate are not in America's or Israel's interest, and both countries would be better off if the United States adopted a different approach.¹³⁶

The positioning of the Israel Lobby in relation to U.S. policymaking circles is telling. The authors are careful not to imply that the Lobby is entirely alien to the American public and political sphere. Both its membership and the sorts of activities it undertakes are presented as native to the tradition of American democracy. Its membership is largely comprised of American nationals, many of them serving in their official capacities as Representatives and Senators in Congress, others occupying important cabinet positions and executive branch offices, and still others sitting on the boards of major corporations and think-tanks. The Israel Lobby, despite its name, is an American institution through and through. This leads to a tension that the authors attempt to relieve with little success.

Insofar as “Pro-Israel forces” are characterized as promoting policies that are not in Israel’s interest – leaving aside for now how these interests are determined – the “Pro-Israel” qualifier appears utterly meaningless from an analytical perspective. It appears as though the “Pro-Israel forces,” native to America, drive the U.S. government as well as

¹³⁶ Ibid, 122.

the Government of Israel to pursue policies that harm their respective national interests. The Lobby can be described as an “Israel Lobby” only in terms of its interest *in* the State of Israel but without relation to the interests *of* the State of Israel. This is not merely a matter of semantics; it is a rhetorical strategy necessary for the proper functioning of the Israel Lobby thesis.

The Lobby is never exiled, but always estranged from the state; a part apart (if you will forgive the wordplay). This estrangement applies as much to its place in U.S. statecraft as it does in Israeli statecraft. In order for the Israel Lobby to function properly in the analysis – as an antagonistic force – it must remain distinct and separate from Israel while at the same time appearing as an appendage of the state.

The authors decision to describe the Israel Lobby as “Pro-Israel” while arguing that the policies it pursues are against the interest of Israel leads to an apparent contradiction in terms (i.e., the Pro-Israel Lobby that brings harm to Israel). This is doubly problematic when one considers the politically charged environment developed around questions of Israeli policy and the resort to labelling critics of GOI policy as “anti-Israel.” Fortunately for the authors, the Pro-Israel appellation is hollow. This is fortunate because if the term carried its implied solidity, then Mearsheimer and Walt would be taking residence in the “anti-Israel” camp. This sort of charge, despite its absurdity, was leveled by Zbigniew Brzezinski in a short review of their book. According to Brzezinski, “[t]hey are...generally critical of Israel’s policy and, thus, could be labeled as being in some respects anti-Israel.”¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, “A Dangerous Exemption: Why should the Israel lobby be immune from criticism?,” *Foreign Policy* (July/August 2006), 63-64.

In using the appellation “Pro-Israel,” however, the authors concede substantial ground to those forces in the Lobby that they otherwise aim to weaken; namely, right-wing religious nationalists who refuse to concede either territory or recognition to the Palestinian people. By limiting all possible political debates in the discursive field to the pro-Israel/anti-Israel division, the authors participate in the erasure of pluralism and politics within and between the relevant societies (Israel, Palestine, U.S.). We are left with a rigid construction whose inability to adapt to the frequently changing dynamics of the Israel-Palestine conflict – including demographic, cultural, infrastructural, and social characteristics – is not all that surprising. The more nefarious effect of this discourse is its ability to reinforce identification with sterile divisions that carry with them old modes of historical violence.

Let me develop this point a bit further because it highlights the core assumption supporting Mearsheimer and Walt’s thesis: the existence of a representable, identifiable, incontestable national interest. Either the Lobby pursues its own peculiar interests, in which case we should hesitate to call it the Israel Lobby, or it advocates policies that have Israeli interests in mind but nonetheless result in negative and unintended consequences. In either case, the Government of Israel and the U.S. government appear to be inept and powerless institutions unable to adjust their policies toward their own interests.

Put in terms of theoretical frameworks, the view that the Lobby pursues its own unique set of interests is most consistent with a liberal/pluralist view of politics. The view that the state actions account for policies and their attendant results is most consistent with a statist perspective. Mearsheimer and Walt, as realists, appear to privilege the latter logic. However, if the latter were true, then pursuing the national interest could be done

only after first determining which political influences are pure and which are degenerate. In other words, political deliberation would be a necessary first step toward ascertaining the national interest. This simple observation escapes the authors' analysis, and for good reason, because making it explicit would reveal the contestable nature of the national interest. If the national interest is up for debate, then Mearsheimer and Walt's insistence that it is not being met is not likely to be very convincing. Put simply, political process is sidelined in order to offer a more manageable puzzle amenable to top-down administration using calculative reasoning.¹³⁸

The focus on Pro-Israel forces is even more puzzling given Mearsheimer and Walt's self-ascribed realist orientation. Because Pro-Israel forces are represented as separate from the state, Mearsheimer and Walt would need to explain how the statist conception of national interest (the view that states are discrete, unified entities capable of pursuing discrete interests) can be consistent with their pluralist epistemology (the focus on sub-state forces determining state policy). If the state interests and policy are predominantly determined by non-state actors, then a statist approach to understanding foreign policy would appear misplaced.

"Three Main Interests"

The particulars that Walt and Mearsheimer turn to also provide little by way of clarifying the tension between (1) the interests of loose networks of power (e.g., the Israel Lobby)

¹³⁸ Calculative reasoning here is an oblique reference to "calculative thinking" that formed the basis of Heideggerian and later Frankfurt School criticism of modern state politics and social theory.

and (2) the state conceived of as having a single definable identity from which the national interest would emerge naturally and appear incontrovertible. The authors begin the second half of the book with the following general claim:

The United States has three main interests in the Middle East today: keeping Persian Gulf oil flowing to world markets, discouraging the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and reducing anti-American terrorism originating in the region. There are instances where the lobby has supported policies that advanced these interests, but many of the policies that organizations in the lobby have promoted over time have ultimately left the United States worse off.¹³⁹

Consider these “three main interests” in turn. Keeping Persian Gulf oil flowing to world markets is by no means an uncontroversial pillar of the U.S. national interest nor a clearly articulated goal. As Timothy Mitchell points out in *Carbon Democracy*, control over oil markets has long been a concern for policymakers, but this control entails both supply and scarcity. This partly follows a logic of price controls but also serves wider political objectives including securing the dominance of the Saudi monarchy against regional adversaries, limiting class-based political reforms, and undermining democratic movements at home and abroad.¹⁴⁰ More importantly, that there exists a real threat to the supply of oil for market is refuted by the authors themselves:

because most oil-exporting governments depend on large revenues to keep themselves in power, threatening to cut off the supply is not credible and their leverage is thus reduced. Many of these governments also have sizable investments in Western economies and would suffer considerable losses in the event of a sustained economic downturn. Reducing production would drive prices up and make alternative energy sources more attractive, and give the United States and other countries a big incentive to wean themselves from oil dependence once and for all. Because major oil exporters like Saudi Arabia want to keep the industrial

¹³⁹ *The Israel Lobby*, 199.

¹⁴⁰ Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*. (New York: Verso, 2011).

powers hooked on oil and gas, they have an obvious disincentive to using what little leverage may be at their disposal. As a result, U.S. dependence on imported energy supplies has not given these countries much influence over U.S. policy.¹⁴¹

So goes the threat from Persian Gulf oil supplies.

The second main interest proposed by Mearsheimer and Walt is equally puzzling. Not only has the U.S. allowed for weapons of mass destruction to spread in the region (e.g., providing support for chemical and biological weapons development to Saddam's Iraq, providing cover for Israeli nuclear proliferation) but it has sought policies that make the development and acquisition of WMD a reasonable policy goal for states like Iran.¹⁴² The authors are correct to point out that some of these policies have been aided by the so-called Israel Lobby, but others were more accurately the result of broader geostrategic aims by various U.S. administrations. The Nixon administration's "Twin Pillar policy" regarding Iran and Saudi Arabia is a case in point whose effects remain relevant for the current politics in the Middle East region.¹⁴³ Much like the carbon politics referenced in the last example, this topic is far too complex to summarize here and is open to many challenges. As such, it fails to serve as a commonsense basis from which to derive the U.S. national interest.

The last goal, reducing anti-American terrorism, is similarly complex. There are many U.S. policies unrelated to Israel that have been used to justify terrorism against the

¹⁴¹ *The Israel Lobby*, 144.

¹⁴² The authors themselves acknowledge U.S. support in developing Saddam Hussein's WMD in their January/February 2003 FP article "An Unnecessary War" as well as U.S. policies that provoke Iranian proliferation in their July/August 2006 FP reply to their critics, "Mearsheimer and Walt Respond," pp. 66. *The Israel Lobby*, 340.

¹⁴³ Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the U.S.*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 36.

U.S. While Mearsheimer and Walt are correct to point out that bin Laden mentioned U.S. support for Israel as a reason for the 9/11 attacks, bin Laden also mentioned U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia as a principle grievance. Similar to the other examples, the authors acknowledge this line of reasoning, even accepting the view that U.S. bases in the Middle East provoke violence against American assets.

A more general point should also be made regarding the use of political rhetoric as evidence. The rhetoric used by the likes of bin Laden might not necessarily represent the political logic employed by him or similarly gifted if sadistic political strategists (e.g., Zawahiri, al-Baghdadi). As Bruce Riedel has pointed out, bin Laden followed a strategy that could best be described as one of promoting adversaries – provoking the U.S. in order to draw its forces into the region only to trap them in a long and costly quagmire.¹⁴⁴ From the region-wide chaos, a charismatic leader could emerge and serve as a unifying force, turning the initial U.S. intervention in the Middle East toward a weakening of U.S. assets – a sort of political judo – or so the logic went. Bin Laden did not need U.S.-Israel policy to pursue his political agenda, though the policies of the two states can be effective recruitment tools. Walt and Mearsheimer acknowledge but quickly marginalize these points in order to maintain the assertion that the Israel Lobby is unique in terms of the scale of its impact, and that U.S. policy would avoid all manner of negative and unintended consequences if not for the Lobby.

For the authors, a more just solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict would allow the U.S. to exercise power in the region more effectively, thereby reducing anti-American

¹⁴⁴ Bruce Riedel, “Al Qaeda Strikes Back”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2007, 24.

sentiment.¹⁴⁵ The U.S. military could have its cake and eat it too, so to speak, maintaining regional dominance under a new, improved, purified strategy that would limit all manner of negative externalities.

Syria

Mearsheimer and Walt, in their attempt to estrange the Israel Lobby, have to convince the reader that the Lobby is a force uniquely capable of sabotaging U.S. strategy. In order to demonstrate this power, the authors turn to U.S.-Syrian relations. Mearsheimer and Walt argue that Israeli policy toward Syria undermined U.S. attempts to normalize its relations with the Assad regime and achieve a mutually beneficial strategic cooperation. The Israel Lobby, which in this section is comprised almost entirely of members of the hawkish neo-conservative wing of the Bush administration, is charged with steering the administration toward a more conflictual stance with regards to Syria. Aligning themselves with the hawkish policies of Ariel Sharon, and later with the hawkish wing of Ehud Olmert's administration, the Lobby is credited with having successfully undermined U.S.-Syria strategic cooperation.

In December of 2006, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad signaled his interest in opening negotiations with Israel concerning the Golan Heights (occupied by Israel since 1967) without preconditions. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, citing pressure from the Bush administration, rebuffed Assad's overtures. Mearsheimer and Walt dismiss Olmert's claims of American pressure by recourse to three indicators.

¹⁴⁵ *The Israel Lobby*, 348.

First, the U.S. ambassador to Israel denied Olmert's claim. The word of the U.S. ambassador is trustworthy by definition.¹⁴⁶ Second, the authors claim that "Israel is not in

¹⁴⁶ According to Akiva Eldar's article, cited by the authors on this point, the ambassador made the claim in a closed door meeting, and his statements did not receive official confirmation by the U.S. Embassy. That said, a press attache for the U.S. embassy stated that "we are unaware that any U.S. official has ever expressed an opinion on what Israel should or should not do with regard to Syria." The ambassador, having attended meetings with Secretary of State Rice and Israeli officials, claims that he had never heard such a demand being made. It is not beyond reason to assume that this request could have been made at higher-level meetings. Moreover, in this same article, the ambassador is reported to have said that:

"he does not consider Syria a partner in the diplomatic process so long as it supports terrorist organizations and aids Hezbollah. He added that the Syrians have not done enough to lift doubts that they are interested in negotiations solely as a means of receiving international legitimacy.
"If the Syrians change the situation," the ambassador said, "the situation will also change."

In short, the ambassador's message could be read as "I never said not to talk to them, I'm just saying they are untrustworthy and don't deserve to be included in talks." This is hardly an indication that the Bush administration was at all enthusiastic regarding normalization of relations with Syria. Lastly, the headline of the article appears to quote the ambassador, when in fact, this quote does not appear anywhere in the piece. Akiva Eldar, "U.S. Ambassador: We won't stop Israel from talking to Syria", March 14, 2007. *Haaretz*. (<http://www.haaretz.com/news/u-s-ambassador-we-won-t-stop-israel-from-talking-to-syria-1.215576>)

Another article cited by the authors (Aluf Benn, "Israel, U.S. Sources Say Views on Israel-Syria Talks Unchanged", *Haaretz*, May 25, 2007) appears to indicate in the first paragraph that both U.S. and Israel officials were opposed to talks with Syria. The full article is behind a paywall and has not been accessed at the time of this writing.

A third article cited on this point (Ze'ev Schiff's "U.S. envoy denies pressure on Israel not to engage in talks with Syria", *Haaretz* May 21, 2007) is similarly confusing. It begins with the claim that the U.S. had reversed its previous objections to negotiating with Assad, followed by Ambassador Jones' denial that such objections were ever made, which is immediately put to doubt with the following:

During a recent visit to Israel, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice responded forcefully when the issue of Assad's call for a resumption of negotiations with Israel was raised.
"It is best that you avoid even exploring this possibility," she said.
Israel's government interpreted this as a firm American stance preventing Syria from taking advantage of talks with Israel to extricate itself from diplomatic isolation before fulfilling its obligation to control insurgents from crossing into Iraq, and before meeting the demands of the international investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri.

The article also offers instructions from the U.S. to Israel regarding which issues have not been approved for discussion by the U.S. administration (e.g., U.S. policy, Iran, and the future of Lebanon). Ze'ev Schiff, "U.S. envoy denies pressure on Israel not to engage in talks with Syria," May 21, 2007, *Haaretz* (<http://www.haaretz.com/news/u-s-envoy-denies-pressure-on-israel-not-to-engage-in-talks-with-syria-1.221112>).

the habit of taking orders from any U.S. leader when its vital interests are at stake.”¹⁴⁷

This statement is curious for at least three reasons.

First, the authors attribute to Israel a characteristic that their thesis denies to the U.S.; namely, pursuit of the national interest (“vital interests”) in spite of outside pressures. U.S. policy appears to be easily guided by a loosely assembled though powerful interest group, while Israeli policy appears resilient even in the face of pressure from the world’s sole remaining superpower. Quite a feat if it were true. The authors undermine this claim almost immediately.

Mearsheimer and Walt explain that Israeli leaders have never viewed negotiation with Syria as a top priority, though some abortive attempts to settle their disputes have occurred several times in the past (under Rabin, Barak, and Olmert). Syria does not pose a serious let alone existential threat to Israel (i.e., it does not put Israel’s “vital interests...at stake”), though proxy forces like Hezbollah and Hamas have managed to exact a toll, mostly through effective provocation.¹⁴⁸ As Mearsheimer and Walt point out, Israeli Prime Ministers since Sharon have preferred to maintain an antagonistic relationship with Syria rather than return the Golan Heights, a calculation that has wide support among the Israeli public. As Mearsheimer and Walt demonstrate, there was an affinity between the right-wing elements of the Sharon and Olmert governments, on the one hand, and the right-wing elements of the Bush administration on the other. Both viewed Syria as a rogue state and militated between opening channels of communication when advantageous and withdrawing cooperation when contemporaneous calculations

¹⁴⁷ *The Israel Lobby*, 270.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 271.

deemed such a policy to be in the national interest. Instances of Israeli intransigence regarding the opening of negotiations with Syria, the end of which would be a disengagement from parts of the occupied Golan Heights in exchange for a normalization of relations, fall short of demonstrating an intentional undermining of U.S. policy by the Israeli government, let alone effective manipulation at the hands of the Israel Lobby.

Finally, the Government of Israel *has* taken orders from past U.S. administrations, even in the face of threats to vital national security, most notably in the restraint shown against Saddam Hussein's Iraq during the Gulf War. Iraqi missiles bombarding Israeli cities were met with no retaliation by Israeli forces. Curiously enough, Mearsheimer and Walt reference Israel as a strategic liability during the Gulf War because its participation in the war would "jeopardiz[e] the fragile coalition against Iraq."¹⁴⁹ Their assertion is odd because in that conflict, the U.S. managed to restrain the IDF. In other words, the U.S. was successful in controlling the actions of its ally. Netanyahu's continued restraint in bombing Iranian nuclear sites is a more recent example (in this case, domestic politics plays a decisive role, with Israel's top military leaders vocally opposed to an attack on Iran). Israel appears to have bowed to U.S. pressure even when its perceived vital interests were at stake.

