Israel's Biospatial Politics: Territory, Demography, and Effective Control

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Not long after the June 1967 war, at a meeting of the Labor Party, Golda Meir turned to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and asked: "What are we going to do with a million Arabs?" Eshkol paused for a moment and then answered: "I get it," he said. "You want the dowry, but you don't like the bride!"

This anecdote underscores that, from the very beginning, Israel made a clear distinction between the land it had occupied in the 1967 war—the dowry—and the Palestinians who inhabited it—the bride. While the distinction between the people and their land swiftly became the overarching logic informing the structure of Israel's colonial project in the occupied territories, it has also informed Israel's land policies within the pre-1967 borders (Said 1980). Indeed, the notion that there are "two Israels"—the virtuous liberal democracy west of the Green Line, or the 1949 armistice agreement border, and the iniquitous colonial regime within the territories Israel occupied in 1967—is a construct disseminated by liberal Zionists that conceals the intricate connection between race and space produced by the Jewish state.[1] This "good Israel" / "bad Israel" framing does not hold water once one acknowledges that the Judaization of land has been a prime objective of every single government since Israel's establishment in 1948, while the modes of Palestinian dispossession on both sides of the Green Line have been uncannily similar.

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1. We often use the word *race* rather than the term more commonly employed in the academic literature on Israel—*ethnicity*—because in Hebrew the manifestations of these policies are often described as racist and never as a result of ethnic hatred.

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Expropriating land, does not, however, guarantee spatial control or the Judaization of space. Critical social scientists have shown how from the "tower and stockade" method of settling Jews in Mandatory Palestine through the establishment of Jewish towns in the Galilee and the Negev to the construction of settlements and outposts in the West Bank, Zionist leaders have always understood that without civilian presence on the ground effective control of Palestinian land could not be secured. Thus, alongside efforts to empty the land of its Palestinian inhabitants, Jewish civilians were relocated to the land seized from the indigenous population and deployed within the broader architecture of control as an integral part of the process through which space has been racialized and rendered "Jewish." This process has depended on the creation of a strict bifurcation between Jews and Palestinians, which today may seem all too natural but was, in fact, produced over time through the introduction of a variety of mechanisms, including decisions relating to demographic classifications. Underscoring how the Judaization of land is tied to the state's biopolitical techniques helps to make sense of the interplay among territory, demography, and effective control.

Using Israel's land-grabbing practices alongside its demographic classifications as a conceptual lens, in the following pages we make two claims: one about *biospatial* strategies, including the construction of space as a racialized category, and the other historical. We derive the term *biospatial* from Michel Foucault's (2003) notion of biopower, which deals with the *population* as a political problem. Biopower uses statistical devices and scientific methods as well as mechanisms of surveillance to measure and intervene in a set of processes designed to maximize and extract forces from individuals and at times to repress and subjugate them. As opposed to discipline, however, these biotechniques operate on the level of the population rather than the individual. The term *biospatial* denotes the deployment of such biotechniques to demarcate, control, manage, shape, and ascribe signification to space. In other words, *biospatial* is a term that helps describe the diverse mechanisms and processes by which space is constituted as racialized or in racialized terms.

We accordingly show that the particular biospatial scaffolding underlying Israel's colonial project has deployed two major strategies—made up of legal-bureaucratic mechanisms of dispossession alongside the movement of Jewish civilians to settle Palestinian land—across the entire territory located between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean Sea in order to grab and control as much land as possible (Falah 2003).[2] We go on to draw a connection between these strat-

2. Since Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, the methods through which it is controlled—without permanent presence on the ground—are radically different from the methods used in the West Bank. We therefore do not discuss the Gaza Strip in this article.

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egies and statistical classifications and techniques of enumeration that Israel has adopted in order to delineate its efforts to racialize the appropriated space. These classifications and forms of enumeration at times not only defy international standards of statistical reporting (Cohen 2015) but are deployed to either cement or sever the connection between people and space. Historically, we identify a boomerang trajectory, beginning with the massive confiscation and Judaization of Palestinian land in the wake of the 1948 war, then extending and duplicating many of the practices originally developed inside Israel to the West Bank in 1967, and finally turning back inward to solidify the racialization of land within Israel. When we consider that settler colonialism, as Patrick Wolfe (2006) has shown, is a structure and not an event, this recoiling movement across space is neither surprising nor unexpected.