Could it be the case that Olmert acceded to U.S. pressure, avoiding negotiations with Syria that were otherwise viewed as an auxiliary rather than primary concern? It is plausible and it would be unsurprising if true. More importantly, where does the Lobby fit into this calculation? According to Mearsheimer and Walt, the Lobby successfully prevented the U.S. cooperation with Syria by preventing Israel-Syria reconciliation. Was

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 58.

Olmert bowing to pressures by the Israel Lobby or is Olmert part of the Israel Lobby?

The authors blur the distinction, writing that “Israeli policy toward Damascus...determines U.S. policy toward Syria.”¹⁵⁰ Was Olmert part of the Israel Lobby? Was he acting on behalf of the Lobby when he offered the Palestinians shared custody over the holy sites in Jerusalem, as was revealed by the Palestine Papers leak?¹⁵¹

These tenuous connections between particular policies, the interests of the Lobby, and the politics of particular Israeli and U.S. administrations recur throughout *The Israel Lobby*. The inconsistencies presented by Mearsheimer and Walt are often difficult to reconcile. Olmert plays the role of a spoiler at one moment and the role of flexible statesman the next. After describing Olmert’s snub toward Assad, the authors explain that he approved of the progress being made in covert Track-II negotiations from September 2004 to July 2006 by Israeli and Syrian interlocutors. Olmert ultimately rejected attempts at bringing the negotiations to an official level, and while the politics regarding that decision are by no means clear, the event itself should give pause to accepting Mearsheimer and Walt’s characterization. The authors also rightly point out dissension within Olmert’s own cabinet, as well as the shifting attitudes and opinions regarding Syria from otherwise bullheaded politicians like Netanyahu.

In a similar vein, Walt and Mearsheimer explain that when it came to U.S. policy regarding Israel and Syria, “[t]he Bush administration’s bottom line is difficult to discern, due to the continuing tug-of-war among policy makers over how best to deal with

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 271.

¹⁵¹ Bernard Avishai, “A Plan for Peace That Still Could Be,” *The New York Times*, February 7, 2011. Available at: (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/13/magazine/13Israel-t.html?pagewanted=all>) February 2015.

Damascus and a recognition of competing interests.”¹⁵² This being the case, one has to wonder why the authors put forward their argument in the first place. What, after all, was the U.S. national interest given the “continuing tug-of-war among policy makers”? Each of these cases has its own complex history and political logic, and deserves a more serious analysis than what I present here. My present task is merely to show that many of the claims that Walt and Mearsheimer present as straightforward and uncontroversial are anything but.

Mearsheimer and Walt bring their point home on the topic of Syria by focusing on the War on Terror. Put simply, “if there were no lobby, there would have been no Syria Accountability Act, and U.S. policy toward Damascus would have been more in line with the U.S. national interest.”¹⁵³ In the fight against the al-Qaeda network, the Bush administration valued Syrian intelligence cooperation and hoped to secure a policy of non-interference in Iraq by the Syrian regime. Against these efforts stood a piece of congressional legislation entitled The Syria Accountability Act – first introduced in the Spring of 2002 before the U.S. invasion of Iraq – which called on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon, end its support for terrorism, and give up its WMD or face sanctions. It was initially rejected by the Bush administration who at the time were still trying to market their plans for an invasion of Iraq. After the fall of Saddam’s regime in 2003, Bush resisted calls for regime change in Syria and passage of the Syria Accountability Act despite vociferous advocacy by the more hawkish insiders and administration officials (e.g., John Bolton, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Elliot Abrams).

¹⁵² *The Israel Lobby*, 278.

¹⁵³ *The Israel Lobby*, 279.

After several failed attempts, the Syria Accountability Act was passed by Congress and signed to law by Bush in December of 2003, over a year and a half after it was first drafted. Interestingly, Walt and Mearsheimer admit that Bush dragged his feet and never did really implemented the law.¹⁵⁴ Instead, administration officials kept pressure on Syria using little more than harsh rhetoric; hardly a victory for those seeking regime change, or as Mearsheimer and Walt call them, “The Israel Lobby.” The current situation in Syria and the Obama administration’s policy goals regarding Assad – whether the Assad regime will be toppled at the behest of the U.S. – is deeply contested and too complex an issue to enter into here. In either case, Mearsheimer and Walt’s analysis regarding Syria, Israel, and the U.S. is hardly convincing.

The Petrodollar-Weapondollar Connection¹⁵⁵

In the next chapter, I address the military, security, and hi-tech networks as they relate to the politics of recognition. Here, I will briefly outline the importance of the military and hi-tech industries in order to establish how and why they are too easily dismissed as explanatory variables in Mearsheimer and Walt’s analysis. These industries are not only a source of economic prosperity for the two states, but also point to the ideological affinities between the Israel Lobby thesis, American exceptionalism, and Jewish nationalism. With regards to the interests of the security and defense industries, some

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 277.

¹⁵⁵ The term Petro-dollar/Weapon-dollar is borrow from Bichler and Nitzan. See: Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan, *The Global Political Economy of Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

basic facts are worth repeating. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the U.S. annual military budget surpasses that of the next 10 largest military combined (\$682 billion).¹⁵⁶ Israel is the largest recipient of U.S. military aid and a close collaborator on new defense-related technologies (e.g., Iron Dome, David's Sling, the F-35 fighter jet).

Michael Eisenstadt and David Pollack demonstrate rather convincingly that military and hi-tech industries have much to gain from a close relationship with the State of Israel. Indeed, the conflict has proven to be one of the most secure investments, with R&D programs working at a fast pace and with demand skyrocketing at every new outburst of violence. Foreign aid and military industry cooperation with Israel is best viewed as an *investment*, not as support for a fledgling client, as it is often characterized in both the media and in scholarship. Intelligence cooperation with Israel bears a similar characteristic of preferential treatment of a kind not extended to any other U.S. ally, not because U.S. networks of power fear for Israel's existential situation, but rather because the payoffs happen to be more relevant and secure.

Networks of power emanating from the U.S. do not subsidize the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, as Mearsheimer and Walt claim; they *invest* in it. Drone technology, surveillance (hardware, software, and training), and all manner of national security related technologies undergo real world field testing in Israel, oftentimes foreshadowing the use of these technologies by the U.S. military and the domestic security establishment. Moreover, support for Israel along these lines is consistent with

¹⁵⁶ Mark Koba, "U.S. Military Spending Dwarfs Rest of World," *NBC News*, February 24, 2014. Available at: (<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/military-spending-cuts/u-s-military-spending-dwarfs-rest-world-n37461>)

Mearsheimer and Walt's preferred U.S. strategy in the Middle East – offshore balancing and client-state relation management. Walt and Mearsheimer make the odd claim that “we should not forget, [Israel] still managed to defeat its various adversaries, and with little assistance from the United States,”¹⁵⁷ a claim that might have held true before 1967, but not since, with the U.S. becoming the primary weapon's supplier for Israel and replacing France as the primary supplier of jetfighters. The now-routine bombardment of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli military is consistently met with three responses from the U.S. – affirmation of Israel's right to security and an obligatory if restrained condemnation of the use of excessive force followed by resupply to the Israeli military.

One last point to consider. The other major recipients of U.S. military aid in the region – Saudi Arabia and Egypt – were driven to enhance their military capabilities in the face of Israeli military dominance. Echoes of the Nixon administration's Twin Pillar Policy with regards to Iran and Saudi Arabia can be seen in U.S. military aid to both Egypt and Israel following the 1973 War. The “special relationship” not only guarantees an ally with military superiority in the Middle East (a strategic asset) but also offers a stable market for hi-cost military-industrial projects.

Democratic Realism and Neo-Conservatism

After this excursus, you the reader might be wondering what, exactly, is the U.S. national interest? If national interest is not one given thing, then we need to return to the claim made at the outset of this chapter; namely, that the national interest is little more than an

¹⁵⁷ *The Israel Lobby*, 343.

ideological stand-in for a given political project by an interest(ed) group who cannot properly be described as the “national.” Focusing on political preferences, we can conceive of many private groups – what were once called factions – vying for power in order to craft policy.

Walt and Mearsheimer appear to have fallen into a trap of sorts: ensnared as they are in the self-proclaimed position of *realists*, they end up missing the (idealist) woods for the (realist) trees. Try as they might, the authors are unable to construct a version of the national interest that is anything but contingent and value-laden. They are unable to present the national interest as an objective measure without sneaking in a certain set of values and an identity. These values are rarely explicit with most invocations of the national interest passing over an otherwise glaring void at the center of the thesis. The center – the national interest – is as fortified as it is hollow. By covering over the *point de capiton*, the authors leave the hollow center of their thesis just out of sight, just far enough to produce an authoritative aura to a thesis that stands on the edge of a void.

By claiming that the U.S. national interest is being damaged, the authors seem to already have in mind the interests of certain groups held together by a shared identity. At its most general level, the authors assign a national identity to a broad collection of individuals and interests; they write of Israel, the U.S., and to a lesser extent the Palestinians as fully formed entelechies. These very categories, however, are deeply contested sites of political deliberation regarding what values they wish to represent and the ends to which they should aspire. Mearsheimer and Walt do not escape the impulse to offer their own preferred ends.

There are those who maintain that Israel should never have been created, or who want to see Israel transformed from a Jewish state into a binational democracy. We do not.¹⁵⁸

What Walt and Mearsheimer mean when they describe Israel as a Jewish state is not clear. What is clear is that Jewish is privileged over binational democracy, which would otherwise be a troubling position for anyone who advocates democratic pluralism, even more so for a realist concerned with state power above all else. Does something about the State of Israel logically entail that its national interest be identified with the appellation “Jewish”? This of course depends on the range that one allows for the national interest.

One could imagine that the State of Israel would greatly increase its strength if it properly utilized the powers of all of its citizens, developing loyalty based on civic virtue and a common national (Israeli) identity. For some reason, conceiving of Israel as a state of its citizens appears anathema, but the logic is not worked out in any detail, especially not in *The Israel Lobby*. The point is to make these assumptions clear, to draw attention to them so that we can then begin the work of theorizing the relevant politics from a more distanced, though never entirely objective, point of view.

How is the national interest used as an ideological stand-in within popular political analysis of which Mearsheimer and Walt are prominent participants? A telling example can be found in the publication cited several times by the authors, the fortuitously titled journal, *The National Interest*. The journal is published by The Center

¹⁵⁸ *The Israel Lobby*, 12.

The authors appear to have deviated from this position in recent years though my criticisms still apply. I am currently working on a postscript to this chapter which does not appear in this version. The postscript outlines the apparent change toward acknowledging the one-state reality and the view expressed in writing by Mearsheimer that Israel/Palestine will undergo a process of integration and apartheid, only then to be followed by a binational state.

for the National Interest and was founded by Irving Kristol, noted Trotskyite-turned-neo-conservative, in 1985. While it is true that Walt and Mearsheimer include neo-conservatives in their operationalization of the “Israel Lobby”, most notably Charles Krauthammer, Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Perle, they seem to have overlooked the ideological shell game between *The National Interest*, its affiliated institution The Center for the National Interest (started by Richard Milhous Nixon and currently listing Henry Kissinger as Honorary Chairman), and the term “national interest.”¹⁵⁹

Here you have a journal and a center, emerging at the tail-end of the Cold War and potentiating the popularity of neo-conservative hawks like Charles Krauthammer and Daniel Pipes, which attempts to define the U.S. national interest on any given issue. Emerging from the Reagan years, ideals like democracy promotion and neo-liberal reform were ubiquitous, as were concepts of balance of power and hard-lined policies toward the Soviet Union and its allies. These echoed earlier efforts by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an anti-Communist intellectual conglomeration funded by the CIA in the 1950s.

Irving Kristol, then publisher for the literary magazine *Encounter*, was one of the more prominent recipients of covert CIA funding during this era.¹⁶⁰ Towing an anti-Communist line, these publications were largely mute in criticizing U.S. foreign policy,

¹⁵⁹ It’s also worthy to note that the Chairman of the Center for National Interest, General Charles G. Boyd, was the President and CEO of Business Executives for National Security (BENS) and also serves on the board of In-Q-Tel, the C.I.A.’s venture capital firm. Incidentally, the chairman for In-Q-Tel is current Arizona State University President Michael Crow, further highlighting the location of politics at the intersection of national security, national education (the academy), neo-liberalism and technological innovation.

¹⁶⁰ Joel Whitney, “Exclusive: The Paris Review, the Cold War and the CIA,” *Salon* May 27, 2012. Available at: (http://www.salon.com/2012/05/27/exclusive_the_paris_review_the_cold_war_and_the_cia/)

though American society was openly criticized.¹⁶¹ Kristol's *The National Interest* is also notable for having published Francis Fukuyama's essay, "The End of History?" which empowered both neo-liberal and neo-conservative fundamentals rooted in American exceptionalism. Fukuyama later walked back some of the conclusions he reached in that essay (history being unforgiving), and as the War in Iraq showed signs of a massive strategic blunder, largely rejected the neo-conservative logic that he helped to perpetuate.

And that is exactly when the politics of *The National Interest* started to get interesting. As the short-sightedness of the Iraq War became glaringly apparent, Fukuyama challenged the interventionist approach of his colleague and fellow neo-conservative at the journal, Charles Krauthammer.¹⁶² Alleging that Krauthammer and fellow high-level Bush administration officials were betraying neo-conservative values of democracy promotion for a more hawkish and amoral foreign policy, Fukuyama ignited an internal debate.

The debate consequently resulted in the resignation of 10 of the 16 board members of the journal. Krauthammer, for his part, pondered in an editorial whether Fukuyama's criticism revealed an anti-Semitic core in his thought and derided Fukuyama's suggestion of applying "soft power" in response to the September 11 attacks.¹⁶³ Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington were among the dissidents who split, with

¹⁶¹ Democratic movements at the time implied socialist tendencies that had to be reduced if the neo-liberal world order was to succeed. The *Crisis of Democracy* document co-authored by Samuel Huntington and published by the Trilateral Commission (Zbigniew Brzezinski being a prominent affiliate) gives a clear picture of the emerging neo-liberal ideology that promoted "Western" management of the global economy alongside justification for all manner of foreign intervention.

¹⁶² Francis Fukuyama, "The Neo-Conservative Moment," *The National Interest* (Summer 2004). Available at: (<http://nationalinterest.org/article/the-neoconservative-moment-811>).

¹⁶³ Charles Krauthammer, "Fukuyama's Fantasy," *Washington Post* March 28, 2006. Available at: (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/27/AR2006032701298.html>); Charles

the former starting a rival publication, *The American Interest*.¹⁶⁴ It turns out that the more influential segments of editorial board at *The National Interest* could not come to an agreement on what neo-conservatism entailed, and more importantly, which “national interest” would be the focus of the publication. The irony should be clear.

What is significant about this and similar publications is their location at the nexus of the academy and the government, between science and politics, in the very place that our *point de capiton*, the national interest, is subject to attempts at establishing form and content. It is also worth noting that the debate surrounding *The National Interest* was never one that doubted the project of American hegemony. While the means and even the purpose of American global hegemony may differ, the appropriateness of the project is unquestionable. Similarly, Mearsheimer and Walt never pose the question as to the right of U.S. global hegemony.

In their conclusion, the authors advocate a U.S. policy of offshore balancing, a strategy which guarantees a permanent and expanding role for the U.S. military and its related industries in the region and beyond. If national interest is meant to signal something beyond mere tactics at any given point in time, if national interest is to be some discrete discernable thing that can guide policy, as Mearsheimer and Walt imply, then we are still left with few clues as to what it might be. With such a high degree of uncertainty, the call to minimize the strength of the so-called Israel Lobby in order to

Krauthammer, “Krauthammer on Fukuyama,” *New York Times: Letters* April 16, 2006. Available at: (<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/16/books/review/16mail.html>).

¹⁶⁴ David Glenn, “Quarrels Cause Resignations at ‘The National Interest’ and Give Rise to Plans for a Rival Journal,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 15, 2005. Available at: (<http://chronicle.com/article/Quarrels-Cause-Resignations-at/35990>); David D. Kirkpatrick, “Ideas & Trends; Battle Splits Conservative Magazine,” *New York Times*, March 13, 2005. Available at: (<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A03E4D7143CF930A25750C0A9639C8B63>).

restore the U.S. national interest cannot be taken seriously. At times, the Lobby pursues objectives that would align with Mearsheimer and Walt's conception of the national interest, and at other times, the opposite is true.

American Exceptionalism and Jewish Nationalism

Earlier in this chapter I had indicated that national interest, lacking consistent form or content, nonetheless functions as a rhetorical device that lends productive capacities to otherwise sterile claims. The purpose I had set forth was to describe how national interest functions at the hands of different actors and what that might teach us about underlying ideological assumptions that are implicitly at play in their analyses. Applying this aim to Walt and Mearsheimer's Israel Lobby thesis, a clear picture begins to emerge.