The Racial-Spatial Logic

Before the 1948 war, there were nearly three hundred Jewish and over six hundred Palestinian villages and towns in the territory that would later become Israel. During the war, Palestinian cities were depopulated and about five hundred Palestinian villages were destroyed, while most of their inhabitants either fled or were expelled across international borders, becoming refugees in neighboring countries. In total, about 750,000 Palestinians were displaced in what today would be characterized as ethnic cleansing, while thousands more were internally displaced within the nascent Jewish state. By 1951 the Palestinians who had become refugees were "replaced" by a similar number of Jewish immigrants, both Holocaust survivors from Europe and Mizrahi Jews from Arab countries, thus transforming the nascent state's ethnic composition without altering its overall population size (Cohen 2002).

Soon after the war, Israel introduced a series of administrative and legal mechanisms to seize Palestinian land (Zureik 1979). It classified property belonging to Palestinian refugees first as "abandoned" and then as "absentee property" and quickly appropriated it, while also confiscating much of the land owned by the Palestinians residing in the one hundred villages that survived the war (this includes the villages that were transferred from Jordan to Israel as a result of the 1949 armistice agreement). The establishment of a military government (1948–66) responsible for governing the Palestinian citizens within the fledgling state (Sa'di 2013) facilitated the massive confiscation of land. A twofold strategy was adopted: Israel confined the estimated 160,000 Palestinians who had remained in the Jewish state to their villages and simultaneously converted Palestinian land into closed mili-

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tary zones and nature reserves, confiscated what it defined as absentee property, and prohibited Palestinians from cultivating agricultural plots, all the while registering their estates as state land (Khamaisi 2003). As we will see, the post-1967 strategies implemented in the occupied territories and associated with the "bad Israel" by liberal Zionists had their origins in these earlier practices. Indeed, as early as 1951, the state effectively owned 92 percent of the land within its judicial territory, up from 13.5 percent in 1948 (Forman and Kedar 2004).

Yet, as mentioned, seizing land alone does not guarantee effective control or the reconstitution of space and its racialization as Jewish. Using the rhetoric of "population dispersal," Israel consequently established new Jewish towns to attract large numbers of immigrants to areas still populated by Palestinians and created agricultural settlements to ensure control over large swaths of Palestinian land. Of the 370 new Jewish settlements established soon after 1948, 350 were built on or in proximity to Palestinian villages that had been destroyed (Kedar and Yiftachel 2006). While Jews of all stripes and classes settled on confiscated Palestinian land, the state sent mostly new Mizrahi immigrants—a weak socioeconomic group—to Israel's periphery, especially to the frontiers along its borders. This, according to Ela Shohat (1988), raised their anti-Palestinian sentiments and strengthened their non-Arab identity. In later years, middle- and upper-middle-class Jews were offered incentives to relocate to the Galilee to live in hilltop communities overlooking Palestinian villages. As Alexandre Kedar and Oren Yiftachel (2006) explain, the Palestinian settlement map was "frozen" in 1948 by prohibiting the establishment of new Palestinian villages and towns and arresting the development of those still intact after the war by confiscating most of their land reserves, preventing any development outside the already developed area, and surrounding them with Jewish settlements. In this way, Israel created a "geography of enclaves" in which the vast majority of Israel's Palestinian citizens have remained until this day—even as their population has increased tenfold. Not surprisingly, these policies maintained and reproduced extreme residential segregation between Jews and Palestinians.