The concept of national interest functions as a bulwark for a vision of American exceptionalism, the purpose of which is to legitimate regional and global management at the hands of "a loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively works to move U.S. foreign policy," though maybe not those identified by the authors. In *The Israel Lobby*, Walt and Mearsheimer only take their analysis half-way, focusing on one particularly exciting network at the expense of other equally interesting, complex and arguably more powerful and effective networks. There is no monolithic, unified coalition of political actors steering policy, but rather a loose coalition based on some fundamental presuppositions buried in seemingly innocuous discursive networks. The economic and military superiority ascribed to the United States, and the actions that are prescribed in

the name of securing the national interest – securing it as if by right – emerges from networks of interested individuals and organizations within the United States whose power is derived from a discourse that implies, and on occasion explicitly declares, the right to intervene in the affairs of other national, regional, or global networks.

To reiterate, the process of defending some privileged conception of the national interest is natural, and while many philosophical, ethical, and normative implications emerge from my critique – ones which I cannot fully develop here – it is important to clarify that the tendency to convoke a national interest is not inherently malicious. Instead, the critical point is to draw our attention to the way discursive privileges operate so that we can avoid the most arrogant tendencies of social science and embrace the radical freedom offered by the scientific method, a method that urges us to investigate our deeply held assumptions. The assumption that there is a national interest that is pursued by policymakers does not withstand the most basic load-bearing test, and so, any enunciation of the national interest needs to be clear as to the bounds of the nation, the type of interest, and inevitably, the political contestation over these very questions.

Much of Mearsheimer and Walt’s evidence points toward the complex entanglements that the U.S. found itself in due to efforts by the Lobby or the Government of Israel. The Lebanon War in 2006, for example, weakened the Siniora government in Beirut – a regime which the Bush administration had up until then successfully empowered – and “solidified the informal alliance” between Syria, Iran, and Hezbollah. This, in turn, “complicat[ed] U.S. efforts to forge a regional consensus on Iraq and

Iran.”¹⁶⁵ The reader must assume that these efforts are otherwise reasonable, rational, practical and have a high likelihood of success. What policy could be more propitious than one aimed at forging a regional alliance in the Middle East, or anywhere else for that matter?

When the U.S. lost the war in Vietnam, blame was cast at the media, at the surrounding countries sucked into the vortex and “complicating U.S. efforts,” at the Russians and the Chinese, and at the American public that failed to show resolve. If not for these subversive elements, the U.S. would have won the war. Following the dictates of American exceptionalism, credit is taken when a policy is deemed successful; exculpation and estrangement is performed when a policy is deemed a failure. Any U.S. policy failure must be attributed to some aberration, sometimes under the label of an administration, and sometimes under more particular and complex networks. This works to shield the state, as a concept and as a network, from any criticism. It works to strengthen the notion, never well founded in all of history, that the state is the culmination of a community of interests. It is Rousseau (though he was too idealistic), it is Machiavelli (though he was too honest), it is Hobbes (though he was too bullish).

The same unity that Mearsheimer and Walt convoke when describing the U.S. national interest (unity in the State though not in civil society) is the unity – in an inverted form – that the authors deny to Israel-Palestine (unity in civil society though not in the State). Put another way, Mearsheimer and Walt’s dismissal of a bi-national state – one that would more accurately reflect the body politic in the State of Israel and de facto exists at this moment – denies not only a possible unity of the two polities (Israel and the

¹⁶⁵ *The Israel Lobby*, 307.

Occupied Territories) under a pluralist democratic state, but also threatens to constrain Palestinian-Arab-Israelis in the public sphere and government within the Green Line.

It is little wonder that as the Government of Israel continues its separation policy, the treatment of Palestinians becomes more brutal, and society itself becomes coarser. Domestically, there are signs of a growing integration of Palestinian-Arab-Israelis and efforts by the Government to reduce anti-Arab racism in Israel (e.g., Or Commission, current President Reuven Rivlin's anti-racism campaign). Israeli society still has considerable work to do regarding the tortured history with the Palestinians and the groundswell of racial prejudice that continues to exercise considerable force in the conflict, both within and outside of the Green Line. It should go without saying that Palestinian society too will need to overcome bitter resentments that eliminate the most productive paths toward reconciliation.

In short, at the level of society, strategies toward recognition should be explored and developed rather than closed off. Not the recognition of state-making and legal coercions, but a recognition at the level of social encounter, beginning with the so-called elite institutions, primary among them the academy. In the context of a discourse of national security and terrorism, these considerations are effectively banned. The likelihood that these strategies are pursued is no higher than any other presently predicted paths and there is reasonable pessimism regarding their plausibility. That said, this idea should not be mistaken for utopianism or naïve optimism. The case of post-apartheid South Africa, if it is to be invoked at all, should be invoked in the name of truth and reconciliation (a process of recognition), however partial and on-going that process may be.

Israel is a polity with an identity problem. The problem is not an inability to balance the various identities, but rather, an inability to slough off their most divisive inscriptions in law and in the public mind. Recent efforts by the Netanyahu administration to inscribe a hegemonic identity to the state in the domestic realm (i.e., the Jewish nationalism bill whose proposal dismantled the current government) and in the international realm (i.e., the demand for Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish State whose proposal dismantled the most recent peace efforts) appear in-line with Mearsheimer and Walt's thinking on the conflict. But the success of such an approach is by no means guaranteed and its ethical implications should give us pause.

Recall that in South Africa, apartheid did not end with two new culturally homogenous states; it ended with a single state that continues to work toward eliminating old barriers rooted in identity. It is similarly telling how soon we forget the American Civil War. In that conflict, the U.S. reconstituted itself along new, more inclusive lines, largely by (partially) eliminating the inscription of divisive identity in law. We have yet to remove these inscriptions from our minds and from our various institutions (witness the "Ferguson" unrest). Whether the Israel-Palestine conflict – rooted in religious, ethnic, and historical cleavages – is able to overcome barriers to (re)cognition is an open question and its success depends in part on gathering allies at the level of policymaking elites and civil society.

Taxonomies of identity developed for the purpose of control and management are inherently unstable in the long term. Changes in political, social, economic, and personal relations within and among states are the most stunning and consistent features of modern political history. The changes are always met with legal-statist counterforces – sometimes

in the form of barriers, bullets and bombs – but their prevalence is difficult to ignore. In many cases, changes to social structures are preceded by shifting attitudes regarding the logic of hierarchical structures based on identity (and often, shifting attitudes regarding the necessity of identities as well). It is a wonder, then, why efforts at establishing difference for the sake of management and control continue to pervade our political landscape. The statist perspective, based as it is on establishing difference, is never quite able to defend the criteria on which to determine difference and identity. The “commonsense” rejection of the bi-national approach by Mearsheimer and Walt is a clear example of an uncritical reproduction of difference and all its attendant violence.

The greatest risk to a society is the potential for identities to calcify such that a new forms of (re)cognition – the process by which subjects negotiate shared understanding – require more force, and often times, violence. Without addressing the uncritical reproduction of identity, the conflict between the warring factions will likely continue, either within the same borders (Israel proper), in neighboring states (Israel and Palestine), or in a greater Israel. We are back to first philosophy and the responsibility to open broader avenues of (re)cognition for the purpose of eliminating what Levinas termed “ontological violence.”

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PART THREE: THE MILITARY-SECURITY NETWORK

Chapter Five: War Machine, National Identity, and Recognition

Without agreement on the formal structure or substantive content of the national interest, any attempts at securing recognition between supposed national groups will result in not a little failure, whether at the margins or through the marginalization of particular interests. In the context of Israel, the manifold identities and their geographic overlap further point to the significant problems in the Jewish State recognition discourse. By what force might the relevant political identities in the conflict (i.e., Jewish, Palestinian) and the subsequent hierarchy of rights in the state be determined?

Gilles Deleuze and Guattari's essay "Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine" provides a useful vantage point from which to view the relationship between the concepts of identity, violence, and the state. The piece broke with the classic articulations of the state as either (1) a unitary actor identified by its monopoly on violence or (2) an institution that binds and represents a sovereign communal identity and works to form a "milieu of interiority."¹⁶⁶ Rather than take the notions of "interiority" and sovereignty as self-evident characteristic of the state, Deleuze and Guattari trouble the very notion of interior/exterior with the introduction of the peripatetic force of the "war machine." By introducing the concept of the war machine as a go-between or "in-between," Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate the way in which the two poles of the state –

¹⁶⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Nomadology and the War Machine," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 352.

sovereign power and identity – are entangled in a perpetual relationship with a circuit of violence. Their insights allow me to address how this circuit of violence – the war machine – troubles those attempts to define or have Israel recognized as a Jewish State. By decentering the force that helps determine the relevant political identities in the conflict (i.e., Jewish, Palestinian) and the subsequent hierarchy of rights, we can begin to understand the misapprehension that allows the recognition discourse to appear rational, plausible, and central to resolving the conflict.

At stake is the mythic conception of a sovereign national identity that would have to hold in order for the discussion on recognition to maintain conceptual, political, and ethical rigor.¹⁶⁷ As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, academic productions on the national interest provide little in the way of securing a non-contradictory and stable conception of the national identity and interest.

As Deleuze and Guattari describe it, the State is a type of force or logic that has as its project the establishment and consecration of sovereignty. Sovereignty here should be read as broadly construed, including everything from the inscription and division in territory, the definition and consecration of identity, the creation and annunciation of sovereign language, the direction and practices of the Sciences, and the reception and translation of the sovereign word of God. However, as the world is not given to us ready-made, fully prepared and properly divided, the State is burdened with a project that it

¹⁶⁷ Others have already demonstrated this insight as it relates to recognition, redistribution, identity and liberty. See: Patchen Markell, *Bounded By Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition?: A Political-philosophical Exchange* (New York: Verso, 2003); Tamar Malloy, “Reconceiving Recognition: Toward a Cumulative Politics of Recognition,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* (2013), 1-22.

might not be able to carry out to final completion. In order to create a sovereign space, not a little ground clearing has to take place. As such, the State's work toward striating space relies on forces that create new, smooth, open space for the state to re-territorialize. These forces are an opposing tendency to that of the State but are at the same time necessary for the State project. Without these forces (i.e., the War Machine), nation-building and state-making would be rendered mute and ineffective.

Resembling Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida's investigations into the "Force of Law," Deleuze and Guattari argue that "the war machine in itself...seems to be irreducible to the State apparatus, to be outside its sovereignty and prior to its law."¹⁶⁸ And yet, the war machine proves to be both a project and retainer of the state – a project insofar as it has the quality of "in-the-making-ness" and projects outward; a retainer insofar as it helps to bind, enclose, capture, package and keep in reserve services rendered to the state. The war machine is necessary for the state to form its sovereign claims.

The war machine should not be confused with the military. Understanding the war machine as tethered to but differentiated from both state and military is useful because it allows us to more carefully observe how these networks function. More exactly, it allows us to observe the practices of legitimation that are taken at every step along the production line of the modern State. Both state and military are institutions whose ostensible purpose is securing the national interest; their very legitimacy as institutions hangs on this project. Typically, the military is thought to take orders from the state for the purpose of securing the national interest defined by the state. As we saw in the last

¹⁶⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, 352.

chapter, political scientists can say plenty on what the national interest might mean but nothing they say appears decisive, especially once we realize the minute practices and detailed chains of relation that go into producing the national interest. Any declarative, constative statement either from State or the Academy following the form “the national interest is X” quickly leads to any number of squabbles with competing conceptions offered by other agents. And yet, the term *is* functional.

The national interest helps to secure the preferences of some networks or affinity groups over that of others. It establishes hierarchies of interests and rights and attempts to consecrate these structures through a performance that would lend legitimacy to these conceptions. The war machine – whether appropriated by the military or the state – does not have the protection of the national interest or of the people (civil society) as its motivating principle. Its tendency is toward de-territorialization and itineracy; its structure – insofar as speaking of structure is meaningful in this context – is rhizomatic.¹⁶⁹ And yet, the practices of the war machine rally or else leave in their wake effects which condition or construct discourses of the “national interest” and identity from which a privileged metanarrative emerges.

The “national interest” that emerges does so through the play of power over discourses which works to accentuate certain features, ideas, or connection while marginalizing or neglecting others. The play of power can be traced, in part, through concentrated centers of political power and discursive nodes, understanding all the while

¹⁶⁹ This ties into the capacity for the war machine to dividualize its objects of concern, lending to them the necessary characteristics for manipulation without any of the attendant identities that would allow them to entrench a logic of striated space, a point I will return to shortly.

that these traces are inherently as unstable as the centers and nodes themselves.¹⁷⁰

Tracing the operations of power through these networks can nonetheless bring into relief underlying ideological and political positionings that condition the structure and the subsequent ethical justifications that follow from it. We have already addressed two of these networks – the State Department/diplomatic network and the academic/intellectual network. Now, we turn to the military/security network. We will begin to realize that the military network itself is no longer, and in many ways never was, strictly a property – and here I mean both property-as-ownership and property-as-characteristic – of the State.

The State of the War Machine

The State of Israel, like many national movements who have achieved broad recognition of their de jure and de facto statehood, owes its existence in large part to pre-state armed bands who coordinated strategies and enacted tactics of violence against their intended targets. These armed bands did not yet have the legitimacy of the state form; they could hardly be said to have established a metaphorical social contract let alone a codified set of institutional rules in the form of basic/common laws or a constitution. Refusing to legitimate contemporary social and political institutions, they actively worked to subvert the status quo and establish a new institutionalized order. The Haganah, Palmach, the Irgun, and Lehi were all nomad war machines, denying the legitimacy and status of the

¹⁷⁰ See: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Second Edition (London: Verso, 1985, 2001), 111-3; Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Yannis Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

existing political topography, recognizing neither the British Mandate power nor the traditional clans and elite Arab networks within which they operated. They operated covertly, outside of the law, and without regard to the previously consecrated territorial claims and their attendant powers. The Yishuv, alongside the traditional Arab political networks, were establishing their own spaces between those spaces constructed by the British. As Benny Morris described it:

As they developed, Jews and Arabs bred their own social, economic, and political structures, with British officialdom becoming increasingly irrelevant to the internal dynamics of each community – a process that helped lead eventually to the withdrawal of the British and the partition of the country between Jews and Arabs.¹⁷¹

These forces had two primary tasks to complete before they could claim to hold legitimated sovereignty in its state form.

The first task facing the nomad bands was demonstrating their power to sanction human actions in their territorial holdings. The Arab riots of 1929 revealed the inability of British forces to adequately protect Jews in the Yishuv and precipitated a restructuring of the Jewish defense organizations; first the Haganah and later Irgun.¹⁷² These forces remained largely decentralized and refused to be integrated into the British Mandate forces in the style of earlier “Jewish battalions” within the British Army during the First World War. Whether operating as local defense units or later as terrorist organizations that cut through enemy lines, these groups were vying for the privilege to establish their preferred social, political, and territorial space. As Weber would describe it, they had to

¹⁷¹ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage, 2001), 107.

¹⁷² Morris, 118-120.

hold a monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force within their given territory. Whether against the local Arab population (at times with tacit British approval), or later, against British interests themselves, these Jewish paramilitaries sought to regulate peoples within a territory.¹⁷³

The second primary task of these paramilitary forces was to create some unifying identity that would legitimate the control – by force or by law, though the distinction is never quite clear – over the land by *these* people over attempts to control the land by some *other* people. In short, they would have to establish a nation. Almost without exception, national belongings must point to some origin in order to legitimate sovereign right. Whether we look to Plato’s myth of the metals, Rousseau’s Civic religion, or Hobbes’ Leviathan, some real and unifying identity is sought in order to bind members of a community to one another and to differentiate them from those on the other side. Even though these notions of a nation of peoples are often described in terms of calculated necessity – necessary for the proper functioning of a coordinated community of individuals – rather than as observable and self-evident fact, they nonetheless take on a real dimension insofar as members of a community adopt them into their beliefs and practices. As Nadav Shelef explains, nationalism is “sticky,” and “while scholars should recognize the constructed character of any particular nationalism, they should still treat

¹⁷³ Within Weber’s definition of sovereignty, physical force (i.e., violence) and territory, though not entirely unproblematic, are fairly well understood and there is some consensus over their general form and content. Attempts to reach consensus on the form and content of the concept *legitimate*, however, have proven difficult. The conception of *legitimate* is imbricated by ethical, sociological, political, and historical factors whose full accounting is only possible with great difficulty, if at all. In either case, a careful genealogical undertaking would be required, tracing the logics encoded in both official and common language that works to create some stable and sovereign understanding of the boundaries and interior of legitimacy. I will return to the question of legitimacy shortly.

nationalism ‘as if’ it was primordial.”¹⁷⁴ Whether through archeology, anthropology, genealogy, history, or theology, and often through combination of one or more of these epistemological communities, some root or grounding is sought.

At stake is the *legitimacy* that would allow the State to justify its being to others. Recall that the discourse on recognition in its liberal register depends upon some stable identity. As I argue in the introductory chapter of the dissertation, this stable identity is not ontologically grounded but can nonetheless carve out and defend a space through performative acts. While we can point to national or ethnic groups through their superficial markings either as phenotypical characteristics or as cultural productions that include styles of architecture, dress, language, and so on, we cannot demonstrate their onto-theological beingness or universal grounding. It is for this reason that national symbols, identities, and performances undergo noticeable changes over time. In the case of Israel, we could once again point to Shelef’s observation that three strands of the Jewish national movement – the Labor Zionist, the Religious Zionist, and the Revisionist Zionist – all underwent important changes in their territorial claims regarding what constituted the Land or State of Israel as well as their views on Jewishness and its ability to legitimate a particular kind of state.