Residential segregation—characterized by acute disparity in the state's investment in infrastructure and social services—is arguably the most salient feature informing the organization of Israeli space, with the vast majority of localities defined as either Jewish or non-Jewish by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). To create and maintain such segregation, Israel adopted a variety of biopolitical techniques while harnessing statistical tools to produce and reproduce a series of classifications that create a clear demarcation between Jews and Palestinians; it did so by homogenizing the former and fragmenting the latter. From the outset, the CBS adopted religion as the population's primary classification, while

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Figure 1 Israel and the occupied territories (Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html, accessed October 21, 2017]) The map has been altered, deleting some of the cities that appear in the original and adding markers relevant to the article.

framing the Jews as the norm and contrasting them with all "non-Jews" in its statistical reports. To this day the word *Palestinian* does not appear in Israel's statistical abstracts, while only in 1995 did the word *Arab* finally emerge after decades in which Palestinians were referred to by their religion or as "non-Jews," reminiscent of their treatment in the Balfour Declaration and the 1922 British Mandate for Palestine.

Moreover, to determine their "origin," Jews are classified according to their (or the father's) country of birth. Possible "origins" do not include Mizrahim or Arab Jews (presumably because they are divisive) but only include continents of birth. If, however, both respondents and their fathers were born in Israel, they are assigned an "Israeli origin." Kenneth Prewitt (2013: 217), a former director of the United States Census Bureau, calls this "Israel's policy of ethnic erasure," explaining that it was "designed to solve any problem of [Jewish] ethnic cleavage." One of its outcomes was the rapid erasure of the Arab origin of Mizrahim, about half the Jewish population, thus contributing to the "cleansing," in Ella Shohat's (1988) words, of their Arabness, while ensuring that Arab Jews would swiftly become "Israeli." By contrast, Palestinians have always been unable to attain the status of "Israeli origin" irrespective of how many generations their ancestors have resided in Israel/Palestine (Cohen 2002). In fact, they have no "origin," only religion. In other words, according to Israel's official statistics, all Jews ultimately become "Israeli" within the span of two generations, and no Palestinian can ever become "Israeli." This produces a bifurcated racial reality where Jewishness trumps all other categories of identification, which, in turn, both reflects and helps reproduce the state's mechanisms of control as well as its spatial politics.

A case in point is nationality. The word *nationality* has never appeared in

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CBS reporting, probably because adding nationality would undo the strict division between Jews and Palestinians. Nationality, however, is recorded by the state's population registry, which has a list of 135 acceptable nationalities, yet "Israeli" is not one of them. In most cases, the registry determines nationality according to religion, the most common being Jewish (for Jews and their non-Jewish relatives), Arab (for Muslims and "Arab Christians"), and Druze. A 2008 petition filed by citizens of different registered nationalities, including Jewish, Arab, and Druze, asked the Jerusalem District Court to compel the state to register their nationality as "Israeli." The court rejected the petition, ruling that such a change has "far reaching implications for the State of Israel's identity," while accepting in part the government's claim that an Israeli nationality would "undermine the foundation of the State of Israel" (*Uzi Ornan et al. v. Ministry of Interior et al.* # 6092/07; clauses 58, 14). In 2013 Israel's Supreme Court upheld this decision.

The statistical acrobatics carried out following the mass migration from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s underscores even further the steps the CBS has been willing to take to consolidate the strict Jewish/Palestinian divide: adding non-Jews to the Jewish group as long as they are not Palestinians (Lustick 1999). Out of an estimated one million immigrants who arrived on Israel's shores, approximately 250,000 had Jewish relatives but were themselves either Christian or had no religious affiliation. The CBS decided to alter the way it classifies the entire population and labeled the new non-Jewish immigrants as "others," uniting them with Jews in a group called "Jews and others." This group is contrasted in the statistical abstracts with the newly created group "Arab population," which includes only Muslims, Druze, and Christians. Thus, since the mid-1990s, according to the CBS, there are two kinds of Christians in Israel: "Arab Christians" and "non-Arab Christians." The algorithm developed by the CBS to distinguish between these two groups is based in part on where they live, namely, in a "Jewish locality" or a "non-Jewish" one. This suggests that race and space are mutually constitutive; biotechniques are used to produce a population's racial (and other) identity and in this way to racialize the inhabited space, while space itself helps determine the population's identity.

Over the years, Israel has continuously monitored the changing proportions of Jews and Palestinians, not only at the national level but also in each region. Its demographic anxiety has manifested itself prominently in its spatial policies in the northern district, especially the Galilee, where nearly two-thirds of the district's population after the 1948 war were Palestinians. This demographic imbalance led the state to devote massive resources to Judaize the land, and, after decades of investment in the northern district, the proportion of the Palestinian popula-

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Figure 2 Police guarding bulldozers during demolition of a Bedouin house, August 4, 2015 (Michal Rotem / Negev Co-Existence Forum for Civil Equality)

tion was reduced to 54 percent. In line with its policy of arresting all Palestinian development, Palestinians in northern Israel currently reside in 78 localities, all of which existed before 1948, while Jews reside in 307 localities, most of them established since 1948. Even though Israel did not succeed in creating a Jewish majority in this district, the size of the Jewish population relocated to the area has been sufficient to advance three major objectives. First, the establishment of Jewish towns and farming communities has helped restrict Palestinians' development, transforming their villages into enclaves. Second, it has enabled Jews to exercise effective control over the land confiscated after the 1948 war and thus to Judaize it. This was particularly important in the Galilee, parts of which had been allotted to the Palestinian state in the 1947 United Nations (UN) Partition Plan. The Labor government believed that if Palestinian development was left unchecked in the Galilee, it could potentially lead to demands for Palestinian autonomy or even Palestinian independence, a concern that has also informed the West Bank settlement project. Third, the Jewish civilians who were relocated to these areas served, wittingly or not, as a vital component in the state's apparatus of ethnic policing and surveillance.

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The biospatial strategies adopted in the south, which is Israel's largest geographical region and is known in Hebrew as the Negev, were even more pronounced. An estimated ninety thousand Palestinian Bedouin inhabited the region in 1947, but only eleven thousand remained in the years following the state's establishment, the rest having been pushed across the borders (Porat 2009). Moreover, not long after the 1948 war, Israel concentrated the majority of the remaining Palestinian Bedouin population into a restricted, 1,500-square-kilometer area known as "*al-Siyaj*" (meaning "fence" in Arabic) located in northeastern Negev, the region's least arable land. After military rule ended, forced urbanization of the Bedouin community began. For Israel, concentrating the Bedouin in urban areas meant that it could seize almost all of the Negev's land while concomitantly consolidating its control over the population. Indeed, after 1969, the state established seven Bedouin-only towns within the Siyaj area—among the eight Palestinian communities that have been established since 1948—touting them as paradigms of modernity (Rotem and Gordon 2017). The allocation of plots within these hastily fabricated towns was, however, contingent on the Bedouin surrendering at least some of their land claims, which drove almost half of the population to refuse to move into these designated towns (Amara 2013). Indeed, a significant portion of the Bedouin population remain in villages unrecognized by the state—villages whose borders are not demarcated, and unlike the Palestinian villages in the north, their houses are dispersed over a relatively large area of confiscated land. The CBS does not include these Bedouin villages in the count of localities and asks the people inhabiting them to indicate the name of their tribe instead of an address, thus revealing, yet again, the CBS's power of interpellation while severing the bio from space.

Attaining effective control of the Negev's land proved difficult also due to its size, which is five times larger than all of the northern district. Even though Israel took over Bedouin land for military training while giving the local kibbutzim unusually large agricultural plots—not so much for the economic value but to prevent Bedouin from settling on these lands—the Negev's size limited the state's ability to Judaize the whole terrain. As we will see, in recent years Israel has adopted new policies to mitigate this shortcoming. Nonetheless, due to the overall success of its dispossessive practices, many strategies were exported to the West Bank following the 1967 war.

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Territorial Expansion

On June 27, 1967, the day East Jerusalem was annexed by Israel, a group of Israeli archaeologists were appointed as supervisors of the archaeological and historical sites in the West Bank. In a press release issued by the military, these sites were defined as Israel's "national and cultural property." This act, which may appear relatively benign, nonetheless reveals that the ideology of a Greater Israel—namely, that the West Bank is part of the biblical land of Israel and is therefore Jewish and should be integrated into the state—informed Israel's policies from the moment it had occupied these territories. Alongside this messianic ideology, a militaristic ideology that considers the West Bank to be a defensive corridor against invasion from the east also gained ground after the fighting had subsided. The spatial significance of the region was emphasized by the proponents of both of these ideologies, while the connection between the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants and their land was similarly and conveniently ignored (Gordon 2008).