While Weber provides us with *Ideal Types* of legitimacy, it is clear that these are intended for their functional possibilities in furthering theory and not as representations of some true state of reality or state of affairs. After all, the history of politics is marked by some very basic similarities (large scale violent conflict, disparities and hierarchies of

¹⁷⁴ Nadav Shelef, *Evolving Nationalism: Homeland, Identity, and Religion in Israel, 1925-2005* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 7.

rights, and so on) but more instructively by major and persistent shifts in political logic. New iterations and concepts emerge and previously unthought paradigms develop before shifting or melting away. In short, the inclusion of *legitimate* in Weber's definition of sovereignty introduces a complicated ideational element into a definition that is most often championed for its simplicity: the sovereign is that which can kill and *get away with it*.

"Facts on the Ground"

The first primary task of an armed band looking to establish legitimacy in its state form is to do it through practice, or to borrow the phrase used in Israeli diplomacy, to create "facts on the ground." The war machine – whether in its institutional manifestation as military or state, or in its discursive operation – is the force that breaks down existing structures. The Jewish paramilitaries had to break existing sovereign structures (e.g., the British Mandate, Palestinian Arab networks, traditional European-Jewish culture) in order to build anew. They proved their ability to create certain facts on the ground by monopolizing violence in a given territory and they worked toward creating an identity that might unify and ground a privileged national community.

The identity, however, could never become whole unto itself. The presence of the Palestinian other could not be reconciled with the Jewish attempts at reterritorialization. While these pre-State bands and their successor IDF could attempt to forcibly remove the internal others, or at times eradicate them, they could never complete the task without undermining their own legitimacy. They could never quite get away with it. Whether in a

transfer policy or in the re-naming of towns, villages, or archeological sites, the actions that seek to create homogenous and pure demarcated space are always faced with counterforces. In addition to the obvious “Palestinian Question”¹⁷⁵ there remained disagreements over who is properly Jewish and the rights, duties and behaviors that are entailed in holding that identity. The Irgun, Haganah, and Lehi and the different Zionist Socialist and Revisionist Zionist factions had substantial disagreements over the character of the people and the state. Could the war machine ever be brought under full submission to the state and fulfil the task of creating smooth space which could then be filled anew with a sovereign identity?

Looking at present conditions provides ample justification for skepticism. The stage still has not been cleared of extras and the actors cannot seem to agree on which performance they should enact. Before giving up hope on the war machine’s capabilities, we should turn our attention to its idealization, raising the question of whether there is or is not hope for a successful production of the Jewish nation-state. In order to make this task manageable, I will first focus on the movement of the war machine through the military institution in the first two decades following Israel’s declaration of statehood. After this prelude, I will provide a brief intermezzo of sorts – this time focusing on the shifting political economy of the State of Israel – before returning to the contemporary movement of the war machine through the military/security networks.

¹⁷⁵ This is a purposeful oblique reference to “The Jewish Question” essay by Karl Marx.

The Jewish State, the War Machine, and the Civitas

As mentioned above, the paramilitary forces in the pre-State period took to breaking down the existing political structures within the British Mandate of Palestine. Before 1947, these forces could not properly ground their legitimacy in a state institution, even if they did have influence and connections with the state-like political bodies of the Zionist movement (i.e., the Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, the Haganah, Keren Yesod, and the Histadrut).¹⁷⁶ Similarly, when it came to military practice, their actions were not primarily aimed at protecting and maintaining borders, hunkering down or holding the line – actions commonly associated with a state defense force (i.e., military). Instead, their practices were ones of expansion, covert maneuvering, cutting paths and opening space, operating on an offensive strategy. Their behavior was that of a war machine, concerned not with the “perpetuation or conservation of organs of power”¹⁷⁷ but rather with “becoming” by using “speed and secrecy,” “flows and currents that only secondarily allow themselves to be appropriated by the State.”¹⁷⁸

These early roots of a nomad-like war machine would later be weaved into the IDF but were easily discernable in the pre-state bands organized as Hashomer, Palmach, Lehi, and Irgun. These were distinct organizations (though some close affiliations existed between them) with their own unique ideologies and visions for the future of the Jewish

¹⁷⁶ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 59, 109-110; Shimshon Bichler and Jonathan Nitzan, *The Global Political Economy of Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 92-93.

¹⁷⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, 357.

¹⁷⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, 360.

people and for their State-in-the-making. With each new land grab, new possibilities of the nation emerged along with new paths of legitimation. At times, the various pre-State and early state forces competed with one another, collaborating with the British Mandate against their fellow Zionists. As Morris explains, during the Second World War:

The Haganah declared an “open season” (referred to in Zionist historiography as the “*Saison*,” meaning hunting season) against IZL, and Haganah intelligence and Palmah [sic] teams tracked down IZL members, confiscated their weapons, interrogated and beat them, and occasionally handed them over to the British police.¹⁷⁹

At the same time, these groups found ways of achieving and creating legitimation for new conceptions of the Jewish nation that would soon have its very own State.¹⁸⁰ We cannot speak of a proper national interest that determined those practices meant to secure it at this time. Instead, the content of the national interest was constructed through the very process of securitizing strategies and practices.

As we move into the early state period, the relationship between the military and the State takes on a different character than that of the armed bands of the pre-State period. With defense and border maintenance now appearing as a central task, the need for a single centralized military institution capable of monopolizing violence and displaying command and control capabilities became apparent. The process of integrating the military bands into a single force was undertaken with not a little political rancor. One

¹⁷⁹ Morris, 175.

¹⁸⁰ As Shelef argues, these changes are more evolutionary in character rather than elite driven or due to external shocks. This is significant because it undermines the perceived stability and taken-for-granted *being* of the nation that precedes violence. Instead, the concept of nation flows through paths of least resistance. External shocks help to create new spaces and possibilities, and elites exercise some control, but the actual processes of change require tracing the networks of relations and viewing the concept of nation as one of boundary-breaking rather than stability, as war machine rather than as state.

event even became the stuff of legends in Israeli history – the decision by Ben-Gurion to attack the *Altalena*. The ship, belonging to the Irgun (IZL) paramilitary forces, carried a stockpile of weapons intended for distribution to its fighters and refused to surrender their cargo to the *Haganah*. On Ben-Gurion's orders, the newly minted IDF fired artillery shells at the vessel, sinking it just off the coast of southern Tel Aviv. The rebellion had been subdued, and the IDF became an integrated state military.¹⁸¹ Today, you can find a plaque commemorating (or else mourning) the event on the *tayelet* (boardwalk) in Tel Aviv, not far from the IZL (Irgun) museum dedicated to the Revisionist Zionist military forces of the pre-State period.

With the creation of a state military, the war machine – properly understood as a force shuttling between violence/law and identity – maintained much of its prior function and freedom. Expansion, circumvention, boundary-breaking and the opening of space were its driving tendency. Whether in seizing new territory (often in contravention of orders from the political or military establishment) or in claiming new social space as part and parcel of the national military project, the war machine expanded its scope and explored new sites.

This force or tendency is easily discernable when one explores a series of important events that are well-known to Israeli historians and the general public, even if their centrality to Israeli politics are marginalized or suppressed in the standard historical narrative. Soon after the creation of the state military, secret units and covert operations were established. These forces (*Mossad* – The Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, *Shin Bet* – The General Security Services, Unit 101, *Sayeret Matkal* –

¹⁸¹ Morris, 236-7.

General Staff Reconnaissance) would later capture the imagination of people around the world and would become the pride of many Israelis. All would become involved in practices that broke with conventions and at times, with the law.

We can take as an example the now-disbanded “Unit 101.” David Ben-Gurion, who in the 1950s was the de facto commander-in-chief, defense minister, head of state, and founding father of the State of Israel, helped to kick-start the career of a man who would become one of Israel’s more notable (and infamous) leaders. Along with Mordechai Makleff and Moshe Dayan, the three created Unit 101 – a covert outfit that would plan and execute cross-border retaliatory raids into Jordanian territory, attacking suspected Palestinian irregular forces, Arab Legion fighters, and not a few civilians.¹⁸² As is the case with covert forces, the existence of Unit 101 was initially denied by the Israeli government. It found itself exposed to international scrutiny after an operation in the village of Qibya – dubbed the Qibya massacre – left some 40 unarmed villagers dead.

Hand-picked by Ben-Gurion to head Unit 101 was a young soldier known for his brash personality and messianic-like dedication to Israel’s armed forces. The soldier, Ariel “Arik” Scheinerman, would throughout his career find himself at the center of disciplinary sanctions for insubordination, conduct that contravened international law, and actions that at times bordered on war crimes. He would acquire nicknames like “Father of the Settlements” and “the Butcher of Beirut” as well as more distinguished titles like “Prime Minister of the State of Israel.” He was most widely known by his

¹⁸² Patrick Tyler, *Fortress Israel: The Inside Story of the Military Elite Who Run the Country – and Why They Can’t Make Peace* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 44.

Hebraized name, Ariel “Arik” Sharon.¹⁸³ We will return to some of his more consequential actions shortly.

It is important to emphasize here that Sharon was not exceptional in breaking with the chain of command and establishing new facts on the ground that would have significant ramifications. As I argue in this chapter, the war machine tendency to resist the State (including “its own”) and establish new realities through “speed and secrecy” is preserved (though not contained) within the military and state institutions. The war machine is a tendency, not an assemblage, even if it is most easily apprehended in the form of roving armed bands who slice through frontlines and blast through barricades or as a state military, as the case may be.

Moreover, we would be mistaken if we restricted our analysis of the war machine to strictly military units or the military in general. While most of this chapter isolates the military-security networks for analysis, the war machine does not submit to categorization imposed from above.¹⁸⁴ Take for example Gush Emunim and the settler movement that has only expanded and extended its power in recent years. Following the capture of the West Bank in 1967, the settlement movement emerged as a force neither sanctioned nor controlled by the state.¹⁸⁵ Whether in staking out hilltops to turn into

¹⁸³ It was common practice in Israel to Hebraize Jewish names as part of creating a uniquely Israeli national identity no longer tied to the legacy of European Jewry. David Ben-Gurion was born David Gruen, Golda Meir’s given name was Golda Meyerson, Moshe Sharett was Moshe Shertok, and so on. This, too, could be viewed as operations of the war machine when properly understood in its discursive register. This practice of Hebraizing names continued through the 60s (my own family name would otherwise have been Berkovitch) and with the migration of new Jewish peoples, especially the Ethiopian community, many of whom adopted classical/biblical Jewish names (e.g., Malka, Leah, Shoshana, Yossi, etc.). It is also not uncommon for American *olim* (emigres) to adopt a Hebrew name upon making Aliyah.

¹⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, 373.

¹⁸⁵ Akiva Eldar and Edith Zertal, *Lords of the Land: The War for Israel’s Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007* (New York: Nation Books, 2007).

future settlements, or undertaking so-called “price-tag” attacks against Palestinian civilians, or in the duplicitous “temporary visit” to Hebron that would later achieve the status of a government-approved settlement, the settler movement and the radical hill-top youth are a war machine *par excellence*. Breaking with state rules, then establishing new facts on the ground that are subsequently ratified by the state, these forces at once develop a new conception of the state (i.e., a new territorialization) while at the same time opening the state to a number of attacks from without and within.¹⁸⁶

After the June 1967 War, when Israel captured, held, and then occupied East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank, the compass of military actions was drastically extended. The state more than doubled in size and the responsibilities of the IDF grew accordingly. It is no wonder, then, that a whole literature on Israel’s civil-military relations began to develop in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Concerned with the apparent boundary-less operations of the IDF and the hazy line between military and state, many began to wonder whether Israel could maintain its democratic attributes alongside its newly acquired territories. Much of the early works by scholars like Amos Perlmutter, Moshe Lissak, and Baruch Kimmerling, and later works by Uri Ben-Eliezer, Yehuda Ben-Meir, Oren Barak, and Gabriel Sheffer focus on both the institutional and sociological characteristics of Israel’s unique form of militarism.¹⁸⁷ Debates over whether

¹⁸⁶ Still, the facts created by the settler movement were never entirely divorced from the reality of support from the military/security network, not least of all because of the weapons that settlers are permitted to carry and the IDF security patrols established for the protection of the settler communities beyond the Green Line.

¹⁸⁷ Amos Perlmutter, *Military and Politics in Israel: Nation-Building and Role Expansion* (New York: Praeger, 1969). Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Moshe Lissak (ed), *Israeli Society and Its Defense Establishment: The Social and Political Impact of a Protracted Violent Conflict* (Totowa: Frank

Israel is a “nation-at-arms,” a “garrison state,” or a “praetorian state” are important and interesting, but here I focus instead on what I view as a consistent oversight among these works.

The literature on Israel’s military-civil relations demonstrates the military’s tendency for breaking the state – its territory or borders in particular as well as its policy – while at the same time helping to ground the state’s legitimacy. With the exception of Oren Barak and Gabriel Sheffer¹⁸⁸ and Rafael Ben-Eliezer, however, the recognition of the co-constitutive nature of the state, military, and civil sectors does not lead to further theorizing. How, for example, does the military construct the concept of “national interest” that it is ostensibly tasked with protecting? If the military has a dominant role in constructing the “national interest,” then how can the state maintain sovereignty over its defining features – the ability to make the definitive decisions on violence and identity? And if the state cannot claim to hold this monopoly, then how does it legitimize its relation to the civil society, to the body politic, to the people who are thought to belong – in a deeply rooted way – to the state? It is critical to remember in all of this that the question is not whether the state becomes “praetorian,” a “nation-in-arms,” a “military

Cass and Co., 1984); Daniel Maman, Eyal Ben-Ari, and Zeev Rosenhek (eds.), *Military, State, and Society in Israel* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001); Gershon Shefir and Yoav Peled (eds.), *The New Israel: Peacemaking and Liberalization* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000); Uri Ram, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (New York: Routledge, 2008), Lev Luis Grinberg, *Politics and Violence in Israel/Palestine: Democracy Versus Military Rule* (London: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁸⁸ Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak (eds.), *Militarism and Israeli Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Gabriel Shefer and Oren Barak, *Israel’s Security Networks: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak, “The Study of Civil-Military Relations in Israel: A New Perspective,” *Israel Studies*, v. 12 n. 1 (2014); Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

with a state,” or a junta. Instead, the very separability of the state, the military, and civil society – and the way these three sectors relate – is called into question.

Curiously enough, most writers in the genre of Israel civil-military relations acknowledge the fact that oftentimes, major changes occurred not by the planning of political elites who then used the military to enact their policies, nor even by the military high command enacting strategies that are then carried out by subordinates. In several crucial instances, the military operated less as an arm of the state or as a single body and more as a wild force whose actions caught the leadership by surprise. A list, by no means exhaustive, and truncated in the interest of space and the reader’s patience, might include:

- Ben-Gurion’s underhanded machinations during the short-lived Sharett administration.
- The creation of Unit 101 with its cross-border incursions and targeting of civilians.
- The disastrous Lavon affair in the early state period.
- Ariel Sharon’s decision to charge through the Suez and occupy the Sinai during the June 67 War against the orders of his superiors.
- The same Ariel Sharon’s decision to draw the Egyptian military into a firefight in the Sinai during the October 1973 war.
- Dayan and Rabin’s decision to take the West Bank during that same war without the approval of Prime Minister Eshkol.
- Ariel Sharon’s manipulation of Menachem Begin in 1982, when his proposed limited incursion into Lebanon became in practice a charge through to Beirut.
- The Dotan affair.¹⁸⁹

All of these events proceeded outside of the normal chain of command and without approval of either higher command or the political leadership of the state.¹⁹⁰ They left in their wake some of the more consequential outcomes that have come to define Israel’s

¹⁸⁹ Maman et al, *Military, State and Society in Israel*, 386-387; Tyler, *Fortress Israel*.

¹⁹⁰ Sheffer and Barak, *Israel’s Security Networks*, 90-93.

politics; the occupation of the territories, the bitter rivalries with Israel's neighbors in the region, and the dominance of military affairs in public and political life.

The history of Israel demonstrates how the trajectory of the war machine – working through the State and through the military – worked to create the conditions rallied for the performance of the national interest. Against the view that the national interest is a direct reflection of the interests of the people, civil society, or state, the war machine demonstrates the national interest as at best tangential related to the *raison d'état*. Delinking the state from policy also works to challenge social contract theories that would draw a direct connection between the sovereign action of the state and civil society for whose interest these actions are undertaken. Not only were the most decisive actions in Israel not subordinate to the State, they also were not reflecting civil society at large, amplifying the conflict and strengthening the more radical elements of both Israeli and Palestinian society.

In addition to the Palestinians exclusion from the national project of the State of Israel, the Jewish communities themselves could not agree on what the national interest would entail. As the war machine began to extend its purview into emerging political-economic models that began to guide state policymaking in the 1980s, it precipitated a further detachment. The operations of the war machine in the early state period demonstrate the dubious connection between state sovereignty and the military institution as well as the taken-for-granted unity and chain of command ascribed to the military. The current epoch of neo-liberal governance takes the relation one step further, revealing how the “war machine” exceeds the military and state to such a degree as to make its legitimization claims – the military protection of the people – difficult to accept.

Interruptio: “The Life of the Nomad is the Intermezzo”

Before there was a market in Israel, there was an economy subsidized by foreign aid, fundraising, and international loans.¹⁹¹ The dominant early state-like institutions in charge of the economy and production in the Yishuv – the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Histadrut – consciously created an economy based in an ideology of ethno-national socialism.¹⁹² Using this model, the Yishuv could guarantee labor for new Jewish emigres, slowly increasing the absorption capacity of the state by creating new settlements and townships, side-stepping any need to integrate with the Palestinian *others* who had already established their own social, political, and economic networks under Ottoman and then British rule.

Following the occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967, the state re-oriented its economic model in line with new realities. Israel as an occupying power had a new responsibility; namely, to govern the Palestinians who since 1948 were under Egyptian and Jordanian rule in Gaza and the West Bank, respectively. The complex history of Israel’s governance of the territories is too dense to recount here, but in general, the doubling of both territory and population following 1967 potentiated a new economic model that included integration of the Palestinian population. Israel chose to integrate the labor markets of Israel Proper and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in at least three ways:

¹⁹¹ Shafir and Peled (2000), *The New Israel: Peacemaking and Liberalization*, 3.

¹⁹² See Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine 1906-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims*.

First, by creating a common market between Israel and its newly acquired territories, where Israel alone would set price controls, tariffs, a permit regime that would dictate labor conditions and movement as well as land-use and building provisions, licensing, etc. Some of these decision-making powers and procedures were determined unilaterally by the Government of Israel as Military Orders (MO) executed through the Defense Ministry's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). Others, especially in later years, were a result of negotiations with the PLO, especially the Paris Protocol of 1994.

Second, by extending a common currency into the Occupied Territories (the Shekel - NIS) that would allow Israel to tie itself to a larger consumer base. This worked to increase circulation of the shekel and strengthen the currency.¹⁹³ This also proved valuable once the PLO and later the PA gained *international recognition*. Following recognition, the PA would begin to receive foreign aid and, as the now *outsourced* occupation¹⁹⁴ appeared to be the new status quo, NGO funding. Both would necessarily run through the Central Bank of Israel, which would result in additional economic benefits as well as Israeli control over Palestinian resources.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Shir Hever, *Political Economy of Israel's Occupation: Repression Beyond Exploitation* (London, GBR: Pluto Press, 2010).

¹⁹⁴ Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*.

¹⁹⁵ Freezing Palestinian assets, whether foreign aid or tax revenues collected by COGAT, would become a new and effective tool of control, allowing Israel to punish the PA if and when their actions or policies went against Israel's perceived interests. These decisions were at Israel's prerogative and were often

Third, by creating a common labor force. The notion of a common labor force, however, needs to be amended: as an economy that was still driven by an ideology rooted in ethno-nationalism, part of the labor force (i.e., the Palestinians) contributed to the common projects, paid payroll taxes, and were subject to social security withdrawals from their paychecks all while receiving none of the traditional rights granted to workers. Pensions, access to social services, and labour bargaining power were reserved for the Israeli workers only.

By the time we enter the 1990s, we witness another shift, brought about by the wave of one million Former Soviet Union (FSU) Jews into Israel as well as a new security situation following the First Intifada (1987) and continuing into the Oslo years. The dominant economic arrangements in the state were now neither ethno-national socialist nor market-oriented in character, but increasingly neo-liberal.¹⁹⁶ With these new economic arrangements came new governing practices that altered the relationship between the military/security network, the state, and its people. Not only were the state and its people increasingly alienated from the military/security networks, but the

applied arbitrarily. Other times, the decision was made with explicit political content, for example, following the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections that saw Hamas win a ruling/controlling share of the PA.
Hever, 80.

¹⁹⁶ The distinction here is between a market-oriented economy that is nonetheless tied to the state and has enrichment of the state coffers as its primary motive and a neo-liberal economy where governmental functions are increasingly privatized such that the economy serves private interests at the expense of an ever-shrinking public realm. See: Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015).

Palestinians under occupation figured as a new kind of subject best described by Judith Butler as “precarious life.”¹⁹⁷

The Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, once an important part of Israel’s market and labor force, now largely related to the state in one of two ways:

- (1) As a captive market of consumers.¹⁹⁸
- (2) As a captive population of threatening individuals who could (and must) be punished collectively at the will of the State.

The State of Israel’s relation to the Palestinian subjects was not dissimilar from its relation to the Occupied Territories. Much in the same way that the actions of the State of Israel valued the land but not the people who inhabited it, they valued (though less so) the subjects in the OPT but not the Palestinian identity they inhabited. They recognized them as something other than a subject deserving of “equal standing.”

Against the practice of recognition there now stood two substantial barriers. The Palestinians could now be excluded by economic detachment from the previously integrated Greater Israel and could be viewed as individuals – abstract subjects defined by their potential threat as “terrorists,” “enemy,” or worse. The abstraction was achieved through transformations instantiated by a force not enclosed within the State; by the war machine.

¹⁹⁷ Judith Butler, *Prekarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004).

¹⁹⁸ This relates to the shift from a two-state solution to an “economic peace.” After Oslo, Israel returned to an earlier strategy that was applied to the OPT before the outbreak of the Intifada. The strategy of creating a middle-class consumer economy was based on the belief that if the Palestinians were to integrate into a consumer culture, they would drop their national aspirations. The logic works at least two ways. First, so long as the Palestinians are integrated into the consumer society model, they would hesitate to undertake actions against Israel that might harm this placid economic peace. Second, the more optimistic belief in line with some foundational claims of the Modernization literature that neo-liberalism would help engender Western values which work to pacify societies and make them less likely to engage in war (e.g., Liberal Peace Theory, Democratic Peace Theory, Capitalist Peace Theory, McWorld, etc.).

The Wake of the War Machine

Early in their essay on the War Machine, Deleuze and Guattari pivot from speaking of the relation between the State and the War Machine in terms of functionality, roles, poles, and striation of physical space to the relation between the State and the War Machine in terms of thought, the sciences, and imaginary space. Introducing the concept of *noology*, the authors develop a critique of that sovereign voice, language, image or identity contained and crafted by the State in order for it to (per)form an *interior*.¹⁹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari introduce an opposition between the royal sciences and the nomadic or minor sciences²⁰⁰ as well as a sharp criticism of philosophers and great thinkers – including Kant and Hegel but excepting Artaud, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Kleist – whose ideas develop in such a way as to be mere functionaries of the state.

Their criticism is an apt one. Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, for example, maintains a statist project, despite important challenges that he made to State power (e.g., *Contest of the Faculties*, "Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?").²⁰¹ Hegel's thought, from the Right-Hegelian tradition all the way into the Fukayamist resurgence, has also been appropriated (appropriately or inappropriately) for Statist purposes. In any case,

¹⁹⁹ The object of noology is "the State-form developed in thought." The State helps to ground "thought as principle" or "as a form of interiority." As they explain, "only thought is capable of inventing the fiction of a State that is universal by right, of elevating the State to the level of de jure universality." Moreover, "if it is advantageous for thought to prop itself up with the State, it is no less advantageous for the State to extend itself in thought, and to be sanctioned by it as the unique, universal form." Deleuze and Guattari, 374-5.

²⁰⁰ This includes a discussion of bridge building, professional trades guilds, architecture, and metallurgy. Deleuze and Guattari, 361-374.

²⁰¹ Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (New York: Abaris Books, 1979).

these thinkers sustained the notion that the State is a natural and naturalized category necessary for the proper functioning of collectives and societies. Against them stood those who “destroy images,” the “private thinkers” who reject the state projection of *Cogitatio universalis*.²⁰² These thinkers share the qualities attributed to the War Machine.

The War Machine has a strange relationship to thought, the state, and the military, especially regarding questions of *identity* that would help create an *interior* for State thought, language, and sovereignty. The War Machine contests the very categories imposed by The State, whether these categories are ones of bureaucratic or functional necessity, or more problematically, social and political necessity. The State, for example, must present some notion of citizen who is protected from the *other* by the sheer force and violence exercised by the sovereign state. However, the war machine, whose tendency is toward breaking the State form, cannot lend respect to the categories imposed by the state. For the war machine, the target is the dividual entity who is defined simply and only in terms of its relation to the war machine as a target, as an element that will be eliminated, or as one point among others along its itinerant path.

When we turn to studying the science of the war machine, we notice this dividualization of characters. The military/security network develops its weapons not against the Palestinians as a cultural identity. The Palestinians could just as easily be the cartel functionaries operating in Brazil’s favelas, or Iraqi insurgents operating in Baghdad, paramilitary forces challenging the Phillipino army, or neo-Marxist guerillas in the mountains of Peru. In the projects and calculations of the war machine, it makes no difference what identity is ascribed to the enemy or held by the State. And this, it turns

²⁰² Deleuze and Guattari, 376.

out, is one reason why an entire literature on state-military and civil-military relations emerged following the Second World War, after once-General and then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower made his dire warning: “we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist.” Deleuze and Guattari echo this insight in their own unique way:

It is true that this new nomadism accompanies a worldwide war machine whose organization exceeds the State apparatuses and passes into energy, military-industrial, and multinational complexes.²⁰³

We have then two senses in which the State attempts to appropriate the war machine. First, by directing its flow and channeling its energies toward its particular projects that involve striation of space. Second, by attempting to thread the war machine into a national identity produced by the State; a national identity that would allow military practices to be described as “national service” or “national duty,” (i.e., as legitimate actions guided by the logic of security). The war machine, however, moves in the smooth spaces between the stakes planted by the state, flows through channels that traverse the state model and escape its capture.

This presents a problem for the State insofar as it seeks to ground the war machine in an identity when the tendency of the war machine is toward dividuation – the creation of data points that need not be subsumed to the categories performed by the state. And yet, with the dividuation of subjects that the war machine leaves in its wake, the state is left in the cumbersome position of having to define difference in ways no

²⁰³ Deleuze and Guattari, 387.

longer deemed *legitimate* in modern statecraft.²⁰⁴ As Michel Foucault explains in his lectures on bio-politics, the liberal State depends upon national distinction whose logical consequence would be a racism that would run into conflict with liberalism's enlightenment principles of universal rights. The State must disavow *difference* while at the same time creating and grounding its legitimacy in the language and categories of identity/difference. Between its impulse for creating a distinction of self/other, domestic/foreign, Jewish/Palestinian and its desire to fit within the Liberal (i.e., Kantian) model of a democratic state²⁰⁵, the State of Israel is left with the task of packaging the effects left in the wake of the war machine in such a way as to allow the performance of a Jewish Democratic State to continue uninterrupted, despite its inherent theoretical contradiction and practical infelicity.

The war machine, however, is not some invisible or submerged force living in a "shadow world."²⁰⁶ Its movement through institutions is easy to identify once one correctly apprehends the war machine as a tendency that operates through many institutions – state, military, economic, and social. What this means in practical terms is that the war machine is observed in the practices that break the *ideal* of these institutions.

Why, for example, is the military not simply the institutional manifestation of the war machine? To answer this question, we need to view the military as an *ideal*. Central to the idea of the military is the connection it claims to have to the people, however

²⁰⁴ Put another way, the state cannot use racism to legitimate its claims. Instead, *security of the nation* provides a generalizable legitimation function that is universally acceptable.

²⁰⁵ See discussion of "separate but equal" and "recognition" in their Liberal register in Chapter 1.

²⁰⁶ Jeff Halper, *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 35.

tangential. Like conceptions of the state in the liberal and social contract registers, the connections between these institutions and the abstract “people” are more theoretical than they are practical. The connections are empirically dubious but nonetheless central to the performance of the State or Military as institutions rooted in the will of the people.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ See: Alphonso Lingis, Emmaneul Levinas, Judith Butler.

People do not support a real institution, they support a *performance* that demonstrates conformity to an *ideal*. That *ideal* changes over time and discourse allows us to understand the nodal points and the tenuous *point de capiton* whose performative successes are vulnerable to deconstruction. In the case of this study, one central ideal is that of an “ethnicity” or “national identity” (aided by the state in its recitation of particular readings of history – See Part One) and another is that of the national interest (aided by the academy which of course fails – See Part Two), and what constitutes “life” that can be recognized as vulnerable, grievable, and human.

Chapter Six: Global War Machine

In the first part of this section, attention was drawn to the military/security networks that pre-dated the state and worked to clear space in service of the state-to-be. These same forces were also shown to have undermined the newly imposed territorial and operational boundaries established by the state in several critically important instances. This tendency, identified with the “war machine,” helps reveal the ways in which the military is not strictly a property of the state. With Israel’s transition from a socialist to a neo-liberal economic model beginning in the late 1970s, the position of the military in relation to the state and its people was made doubly problematic. Now, the military not only had a dubious relation to the state regarding chain of command, but more problematically, it began to extend its purview beyond the territory of the state. The design, funding, construction, and distribution of military/security equipment took on an increasingly transnational character.²⁰⁸ The military/securities industries would prove to be highly lucrative on the global market, but its operations were increasingly directed by private interests. In light of this, the military/securities industries sought ways to maintain some tentative connection to the state and its people.

If the operations of the military/security network traverse state boundaries and undermines state control, it also insists that it is not a rogue power. The military/security network must appeal to the notion that it serves “the people” and provides for their security. It cannot avoid entering into questions of identity. No longer viewed as merely a technical arm of the state, the military/security networks participate in the production of

²⁰⁸ Jeff Halper, *War Against the People*.

identities, performing in such ways that would grant legitimacy to the actions of certain peoples against others. And yet, in the dialectical, peripatetic movement characteristic of the war machine, the military/security networks also rely upon dividualization of subjects that can serve as the objective inputs of their security calculation, giving the technology flexibility for application across a wide range of interstate and intrastate contexts.

The Political Economy of Ethno-national Identity and Security

Beginning in the 1980s, Israel's economy began to undergo a shift from its traditional socialist or planned economy to a neo-liberal model.²⁰⁹ These changes occurred concurrently with drastic changes in the social and political culture of the state. In a sense, the writing was already on the wall in the economic crises of the late-1960s into the early-1970s, not only within Israel, but globally.²¹⁰ Social movements and political upheavals in 1968 (in the U.S., France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, elsewhere) soon reverberated in Israel, with groups like the Black Panthers organizing for better treatment and greater representation of the Mizrahi Jews, and an increasing number of labour strikes challenging the central role of the State. Following the October 1973 War, civil society groups began to proliferate in Israel, including the rightwing settler *Gush Emunim* (Bloc of the Faithful) and the leftwing peace group *Shalom Achshav* (Peace Now). The diversity of viewpoints that were organizing outside the traditional state/party structure

²⁰⁹ Guy Ben-Porat, Yagil Levy, Shlomo Mizrahi, Arye Naor and Erez Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 91.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

revealed the splintering character of Israeli society and various competing conceptions of Israel's national identity and interest.

As the dominant cultural hegemony in Israel began to splinter and crack, economic changes further exacerbated the growing rift between the people and the state. Poor economic management from the 1970s into the 1980s led to high levels of inflation, a negative balance of payments, growing foreign debt, increasing levels of unemployment, and a series of budget cuts that damaged Israelis confidence in the state. The economic downturns revealed limits to the support that the state could offer its citizens. In the global political scene, this was the era that witnessed the growing neo-liberal hegemony marked by the governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. After decades of Cold War with the Soviet Union, political leaders and private interests in Western Europe and the U.S. found growing salience of the rhetoric against "Big Government" or the "Nanny State." As socialist policies suffered due to the resentment directed toward Communist regimes, privatization of previously government-owned industries began to trend.

In the literature on Israel, the *Mahapakh* ("reversal") of 1977 is often cited as the pivotal historical moment when the role of government in Israel underwent irreversible change. After the 1977 parliamentary elections, the Socialist hegemony that dominated the pre- and early-State period was smashed and the economically liberal and politically conservative Likud party took power. Central government control slowly receded as private capital began to shape the economic, social, and political landscape. The results were felt across the spectrum from urban centers to the periphery, in *kibbutzim*,

moshavim, and ultimately in the military. With the exception of national healthcare, Israel's turn toward globalization, liberalization, and privatization was undeniable.

The first phases of neo-liberal reform were rather unsuccessful and occurred during what could be described as an economic disaster in Israel. From 1977-1985, the selling off of Government Enterprises (including telecommunications, public works, chemical processing, military, and transportation companies) did not meet the high expectations of off-setting fiscal imbalances and generating much-needed revenue.²¹¹ However, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, government divestment from industry – itself only partial insofar as the government maintained a controlling or substantial share in the previously government-owned enterprises – started to see encouraging dividends. The economic growth, however, could not be attributed entirely to the new neo-liberal model.

Israel's rehabilitated economy grew in part due to large-scale migration from the Former Soviet Union (about 1 million over a few short years) that helped to boost consumption and brought in a highly skilled work force.²¹² In addition to providing economic stimulus, the influx of new migrants boosted political capital for Jewish nationalism, with the changing demographic/ethnic/cultural make-up of the state providing a buffer against the Arab “demographic” threat and leftwing reconciliationists. The recent dominance of the Israeli right and the growing status of Avigdor Lieberman's

²¹¹ Shlomo Eckstein, Shimon Rozevich, and Zilberfarb Ben-Zion, “Privatization in Israel,” in *Constraints and Impacts of Privatization* ed. V.V. Ramanadham (London: Routledge, 1993).