Israel, however, did not merely annex what had been Jordanian Jerusalem, the main city in the West Bank, but annexed an area eleven times larger, including twenty-eight adjacent Palestinian villages with a total population of nearly seventy thousand. The "united" city's post-1967 borders had been drawn according to a racial-spatial logic in order to maximize its urban territory while integrating the smallest possible number of Palestinians. Nonetheless, the city's population grew from 198,000 to about 266,000 residents overnight, while its ethnic makeup had been transformed from 98 percent Jewish to 74 percent Jewish and 26 percent Palestinian. These Palestinians were not granted citizenship but rather classified as Israeli "residents," thus enhancing Palestinian fragmentation by distinguishing them from the Palestinian citizens of Israel and from the noncitizens in the West Bank.

Following annexation, Israel once again adopted a two-prong approach of confiscating the newly captured land and sending civilian emissaries to settle it. It imposed its own legal system on the city's eastern part. Applying land-use codes, building restrictions, and regulations involving infrastructure distribution, the government expropriated Palestinian land, prevented the development of Palestinian neighborhoods, disrupted their urban continuum, and transformed them into enclaves by building new Jewish neighborhoods in ways that were reminiscent of Israel's actions in the Galilee. As Michal Braier (2013) explains, the government created a series of inner neighborhoods to ensure Jewish territorial continuity, while simultaneously establishing outer neighborhoods to deliberately facilitate

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Figure 3 East Jerusalem neighborhoods (Ir Amim)

suburban sprawl. These colonial policies managed to blur the lines dividing West and East Jerusalem, creating an urban fabric that, on the one hand, is geographically interwoven yet, on the other hand, preserves strict segregation between the city's Jewish and Palestinian areas (fig. 3). Moreover, the densely built satellite "neighborhoods" nearly tripled the city's Jewish population, even though, due to higher Palestinian fertility and to a lesser extent out-migration of Jews, in the past fifty years the proportion of Jews in the city has actually declined from 74 percent to 64 percent. The rising proportion of Palestinians in Jerusalem, viewed as nothing less than a strategic threat, led Israel to implement a "silent deportation" policy, whereby legal-bureaucratic mechanisms have been used to strip the residency of thousands of Palestinians. More recently, the politics of space and race has moved up yet another notch, with the government contemplat-

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ing ways to redraw the city's municipal boundaries either to include more Jews from neighboring settlements within its borders or to reduce its size in order to transpose 140,000 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem to the rest of the West Bank.

While Israel took over East Jerusalem in one fell swoop through de jure annexation and the mobilization of Israeli laws, in the West Bank, by contrast, it carried out the confiscation piecemeal utilizing a mixture of Ottoman and British Mandatory law, regulations from the Jordanian legal systems, and orders issued by military commanders. The West Bank itself is about seventy miles long and thirty miles wide, an area the size of Delaware; it is circumscribed on the east by a barren plateau and on the west by the Green Line. Before the war, about 800,000 Palestinians were living in twelve urban centers and about 527 rural communities, including nineteen refugee camps. During the war, Israel partially "cleansed" several West Bank areas of their Palestinian inhabitants.[3] The Jordan Valley (excluding Jericho) was partially cleansed of its population because Israel wanted to secure the border with Jordan, while the Latrun enclave was depopulated of Palestinians because their villages overlooked the highway leading to Jerusalem and the Israeli military decided to destroy them, as just one of "the unpleasant and unpopular aspects of fulfilling Zionism," in Moshe Dayan's words (quoted in Segev 2007: 410). In addition, demolitions were part of a broader policy aimed at clearing a section of the area adjacent to the West Bank's western border—where, for example, more than 40 percent of the dwellings in the border town Qalqilyah were demolished—as well as the entire Magharbia Quarter located in Jerusalem's old city in front of Harem al Sharif and the Wailing Wall (Raz 2012). All in all, about two hundred thousand people, or 25 percent of the West Bank's inhabitants, were displaced, fleeing to Jordan during the war and its direct aftermath (Gazit 1995). Similar to the policies within pre-1967 Israel, Palestinians have not been allowed to build a single new village or town in the West Bank over the course of the fifty-year occupation, even as the population has grown fivefold.[4]