²¹² Ben-Porat et al.

Yisrael Beiteinu political party in particular is strongly supported in good part by these recently naturalized citizens and 1st generation FSUs.

Further complicating the story was the ability to not only expand settlements like Ariel – one of Israel’s largest, well-subsidized and predominantly Russian-speaking settlements – but also the parallel movement beginning in the early 1990s *away* from Palestinian labor which would soon amount to a full-scale *separation policy* between Israel proper and the territories it controlled beyond the Green Line. This separation, as I mention in Part One of this dissertation, has serious implications on the ability to reach recognition not only between OT Palestinians and Israelis, but between OT Palestinians and Israeli Arabs, and finally, between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs. But let me bracket this digression for now. We will return to this point in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Government divestment of its formerly state-managed companies meant not only a new, liberal model for Israel’s economy, but more importantly for our present discussion, an increasingly global orientation. As Ben-Porat points out, “while in the past the Israeli economy was influenced by geopolitics and the conflict, its globalization means that it is now also influenced by international developments.”²¹³ Given Israel’s reputation for military/security dominance and skill, it should be no surprise that international developments in the areas of military/security would begin to reflect an important push-pull relationship between Israeli economic and political projects, on the one hand, and the interests of global capital and global politics on the other. The War on Terror helped create an ever-growing demand for military/securities technologies and

²¹³ Ben-Porat, 92.

knowledges over which Israeli companies had a distinct advantage, especially in UAVs (drones), electronic warfare, urban and counterterror technologies, and surveillance. As the military/security companies made sure to note in their advertisements and sales pitches, they could offer “battlefield-tested” devices to interested customers.

Privatization in the Military Industries

The military industries had been – up until the late 60s – owned and operated by the State and this remained true for the most part into the 1980s. However, beginning in the 60s, certain functions once dominated by the state/military (especially in R&D) began to show success in the private sector. Elron Electronic Industries, a large technology holding company, formed in 1962 and created the defense-based microchip company Elbit Systems by 1966. The 1960s also saw the rise of one of Israel’s first billionaires, Shaul Eisenberg, who began to amass his fortune as Israel’s top arms dealer (import and export). His success could be attributed in part to the “Eisenberg Law,” a special amendment instituted in 1969 that exempted him alone from paying taxes for 30 years.²¹⁴ Eisenberg will soon reappear in this story.

Privatization of the military industries was not only dragged along by the general trend within the state economy, but also, and critically, the deteriorating security situation and consequent development of new military and securities technologies. Information systems, air defense systems, border control technologies, and drone technology were all part of a military-tech boom. Elisra Ltd., a military electronics firm specializing in

²¹⁴ Bichler and Nitzan, 290.

missile guidance technology, signals intelligence, and communications, is a prime example. Founded in 1967, Elisra underwent a number of corporate acquisitions between private firms while Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) controlled 30% of the company through its subsidiary, Elsa. In 2011, IAI sold its remaining shares to Elbit Systems, the private firm that previously controlled 70% of Elisra.²¹⁵

Elbit Systems, which describes itself as a “world leader in improving lethality and survivability” in its marketing documents, is one of Israel’s top five military/security companies.²¹⁶ Their technologies can be found in everything from F-16 fighter jets that are updated with sophisticated integrated imaging and communications technology to border security fences, UAV software, armored vehicles, and other high-end military technology. As Elbit points out in their marketing material, their products are “battle-proven,” the unique designs “based on years of battlefield experience in full scale and low intensity conflicts,” and “based on innovative R&D performed in close cooperation with the Israel Air Force.”

Direct mentions to Israel are limited in company documents available through their website, and while the company’s relation to the State of Israel is well-understood by prospective customers, there is little overt imagery of the IDF or direct connections made to the State of Israel. Indeed, many of the clients represent government who are otherwise critical of Israeli military offenses and tactics against the Palestinians. The

²¹⁵ "Elbit Systems to buy remaining stake in Elisra; Israel Aerospace Industries owned 30% of Elisra through subsidiary Elta Systems.." *Globes*, February 22, 2011, Accessed: 2016/02/18.

²¹⁶ Jeff Halper, *War Against the People*, 93.
Elbit Systems, “Elbit Systems of America to Showcase at AUSA High Mobility Lethality Solutions for Winning in a Complex World,” *PRNewswire*, October 8, 2015, Accessed on Feb. 22, 2016, <http://ir.elbitsystems.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=61849&p=irol-newsArticle&id=2095291>.

Palestinians of course, the subjects on which these products are “battle-tested,” are decidedly absent from tradeshow and marketing documents. Elbit, like other weapons companies (i.e., Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon) want their clients to feel confident in the effectiveness of the technology but not to bother with the particular political contexts from which these technologies are developed, derived, tested, and used. When Elbit markets its products to prospective customers from Brazil, Singapore, Chile, the Phillipines, and elsewhere, they often have the support of top Israeli military chiefs.²¹⁷ As the documentary *The Lab* demonstrates, arms trade shows are packed with former IDF Staff, indicating a revolving door between military service and private sector employment.²¹⁸ One particularly salient example is that of former Defense Minister turned Minister of Industry, Trade and Labour Binyamin “Fuad” Ben-Eliezer. Ben-Eliezer makes clear the importance of Israel’s military clout in these tradeshows:

Yotam Feldman (dir. *The Lab*): Why is there such a demand for Israeli weapons when there are many states that make weapons?

Binyamin Ben-Eliezer: Oh, it’s very simple. It’s because we are talking about a state whose technology is basically among the best in the world, but not only that, people like to buy things that have been tested. When Israel sells weapons or equipment, they’ve been tested and tried out. We can say: ‘We’ve used this for 10 years.., 15 years.., 5 years...’ so the demand is tremendous.

Feldman: And does this experience bring economic growth [to Israel]?

Ben-Eliezer: This brings many billions of dollars to the State of Israel.

Another one of the Big 5 military/security companies developed in Israel is Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. Initially an arm of Israel’s Ministry of Defense, Rafael transitioned to a government-owned limited company in 2002, leaving behind years of

²¹⁷ Naomi Klein, “Laboratory for a fortress world,” *The Nation*, June 14, 2007, <http://www.thenation.com/article/laboratory-fortressed-world/>

²¹⁸ *The Lab*, Documentary, directed by Yotam Feldman (2013; Tel Aviv: Gum Films, 2013), DVD.

operating at a loss to become a highly profitable company. Rafael produces a myriad of land, sea, air, and space-based military and securities technologies, including weapons systems, anti-missile systems (i.e., the Iron Dome), C⁴I (Command /Control /Communication /Computer /Intelligence), Electronic Warfare (EW), and armor. Rafael, in addition to Israel Military Industries (IMI), also produce cluster bombs whose use are otherwise proscribed by the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to which Israel is not a signatory.²¹⁹

According to *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, Israel's Ministry of Finance is pushing for further privatization of Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) as well as Rafael, following the model pursued in the piecemeal privatization of the Israel Military Industries small arms division Magen, its Aircraft Systems Division (to an Elbit subsidiary), and Israel Shipyard that had proved highly profitable.²²⁰ According to the report, "[The Ministry of] Finance is hopeful that offering 25%-49% of each [Rafael and IAI] would deliver \$4-5.4 billion in a few years." Currently, Rafael sales amount to about

²¹⁹ Halper, 93, 139.

Israel is one of the few advanced industrialized states not to have joined the treaty, though this decision puts their policy in line with that of a few key states: the U.S., Russia, and China. Despite the ban on using as well as *manufacturing* these munitions by signatories, several states with active weapons industries have nonetheless ratified the treaty, including the UK, France, Germany, Sweden, and Italy.

<http://www.clusterconvention.org/the-convention/convention-status/>

²²⁰ Magen was bought at \$25 million in 2004 and was valued at \$150 million in 2014 while Israel Shipyards sold for \$10 million in 1995 and was valued at \$150 million in 2014.

Eshel, D., "Israeli budget issues may mean more defense companies go private," *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, 250(25) (2014), 5. Retrieved from

<http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1649843510?accountid=4485>

Barzilai, A., "IMI Sells Its Magen Small Arms Plant," *Haaretz.com*, February 12, 2004. Accessed on February 22, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/business/imi-sells-its-magen-small-arms-plant-1.114190>.

\$2 billion per year with some 70 percent of sales comprised of exported products (i.e., not for the domestic market or the immediate “national security” of Israel).

IMI, the other target of privatization, is slated to privatize all but its heavy jet propulsion systems and a few classified programs that will be managed by the Ministry of Defense under a new company called Tomer.²²¹ IMI is Israel’s oldest arms company, pre-dating the creation of the state (1933), and while it has run at a loss for several decades, negotiations and actions toward privatization have been ongoing since at least 2011.²²² At the time of this writing, the Government Corporations Authority has recommended that the privatization of IMI proceed despite their being only one bidder; Elbit Systems. The current Minister of Finance Moshe Kahlon intimated that he will not approve the deal unless healthy competition can be ensured, preferring a government monopoly to a private monopoly.²²³

With IMI being sold to Elbit, practically all of Israel’s top 5 military/security industry companies (with the exception of IAI for now) will be owned privately, with the exception of a few R&D labs which the government will maintain as proprietary holdings. As former Minister of Defense Shaul Mofaz explained in 2005, “At the end of the process, everything in the industry will be in private hands except the national

²²¹ Barbara Opall-Rome, “‘No Turning Back’ for IMI Sale,” *Defense News*, March 21, 2015, Accessed on February 23, 2016, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/industry/2015/03/21/israel-offers-up-imi-to-highest-qualified-bidder/25016173/>.

²²² Anderson, G. (2013). “Israel military industries privatisation may be derailed by austerity.” *Jane's Defence Industry*, 30(8) Retrieved February 23, 2016 from <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1398018553?accountid=4485>

²²³ Ora Coren, “Kahlon: I Won’t Approve Privatizing Israel’s Monopolies,” *Haaretz*, Jan. 27, 2016, Accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/.premium-1.699739>

infrastructures and national laboratories, which will always remain government-controlled."²²⁴ If Elbit acquires practically all of IMI, this concentration of military/security technologies in private companies is rather stunning, though it reflects in many ways the U.S. Military-Industrial Complex dominated by Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, General Dynamics, and Northrop Grumman, themselves the results of a long chain of acquisitions representing a concentration of the industry over the last several decades. Altogether, these top Israeli firms constitute over \$7 billion in sales per year at last estimate, and their market share appears to be expanding.²²⁵ The rate of growth in the last decade is stunning. Between 2005 and 2012, Israel weapons sales shot up from \$3.5 billion to around \$7.5 billion per year before receding back to around \$5.6 billion in 2014, likely due to cuts in domestic military spending and a difficult international market.²²⁶

The expanding market for these technologies and their growing independence from forms of organization that are thought to provide some measure of checks and balances or democratic input (i.e., the State, the Military, Civil Society) reveals two points that we should pause and consider carefully. First, if the military/security networks are no longer a property of the State nor of the People, then they pose a potential threat to

²²⁴ Eshel, T., "Paris air show: Israel's defense market shapes up for privatization. *Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*, 214(53) (2005), 7. Retrieved on February 23, 2016 from <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/231518681?accountid=4485>

²²⁵ Halper, 92.

²²⁶ Lappin, Y., & Anderson, G. Israeli defence exports down for second year running. *Jane's Defence Industry*, 32(6) (2015). Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1682541890?accountid=4485>

those institutions and their democratic appurtenances. This is especially troubling when the economic incentives outpace the political and social controls that would work to channel and guide these networks. Second, as Jeff Halper's *War Against the People* convincingly demonstrates, these networks portend a future of global surveillance and control aimed at disciplining and ensnaring every individual.

We should nonetheless be careful not to misapprehend the tendency of the war machine as necessarily and in all cases a dangerous development. Indeed, the tendency is not likely to be eliminated but that does not preempt the growing need for awareness of the tendency. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the view of politics as centered in hegemonic sovereign institutions is one means of controlling political possibilities. Instead, we may expand the scope of politics toward the view of establishing some measure of democratic controls over those networks within which political ideologies are sanctified and concretized. At the very least, the tendency displayed through the war machine demands attention at the level of political analysis. Only when we apprehend the work done by and through networks can we begin to theorize the ethical implications of our modern politics and begin the project of opening spaces for the free exercise of recognitive practices.

Whither the War Machine

How do the military/securities industries maintain their tentative connection to the state as they transitioned from a state-run model to a transnational privatized network? Recall that the state is generally thought to have two primary functions: the sovereign decision

on violence (sovereign power/law) and the capture of individuals into a national collective, identity, and interest. The war machine, as mentioned earlier, could be viewed as a tendency that runs between these two poles of the state. The war machine is necessary for the state to exercise sovereign violence, even if at times it works to undermine the states attempt to completely capture and enclose this force within its physical and juridical ambit. The war machine is also necessary for the national identity insofar as it is tasked with defending the national interest, even if at times it works to undermine the states attempt to completely capture and enclose a unified and stable national interest.

In order to serve both functions – violence and identity – the war machine needs to speak in two voices. One voice is that of security, emphasizing existential crises and the ability to limit or eliminate them. The other voice is that of common cause, emphasizing that all this violence is justified because it protects “us,” “the people,” or “the nation.” In the turn toward privatization, both tasks were still central to the military/security network, and these attempts to fulfil both roles despite the structural break from the state can be demonstrated through two anecdotes.

Good as Gold

In military and security affairs, necessity is often thought to dictate action. Chain of command and bureaucracy are created in order to streamline decision-making, ensure accountability, and help organize otherwise complex systems of action. From this point of view, the military-security networks often appear to be purely technocratic in their

operations. Leave ideology and politics to the politicians, the military is there to get things done. However, as the first half of this chapter demonstrates, the military-security institutions often go off-course and determine on their own which actions might be necessary.

These instances are once again legitimated by claims of necessity but a closer look reveals that not a little ideology is gathered in order to establish these claims as common sense extensions of an otherwise technocratic institution. While the war machine appears at times to break out of its established boundaries, it nonetheless tethers itself to an ideology grounded in the notion of the nation, peoples, or the State. In cases where a monetary benefit appears to guide the direction of development, the agents of the war machine must nonetheless rally a particular ideology and identity in order to proceed from a position of presumptive necessity.

The story of Brigadier General Danny Gold is a case in point. Gold was in charge of the Research and Development Unit at the Research and Development Directorate (RDD) in the Ministry of Defense, the unit responsible for guiding R&D efforts toward new weapons systems for the IDF.²²⁷ In August of 2005, Gold began to allocate his units funds toward developing a missile defense system without going through the typical chain of command (i.e., without the knowledge of the Prime Minister, Defense Minister, or the IDF). Along with discretely appropriating funds for the purpose of developing this project, Gold utilized his connections with Rafael Ltd., who approached the government of Singapore in order to secure additional funds and share the cost of developing the

²²⁷ Shefer and Barak, *Israel's Security Networks*, 91.

system. For its participation in the project, the government of Singapore could secure the purchase of the new system.

It was not until after the fallout of the Second Lebanon War in August of 2006 that Defense Minister Amir Peretz began to officially instantiate the project, with the RDD instructing Rafael to begin the project, which consequently received the approval of Prime Minister Olmert. The program then underwent a series of delays and reboots, with the IDF chief of staff delaying further developments in June 2007 only to have the new Minister of Defense Ehud Barak approve them one month later. It gathered additional support when U.S. President Barack Obama allocated some \$205 million to the project.²²⁸ Shefer and Barak, citing reporting by Yossi Melman, argue that the system appeared to be directed less toward addressing a particular security concern and more toward creating a profitable project for Rafael, who were previously sidelined in the development of the *Arrow* missile system directed by IAI.²²⁹ In addition to U.S. funds, the project is reported to have sought additional funding and received interest from India, South Korea and other states.

In 2009, State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss' submitted a report on the development of Iron Dome, singling out Gold for breaking the chain of command. The report was summarized in an editorial in *Haaretz* thusly:

...in fact, the entire inception of Iron Dome was done in sin, because one cog in the Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure, Brig. Gen. Dr. Danny Gold, took it upon himself to assume the responsibilities of the IDF chief of staff, the defense minister and the government of the State of Israel, before the project was approved in the proper channels. In

²²⁸ Ibid, 92.

²²⁹ Ibid, 90.

other words, desk job Gold decided on his own with complete disregard for the IDF chief of staff, the defense minister and the entire government.²³⁰

When asked in an interview about the comments of the comptroller and other critics,

Gold stated:

I am completely not angry. It only made the process more challenging and more interesting. People worked on the development like mad men, truly day and night, and the comptrollers and critics, like the pair of old guys in the Muppet Show, sat on the sidelines and criticized. It never really bothered us.

One has a sense that Gold was not exactly “completely not angry” and was indeed rather annoyed by the need to follow some basic guidelines imposed by the institution. In

another interview, Gold explained his actions this way: “I just canceled all the unnecessary bureaucracy... I left only the most crucial bureaucracy needed for

success.”²³¹ Similarly, Yossi Drucker, a project manager at Rafael responsible for developing Iron Dome, explained that “I cannot say that the [State Comptroller] report is wrong... But if you want to achieve something in a very short time...you have sometimes to bypass the bureaucracy.”²³² Drucker, in an interview with U.S. televangelist Pat

Robertson, also intimated that the Iron Dome project was never intended to protect Israeli towns but was instead pursued for purely financial reasons; the system was developed as an item explicitly targeted toward the export market.²³³

²³⁰ Aharon Lapidot, “The Graymatter Behind the Iron Dome,” *Israel Hayom*, November 23, 2012, http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=6509

²³¹ Levinson and Entous, “Israel’s Iron Dome Defense Battled to Get Off the Ground,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 26, 2012, <http://docstalk.blogspot.com/2012/11/israels-iron-dome-defense-battled-to.html>.

²³² “Israel’s Iron Dome Defense Battled to Get off the Ground”

²³³ Melman, Yossi, “Iron Dome Anti-rocket System Was Never Meant to Protect Israeli Towns,” *Haaretz*, Dec. 16, 2010, Accessed on Feb. 23, 2016 from <http://www.haaretz.com/iron-dome-anti-rocket-system-was-never-meant-to-protect-israeli-towns-1.330850>

For his deviation from the chain of command, Brigadier General Gold was not reprimanded but instead received high praise. Following the State Comptroller's searing report, Uzi Rubin, head of the Israeli Missile Defense Organization explained that:

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the First World War there was a special award for officers who violated a command and thereby saved the state. It would be appropriate to give such an award to Brigadier General (res.) Danny Gold, who was severely criticized by the state comptroller for starting the Iron Dome project without waiting for long months until all the bureaucratic steps were completed (Haaretz April 17, 2011).²³⁴

Gold went on to receive an Israel Defense Prize in 2012 for his development of Iron Dome.

Oddly enough, his acknowledgement led another Israel Defense Prize winner, Dr. Moti Shefer, to charge that Iron Dome was in fact a bluff and that the claims regarding its success rate were wildly overblown. According to Shefer, the system was part of a conspiracy between the defense industries and the Prime Minister; the first receiving substantial foreign investment and an expanding international market for the new technology, the latter achieving the added benefit of being able to demonstrate that negotiation with the Palestinians was neither necessary nor desirable.²³⁵ Shefer's allegations received additional support when Theodore Postol, a physicist at MIT, and Richard Lloyd, a weapons expert, echoed the charges of exaggerated claims regarding success rate after reviewing amateur videos of Iron Dome in action. Both claim that the

²³⁴ Shefer and Barak, 92.

²³⁵ *Globes*, "Defense Prize Winner Moti Shefer: Iron Dome is a Bluff," July, 13, 2014, accessed via, <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-defense-prize-winner-shefer-iron-dome-is-a-bluff-1000954085> According to the article, "Dr. Shefer's ideas for developing interception systems were universally rejected before Iron Dome was developed."

success rate is closer to 5 percent against the 86 percent reported by the IDF.²³⁶ Absent some revelatory leak or whistleblowing act, we are not likely to receive the necessary detailed information that might confirm these allegations, as the IDF withholds most data confidentially as a matter of national security.

The Iron Dome system continued to receive development and production grants from the Obama administration in 2014 worth \$225 million and a Senate report estimates \$1 billion provided by the U.S. between 2011 and 2014 for Iron Dome.²³⁷ The government of Canada has purchased Iron Dome technology and there are reports that Singapore, several Gulf States, and South Korea have for a long time now expressed interest in purchasing the technology as well.²³⁸

Danny Gold developed Iron Dome outside, arguably against, the chain of command. The development of Iron Dome troubles the notion of sovereign state action, especially in the sphere most often associated with the monopoly of state power; over the technologies of violence. That the singular notion of state sovereign action is troubled

²³⁶ Axe, David, "Israel's Iron Dome is more like an iron sieve," *Reuters*, June, 25, 2015, Accessed on Feb. 26, 2016 at <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2014/07/25/israels-iron-dome-is-more-like-an-iron-sieve/> Nathan Farber, an aeronautics expert and lecturer at the Technion Institute of Technology also published an article challenging Israel's missile defense apparatus and the exaggerated claims made regarding Iron Dome's success rate.

Reuvan Pedatzuer, "The Fallibility of Iron Dome Missile Defense," *Haaretz*, November 10, 2013 Accessed on March 10 2016: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.557145>.

²³⁷ Jeffrey Sparshott, "Obama Signs Law Providing \$225 Million for Israel's Iron Dome," *Wall Street Journal Online*, August 4, 2014, Accessed on March 8, 2016: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/obama-signs-law-providing-225-million-for-israels-iron-dome-1407193842>

Senate Report 113-211, U.S. Government Publishing Office, Calendar No. 472, 113th Congress. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-113srpt211/html/CRPT-113srpt211.htm>

²³⁸ JTA, "Report: Canada Buys Iron Dome-linked Technology," *Haaretz*, August 1, 2015, Accessed March 9, 2016: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/1.668978>; Reuters, "Koreans Eyeing Iron Dome After Seeing Wartime Success," *Haaretz*, August 10, 2014 Accessed March 9, 2016: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/business/1.609859>; Haaretz, "Report: Gulf States to Purchase Israel's Iron Dome System," *Haaretz*, October 14, 2015, Accessed on March 9 2016:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.680291>.

should come as no surprise. This example, however, provides a clear demonstration that need not rely on esoteric theory or philosophical exegesis. Gold, a man of the state, broke with the state, guided by the ostensible desire to protect the homeland as quickly and as effectively as possible. As he explains:

Alongside the unique contribution to saving human lives and the fact that it only intercepts projectiles headed for a defined protected area, it also gives the political and defense establishments the freedom to plan tactical and strategic maneuvers. It gives the IDF breathing room in its offensives, as the civilians are protected by a safety net. It is much easier when there aren't any casualties on the homefront. The system also saves the cost of economic damage both by preventing physical destruction and by preventing the economy from being paralyzed. For Israel, this is the first line of defense against the main threat we face — the missile threat.²³⁹

Iron Dome proved to be a political and economic success for Israel. Apprehending “the missile threat” as “the main threat we face,” it worked to create space for the continuation of the status quo, or viewed in the negative, helped give delay to any meaningful political concessions or debates regarding the status of the territory and identity of the State of Israel. All in all, Iron Dome proved to be good as Gold.

“That’s Right, I am a Gaucho Judío”

The second anecdote involves two men who did not hold significant positions in the state military institutions but whose dealing would nevertheless shape Israel’s military/security network. One of the more successful companies to emerge from Israel’s transition toward privatization of military and securities industries was International Security and Defense Systems (ISDS), a security consultancy firm. Its founder and president is Leo Gleser,

²³⁹ Lapidot, “The Graymatter Behind the Iron Dome.”

self-described as a “Jewish Cowboy” and known as “Colonel Gleser” among his Latin American clients. Gleser, an Argentine-Jew, migrated to Israel in the late 1960s and quickly developed a good reputation in the security establishment. After serving in an elite IDF unit, he was reportedly offered a position in Israel’s intelligence service, the Mossad, which he turned down for a security position at El Al airlines.²⁴⁰ Gleser got his start in business with the help of Shaul Eisenberg. Eisenberg, you will recall, was one of Israel’s first billionaire oligarchs.

At age 17, Eisenberg fled Nazi Germany before settling in China and then Japan. According to legend, Eisenberg’s first small fortune was earned while on a freighter to China, where he bought cigarettes at five cents a pack from the ship canteen and sold them to Chinese refugees at a dollar a pack. After the war, he began to amass a fortune in the import-export business (e.g., steel for Japanese reconstruction) before moving to Israel in 1968 and founding Israel Corp. – the state’s largest holding company – with the aid of the government. With his growing wealth, Eisenberg found his way into elite policymaking circles, donating to the major political parties and using his influence to pass the aforementioned “Eisenberg Law.”²⁴¹ Eisenberg’s experience in the import/export business alongside his political connections and world travel proved valuable to his new venture as an arms dealer in the 1980s. He served clients from developing nations in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, selling Israeli arms as well as purchasing equipment on

²⁴⁰ Melman, Yossi, “Jewish Cowboy,” *Haaretz*, March 30, 2006, Accessed on Feb. 25, 2016, <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-cowboy-1.184214>

²⁴¹ Bichler and Nitzan, 289.
David, Ariel, “Israeli Showplace Blends East and West,” *The New York Times*, Sept. 5, 2013, Accessed on Feb. 26 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/06/greathomesanddestinations/israeli-showplace-blends-east-and-west.html>

behalf of the state. According to Bichler and Nitzan, Eisenberg's reach extended far and deep:

In 1981, for example, Defence Minister Ariel Sharon was planning an African trip, with plenty of journalists, whose purpose was to open up new markets for Israeli armament. Eisenberg politely offered to fly Sharon, discretely and without the press, in his private jet. The minister of course refused. He had his own friends, such as arms dealers Markus Katz and Ya'akov Nimrodi, to cater to. But as the trip progressed, Sharon realised [sic] he was outmanoeuvred [sic]. On every landing he was greeted by an Eisenberg representative, already holding the exclusive right to import Israeli weapons.²⁴²

Much of Eisenberg's story reads like a Hollywood screenplay full of drama and intrigue, strange connections, bizarre events, stunning achievements and equally devastating failures.

One of the more bizarre incidents in Eisenberg's life was his falling out with former business partner Michael Albin. Following the 1983 Israeli stock market collapse, Eisenberg had losses amounting to some \$40 million while his partner Albin made some \$15 million in profit. As Bichler and Nitzan recount the story, "Eisenberg unleashed his political power – this time against his own partner. Scandal ensued, and Albin, who found himself in police custody, eventually jumped (or was pushed) to his death from the station window."²⁴³

All this happened several years after Eisenberg gave Leo Gleser his first introduction into the world of international security consulting. In 1979, Gleser was approached by Victor Cohen and Zvi Aharoni, two security experts who sought Gleser's help on behalf of Eisenberg. One of Eisenberg's business connections was the wealthy

²⁴² Bichler and Nitzan, 290.

²⁴³ Ibid, 292.

Granados family of Guatemala. Eisenberg and the Granados were developing plans for a hydroelectric station project in Guatemala worth an estimated \$1 billion. In the midst of their business dealings, Jorge Raul Garcia Granados, a child in the Granados family, was kidnapped by *Ejercito Guerillo de los Pobres* (General Army of the Poor), a Maoist rebel group. The family sought help from an American security firm in addition to reaching out to their Israeli connections. Cohen and Aharoni successfully recruited Gleser, who took leave from El-Al and travelled to Guatemala. Forming an investigative body and reaching out to the kidnapers, Gleser was eventually successful in securing the release of Jorge Raul Garcia Granados by paying a modest ransom of \$4.5 million.

According to Gleser,

From the Jorge Raul affair I learned how this world works. I understood that people want to be sold dreams. After all, what was my part in the episode? I helped a family in distress. People in distress want to grasp at hope. I came and gave them the hope, the dream. Sometimes you can wake up from a dream into a nightmare. In life there is either a beautiful dream or a nightmare, there is nothing in between. Luckily for me, the dream came true with a happy ending. *Since then I have sold dreams.*²⁴⁴ [my emphasis]

The documentary *The Lab* further demonstrates Gleser's skills as a dream weaver. Gleser is well-known in the military-security network for the large backyard bar-b-ques that he hosts, bringing foreign dignitaries, military leaders, heads of industry, and Israeli politicians to enjoy a social mixer in his idyllic *moshav* property. The documentary gives an intimate view of these happenings: a sprawling yard shaded by eucalyptus trees, scattered with lawn chairs and picnic tables, children and grandchildren running around the yard, all alongside generals, foreign dignitaries, and heads of industry. The event exudes the prototypical Israeli picnic that would be familiar to most residents and

²⁴⁴ Melman, "Jewish Cowboy."

experienced visitors. Part of ISDS's success can be attributed to Glaser's jovial personality; he can be seen running from one special guest to another, making introductions with a wide grin and punctuating the conversations with quips and jokes.

The company boasts an admirable list of clients, including governments (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Honduras, India, Italy, Peru, Singapore, Spain, the United States), large public events (e.g., the Olympics, the World Cup), corporations, companies, and financial institutions (e.g., Petrobras, Telmex, Banco de Mexico, Singapore Airlines, Coca-Cola, and many others). They house headquarters in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Lima, Buenos Aires, Princeton, Tegucigalpa, and Panama City in addition to their offices in Nir Zvi, Israel. The company website includes a photo gallery of Gleser rubbing elbows with several Israeli heads of state (Olmert, Netanyahu, Peres), the Spanish King and Queen, two Brazilian presidents (de Silva and Rousseff), India's Minister of Defense, a New York Mayor Giuliani, former CIA director James Woolsey, and former Homeland Security chiefs Michael Chertoff and Tom Ridge, as well as a photo of Mr. Glaser with football great, Pele.

ISDS is the picture of a transnational military/security corporation. Gleser's company holds training sessions, with participants from all corners of the globe. The group in one training session filmed by Yotam Feldman is an eclectic and motley crew, most donning fatigues of their given military or police agency, some in more traditional garb. Gleser lives in a world between borders, between languages, without concern for the particular historical or political contexts of his clients. In interviews, he emphasizes that ISDS always operates within the law and refuses to deal with abusive regimes.

Despite this, ISDS is beginning to see some push back. In 2015, the government of Brazil was reported to have distanced itself from the reported \$2.2 billion contract that ISDS had with the Organizing Committee for the 2016 Games in Rio. According to statements by officials in the Ministry of Justice, the Government of Brazil has not granted any government contract to ISDS and that any withstanding deal with the Olympic Committee “won’t result in compromises by the Brazilian government.” The statement came as a result of a letter penned by Brazilian labor unions and activist groups, citing ISDS connections to Israel as well as to Latin American death squads and military regimes.

As the executive director of Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT) – Brazil’s largest trade union – Julio Turra explained:

We are glad with the information the government distances itself from ISDS. It would be illegal and shameful to hire a company that develops its technologies in complicity with Israeli crimes and that accumulates complaints about its participation in Central American dictatorships.”²⁴⁵

The response was viewed as a significant victory for the BDS movement. Still, there is not a little hypocrisy, as the government of Brazil has for a long time had connections with ISDS and the Israeli military/security industries. In 2015, Israel and its affiliated companies were the 5th largest arms importer to Brazil.²⁴⁶ Gleser, on behalf of ISDS and Israeli manufacturers, provides training and pitches small arms and security vehicles to Batalhão de Operações Policiais Especiais (BOPE) – the Brazilian Special Police Forces

²⁴⁵ Palestinian BDS National Committee, “2016 Olympics: After BDS pressure, Brazilian government denies relations with Israeli company IDSD,” *BDS Movement*, May 7, 2015, Accessed March 8 2016, <http://bdsmovement.net/2015/israeli-company-loses-2016-rio-olympics-security-contract-it-had-claimed-to-have-been-awarded-13120#sthash.RmlwD2zN.dpuf>

²⁴⁶ SIPRI, “Trend Indicator Values (TIV) or arms exports to Brazil, 2015,” Generated through: http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export_values.php

in Rio de Janeiro responsible for killing and capturing narcotraffickers in the densely populated *favelas*.

For Gleser, a balancing act between identity and the war machine is necessary. ISDS seeks to benefit from Israeli policies and the development of highly profitable antecedent technologies of control while at the same time disavowing itself as an absolute stand-in representative of the State. Like Gold, who was balancing between the war machine and Law, Gleser has to disavow attempts by the state to tie down his actions, avoiding the *stakes* of the State. This does not mean Gleser, as an embodiment of his company ISDS, is any less implicated in the networks of violence generated and legitimated by the State. Gleser needs the state no less than it needs him, even if their constructions of perceived threat are quite different in structure (form) and context (content).

Gleser and ISDS are highly concerned about generalized threats that could emerge from anywhere and spread everywhere; data points to be targeted and eliminated, movements to be redirected, crowds to be dispersed, surges or blocs of bodies to be pacified. In one especially telling scene, Gleser describes to the filmmaker his vision of the future:

Gleser: The world is heading for very hard times.

Feldman: Where?

Gleser: Apocalypse. Yes. Look, what happened on September 11th was the American apocalypse. Nineteen men with a limited budget brought the U.S. to its knees and made them bite the dirt with their teeth... The defense solutions continue to come only from Israel by Israeli companies.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ Feldman, *The Lab*

Gleser is the anthropomorphic embodiment of the war machine described by Deleuze and Guattari, an itinerant commander without an army. As a functionary of the military/security apparatus, Gleser reflects at one and the same time a largely uninhibited range of movement, beyond the capture of the State, and an absolute reliance on the identity that the State grants its projects and subjects, an identity secured for their and its protection. His romantic self-description as a *Gaúcho Judío* – a Jewish Cowboy – is fitting. Not tied to a State, ambling across the continents, having no superiors, yet motivated by a sense of belonging, Gleser must project that identity which would help legitimate his itineracy.

Military Public Relations and Identity

Since the 1990s, the IDF has not only become increasingly privatized, but has also started to move a greater distance away from the lives of many Israelis. As fewer and fewer Israelis serve in the IDF – the numbers are now less than half of eligible Israelis²⁴⁸ – the ability to engender social cohesion around the common experiences of military service has diminished. Added to this are the scandals that undermine the public faith and trust in the military institutions and leadership. This might explain, in part, why the IDF has engineered a growing public relations presence on social media.

Since Operation Cast Lead in late 2008-early 2009, the government of Israel has become increasingly aware of its public image on the internet. After the backlash against what was seen by many as an overwhelmingly disproportionate use of force in Gaza that

²⁴⁸ Maman et al.

resulted in the death of some 1400 Palestinians, the IDF began to increase its presence on various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter). Facebook, the most popular social media outlet, proved to be an especially important branding tool for IDF. Facebook posts are largely aimed at countering criticism hurled against the Forces and the State of Israel, as well as crafting an ideal image of an admirable military force. Rallying public relations techniques, the IDF Facebook page features human interest stories on current soldiers as well as infographics, news updates, greetings and memes.

The IDF social media effort is telling for at least two reasons. First, it demonstrates the IDF's need to strengthen civil/public support in Israel, but more importantly, to a foreign Western audience. For a State military, the IDF appears to be uniquely concerned with its public image. Many of the Twitter posts highlight the IDF role in emergency aid following catastrophic events in places like the Philippines or Haiti. Another common feature is the focus on women soldiers in the IDF and the military's openness toward gender and sexual orientation. These run alongside updates on seized weapons caches in the West Bank, the routing of Hamas operations, the state-of-the-art equipment used or developed by the IDF, and news alerts on stabbings, shootings, or other violent activities in and around Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Those elements not directly related to defense and security – the ostensible sole purpose of a State military – should not be misread as exaggerations or pretense. The IDF is rather unique in its liberal policies toward sexual orientation and gender, which is not to say that the institution is free of cases of sexual assault and rape. The IDF is also unique, given the size of the force, in the level of support it lends to international aid efforts. These qualities should be encouraged and given their due. The reason I highlight

these practices is not to disavow these praiseworthy characteristics, but instead to ask *why* they are necessary for a military and *how* they work to legitimate the institution. This chapter provides some direction toward answering those questions even if it does not provide a definitive answer. More will be said on this in the concluding chapter of this study.

The second reason that the IDF social media presence is telling is that it reflects the increasingly religious, ethno-national character of the IDF mission. A look at the memes posted on the Facebook page gives a distinct sense that Israel is the Jewish State and the IDF is the military of the Jewish people. This meaning is conveyed by the use of holiday greetings and religious imagery. For example, on Fridays, the IDF often posts an image – usually a heroic scene of soldiers engaged in their duties – with the message “Shabbat Shalom.” More often than not, the image is accompanied by a Star of David with sword and olive branch – the logo of the IDF. Some of the images are not-so-subtle in their intention. One image in particular shows an IDF soldier draped in a prayer shawl and donning a *kippah*, pressed close to the Western Wall, head hung low in prayer, with rifle slung low at his hip. The increased prevalence of the *kippah* donned by active duty soldiers has also been noted by many who served in the IDF during the 60s and 70s.

Statistics back up these observations. As Jones and Murphy point out:

The religious-nationalists make up some 10 percent of the Israeli populace, they now provide 40 percent of the IDF officer corps and tends to do their military service in front-line combat units. Moreover, some 30 percent of front-line troops now wear knitted skullcap or *kippah*, a visible mark of affinity with religious-nationalism.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ Clive Jones and Emma C. Murphy, *Israel: Challenges to Identity, Democracy and The State* (London: Routledge, 2002), 54.

One also increasingly sees Israeli soldiers performing the ritual of wearing *tefillin* for prayer while riding on the public train system.

This is not to say that the IDF was ever anything but an ethno-national military force, but as nationalist aspirations have become increasingly tied to human rights, and as multiculturalism has increasingly become a defining characteristic of the modern liberal state, the IDF's ability to garner legitimacy appears weakened. In light of that difficulty, the IDF has chosen to emphasize its ethno-national affinities, believing that this – rather than legitimacy based on security for all citizens of the State – could provide the grounds for its legitimacy. At the same time, the IDF appeals to liberal enlightened ideals of human rights, gender equality, and ethnic diversity (i.e., images of Ethiopian, Mizrahi, Bedouin, and Druze soldiers but not Palestinian or Arab-Israelis).

The PR images disseminated by the IDF are not likely to raise eyebrows, either among Israeli Jews or a foreign audience who are used to thinking of the State of Israel as the Jewish State. Michael Brecher's seminal study on Israeli military-civil relations, for example, includes the following line: "For Israel's high policy elite, as for the *entire society*, there is a primordial and pre-eminent aspect of the political culture – its *Jewishness*; this pervades thought, feeling, belief and behavior in the political realm."²⁵⁰ Brecher's assertion that *Jewishness* pervades the political culture of the *entire society* is as unsurprising as it is a mischaracterization of the social and political make-up of the state.

Placed in the context of Israel's actual demographic make-up, the images are less than a clear reflection of the reality and diversity of Israeli life, culture, and people,

²⁵⁰ Jones and Murphy, 92 (emphasis added).

especially as it relates to the Arab minority. None of the images on the IDF site give mention of Muslim holidays, toward which some 20 percent of the Israeli citizenry share affinity or observance. Christian holidays, on the other hand, are occasionally given mention – Easter and Christmas. The exclusion of Muslim holidays and imagery, whether intentional or not, reflects the ethno-national affinities of the Israeli State and Military. When one considers the fact that Christians make up an estimated 2 percent of the Israeli citizenry, their inclusion alongside the Muslim exclusion begins to take on some relevance.²⁵¹

These images, we should remember, are posted on the IDF Facebook page, written in English, and largely targeting a foreign audience. The message is clear: Israel is a Jewish State, Liberal and inclusive, but weary of any affiliation, celebration, or commemoration of its Palestinian Arab citizenry. In this context, how might the State hope to achieve peaceable recognition between the Jewish and Muslim communities?

Conclusion

The above discussion gives an image of a globe blanketed-over by a tapestry of the military/security industry, a transnational war machine without any particular national loyalty that is nonetheless appropriated by state power and tasked with its political projects. The image of the war machine that takes the entirety of the globe as its space of movement elicits the nervous conclusion that against the people and the state stands an

²⁵¹ Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel, *Population, By Religion* (2015), http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_02&CYear=2015

independent force that threatens to subordinate their needs in preference to its own freedom of movement. Toward the end of their essay, Deleuze and Guattari describe the war machine this way:

The war machine reforms a smooth space that now claims to control, to surround the entire earth. Total war itself is surpassed, toward a form of peace more terrifying still. The war machine has taken charge of the aim, worldwide order, and the States are now no more than objects or means adapted to that machine. This is the point at which Clausewitz's formula is effectively reversed; to be entitled to say that politics is the continuation of war by other means, it is not enough to invert the order of the words as if they could be spoken in either direction; it is necessary to follow the real movement at the conclusion of which the States, having appropriated the war machine, and having adapted to their aims, reimport a war machine that takes charge of the aim, appropriates the States, and assumes increasingly wider political functions.²⁵²

This essay has noticeably and explicitly addressed only two tendencies of the war machine; its appropriation by forces of state and its naked disregard for life and other established values. In the conclusion of the dissertation, I will now turn to a speculative theory that may illuminate another tendency of the war machine, the one that postmodernists were so attracted to: the deterritorializing of physical and discursive space for the creation of new avenues toward freedom. A politics of (re)cognition that would point toward an ethics of epistemology.

²⁵² Deleuze and Guattari, 421.

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CONCLUSION: A RECOGNITIVE ETHICS OF EPISTEMOLOGY

There is no privileged position from which to view the production of the state in its entirety.²⁵³ We can see the state from the window of a shack in a slum surrounding the central bus station, from a high-rise apartment overlooking the city, from maps on the desk of a cartographer, from tables in the central bureau of statistics, from the diplomatic archives of a foreign embassy, from the market just before sundown on Shabbat, from a mosque minaret edging the coast, or from a church pew on Christmas eve. None of these vantage points is any better than the other. None of these positions is uniquely privileged outside of a web of meaning in which they might be placed or the ends toward which their positions would be rallied. This is not to say that each of them is devoid of value. Quite the opposite is true. Each position is rich in meaning and offers another thread to the tapestry of social life. In addition to lending meaning, each of these vantage points works to undermine any final, stable judgment on what makes up the state and society, how they might be described, from where they derive their value, how they might inspire loyalty or dissidence, and how they may be enclosed now and forever.

In this project, I bring a decentering ethic to the concept of recognition. At heart, this was a study on the *other* that always disturbs our attempts achieving a final and stable being and at the same time demands of us an admission of ethical responsibility in facing its gaze. For a study that would be placed in the field of International Relations, it might seem as though centering the inquiry on the subject of *the other* reads too abstract

²⁵³ Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et Les Choses (The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences)*, New York: Vintage Books. See also: Michel de Certeau, "Walking the City," *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkeley: University of California Press, 91-110.

and detached. International Relations is a field defined by the focus on relation between States – objects that are all too familiar even if we cannot say for sure what they are and what their presence entails for any of the major areas of human inquiry into social relations (justice, economy, politics, aesthetics, language). With its focus on States, mainstream international relations has appeared largely unconcerned by the phenomenality, social ontology, and epistemic paths that allow us to *know* the State as a thing.

The discipline of international relations relies upon a crucial distinction, a bifurcation of the social world – at times leading to a physical boundary – that would mark the space between “us” and “them,” collective-self and collective-other, the people (*our* people), the nation (*our* nation), the state (*our* state). This bifurcation is employed by and achieved through recourse to identity and difference. In the field of post-modern social theory, the problematic of history as it relates to identity and difference is a guiding theme, thanks in part to Hegel.²⁵⁴ In fact, one could go further back in history to Thomas More.²⁵⁵ With a little work, one could reach even farther back to Plato and his dialogues *The Sophist*, *Timeaus*, and *The Republic* in particular.²⁵⁶

These thinkers and others realized the uncomfortable tension: our waning confidence in our ontological viewpoint toward the world on the one hand, and our assuredness as to the political positions we occupy, defend, and disseminate – or in which

²⁵⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

²⁵⁵ Thomas More, *Utopia*, eds. George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

²⁵⁶ Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997).

we are ensnared, entrusted, and disciplined – in our social relations and being. If we are to understand our political scene, we would be required at the least and impelled upon at most to understand how this bifurcation is achieved, to what ends, with what repercussions, and in light of which other possible options or degrees of freedom. We would be required to begin an inquiry into the recognitive ethics of *epistemology* – that field which works to bridge the gap between our phenomenality and our ontological gambits: the very seat of structural violence.

A Recognitive Ethics of Epistemology

The current ethics of epistemology is heavily indebted to its positivist roots. Knowledge is typically seen as value-neutral among its peddlers, practitioners, and developers. Packaged products that emerge after a long chain of verediction are thought to represent the world as it is: nothing but the facts. However, as I demonstrate throughout this project, choices that are made along the way in the face of incomplete information. Despite this, knowledge claims are too often coated in a veneer of confidence that begins to crack when placed under the least amount of pressure.

A recognitive ethics of epistemology would begin with a dedication to interpreting, forecasting, and preventing forms of violence that would emerge from a privileged discourse. This would be an ethical responsibility placed primarily on those whose writing, speaking, and activity are likely to have substantial impact on how their thoughts, ideas, and activities proliferate and affect changes in social thought, structure, relations, and the like. Their ability to affect significant change may emerge from their

individual genius, but more often than not, their work is disseminated via networks of knowledge that have the distinction and power to amplify their effects.

In this project, I focus on three areas of discourse that I packaged and labelled as discursive networks or networks of knowledge/power. These were the State, the Academy, and the Military-Security networks. These might also have been labelled as “Governing/Ordering,” “Analytical/Creative,” and “Killing/Securing” networks – though these, perhaps exempting the first, lack precision and appear “clunky” in the contemporary vernacular.²⁵⁷ Other networks exist and a similar focus could be placed on their knowledge production and the creative forces they rally to affect change in social relations. These might include the Aesthetics (Music, Visual Art, Film, Poetry and Words), Technologies (Energy, Information, Travel, Communication), and Spatial Orders (Architecture, Design, Civil Engineering), among others. The networks selected here were best suited to the current project and my own area of knowledge and interest. The selection, however, was not arbitrary. The networks chosen were those which may be implicated in forms of violence that are more destructive to ethical cognitive practice than others.

These networks have a regretfully heroic ability to influence the killing of corporeal and cognitive bodies. Part of this ability is ceded to them, either because their powers of persuasion as to the legitimacy of their actions, or the magnitude of the force they are able to rally toward given ends. Whether ideationally or materially, these networks often take as their role an act of clearing or else agglomerating bodies and

²⁵⁷ I leave this sort of work to Bruno Latour. See: Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

ideas. What they place in the center of reason and what they relegate to the margins is always a choice between competing values guided by certain modes of interpretation. In this act – we may call it a sovereign act though it is not – are a succession of ethical decisions. As systems become more complex, the nodes of ethical choice – sites of recognition – proliferate. Unless ethical thought is allowed to keep pace with these mushrooming nodes of decision making, the decisions made carry an increased risk of enabling unjust actions toward others and toward the self. Unless ethical thought is brought into epistemological chains or networks, the iterative practice of (re)cognition risks falling toward the stifling politics of recognition.

What would a recognitive ethics of epistemology look like in practice? First, it would include in its analysis an engagement with possible futures emerging from the given knowledge being produced. Second, it would contain explicit notes regarding the gambles being made along the way of producing this knowledge and why one path was chosen over another. Third, it would work toward ensuring that the likelihood of the worst predicted outcomes would be minimized as much as possible. Put another way, it would not only be reflexive in its thought, but actively so, working to reduce its worst excesses. The recognitive ethics of epistemology would also include responsibility on the part of those who pass along this knowledge, to hold the knowledge to account and explicitly announce its failure to aspire to an ethic that would lean toward the reduction of the unjust killing of bodies and ideas.

The exact contours of a recognitive ethics of epistemology are yet to be worked out. Here, I am merely motioning toward them, suggesting their importance and applicability, and enlisting myself with the intention to ferret out their movement and

structure. None of the above is to say that those involved in knowledge production do not admit of some inevitable errors that have been made along the way. The scientific method could be read as one which builds in its practitioner a healthy level of skepticism, (self)doubt, and humility toward its discoveries and findings. Paradigms shift, new discoveries overturn old ones, the value of knowledge can quickly degrade from officially sanctioned praise to junk- or pseudo-science. However, while an individual might admit to some caution and weariness, networks of knowledge/power may have reason not to. The degree to which the two – the individual and the network – are separated is too dense a topic to explore here but both a qualitative and quantitative difference exists between these categories.

Institutions and networks can often escape scrutiny not only because they often pass unnoticed, but also because they legitimate their power on the basis of group identity. Like the War Machine, institutions that structure power and structures that institute power shuttle between violence and identity. The ways they do this are never value neutral and always reflect one choice among many. Our responsibility should be to consider these choices carefully, introducing a recognitive ethics of epistemology into the scientific method and other methods of inquiry, including and especially scholarly productions.

Ethics of recognition

My focus on recognition is an exercise in an ethics of epistemology. Recognition works to ground, stabilize, and legitimate certain institutions. Too often, *how* this functions and

to what ends – with what repercussions and to what exclusions – is passed over as nitpicking or trifling. Recognition, with its origins in the Liberal tradition, collected over the centuries all manner of justifications as well as elusions. My goal here has been to expose some of these overlooked conceptual and political gambits with the hopes of addressing the violence that passes either unnoticed or unrecognized.

The Israel-Palestine conflict, in the eyes of many, can only be solved by a hard division. “Separate but equal” best characterizes the approaches to the conflict from the view of State, the Academy, and the Military (though not the War Machine). From this view, a proverbial Judgment of Solomon will have to take place, except that this time, the sword would be allowed to do its work. Then it would finally put Us Here and Them There: everything in its right place. The individuals and communities, as we have been told before, must suffer and only have a future as *righteous victims*. If this is true now, has it always been? If this is true now, must it be now and forever?

The ethics of recognition would not only recognize contingency and change, but also renounce control and domination of others that had been achieved until now through a bifurcation based on identity (as if identity were a stable and rooted thing). The goal is to remove from politics in the public sphere – or on grand scales (i.e., states, the international system) – an imposed hierarchy of rights and enter instead into relations from which exchanges are decided openly, deliberately and democratically. This does not mean politics and differentiation of roles will not exist in smaller scales or even that the desire toward sovereignty will be entirely removed. Acknowledging and understanding the way this desire operates to construct a certain kind of social world might help to avoid

some of the more aggressive and persistent relations of domination that are given momentum by the presumed and ascribed legitimacy of their project, demand, or calling.

An ethics of recognition requires humility and openness. As Levinas said when speaking of “dis-inter-estedness”:

When I talk of ethics as “dis-inter-estedness,” I do not mean that it is indifference; I simply mean that it is a form of vigilant passivity to the call of the other, which precedes our interest in being, our *inter-est*, as a being-in-the-world attached to property and appropriating what is other than itself to itself.²⁵⁸

It is my hope that the peoples residing in the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea might still find the space to open to the face of the other.

²⁵⁸ Quoted from, Brian Schroeder, *Altared Ground: Levinas, History and Violence*, New York: Routledge (1996), 102.

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