Israel has used several complementary methods to seize Palestinian land in the West Bank, many of which had their basis in the methods first developed within its pre-1967 borders. These include declaring land absentee property, transforming

3. The removal of the population and the land-grabbing policies in the Golan Heights, which we do not discuss in this paper, were more extreme. Of the 128,000 Syrians who lived on the Golan before the 1967 war, only 5 percent remained in the area in its aftermath, and of the 139 Syrian agricultural villages and 61 individual farms registered prior to the war, only 7 villages were not destroyed (Gordon and Ram 2016). Currently the occupied Golan Heights is home to 22,000 Jews residing in 32 settlements, and 25,000 Syrians (mostly Druze) residing in five villages.

4. The sole exception is the town of Rawabi, which is now under construction near Ramallah.

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swathes of land into nature reserves, and claiming that land has been left uncultivated for many years or, alternatively, simply declaring that a particular area was needed for military or public use (where "public" denotes Jewish). Using these methods, Israel by 1987 managed to restrict Palestinians to less than 60 percent of the West Bank, and the outcome has been that, not unlike their copatriots within the Green Line, many occupied Palestinians have lost all or parts of their land. The de jure land-grab translated into de facto annexation through the establishment of Jewish settlements and bypass roads and, eventually, the erection of a separation barrier. Often this process actually operated in the opposite direction, whereby the de facto seizure preceded the de jure confiscation, as has been the case with many "unauthorized" settlements.

While many view the Judaization of the West Bank as part of a right-wing messianic ideology, the policy was, in fact, first enacted by Labor Zionists. Israel began Judaizing the land by moving military bases to the region immediately following the war, gradually converting some of them into settlements. One-fourth of the settlements that currently exist were established within the occupation's first decade, and if one counts those that were already planned, almost one-third of the settlements existing today were initiated by the Labor Party before it lost the 1977 elections (Gordon 2008). Young secular men and women, most of whom were aligned with the Labor Party, established the majority of the Jewish settlements during this first period, many of them located in the Jordan Valley, which was viewed as essential for Israel's security. Simultaneously, the Labor government allowed religious Jews, whose desires and interests were shaped by the messianic ideology of a Greater Israel, to establish a few settlements in densely populated parts of the West Bank.

Two points need to be emphasized here. First, even though the government presented the religious settlers as contrarians, in practically every case the two opposing camps ended up cooperating, with the government actually providing financial and other assistance to the settlers. Second, from the very beginning, settlements were established not only according to a military-strategic logic but also according to a national-religious one. Not unlike Jewish citizens in the Galilee, these settlers and settlements, which are usually located on hilltops overlooking Palestinian villages, serve as a means of population control, not only by restricting Palestinian development and movement but also as mechanisms of civilian surveillance and ethnic policing (Weizman 2012).

After the right-wing Likud assumed power, the cooperation between the government and the settler leadership—Jewish fundamentalists with clear goals and astute political skills—became even more intimate, and, as a result, settlement

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construction was intensified. Sixty-three new settlements were established during the seven-year period between 1978 and 1984. The Likud government's goal was to Judaize the entire "land of Israel" and prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, an option that seemed viable following the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt. To accomplish these ends, other settlements were placed in close proximity to the Green Line, in an effort to attract nonideological Jews to settle in the West Bank. Indeed, a minority of the settlers were religious fundamentalists, while most settlers were simply looking for a suburban home at an affordable price located not too far from the urban centers. To encourage their resettlement, the Israeli government, especially in the post-1977 period, proffered economic perks to anyone who was willing to relocate to the West Bank. Notwithstanding these policies, during the occupation's first two decades Israel failed to populate the West Bank with large numbers of Jews.

When Israelis and Palestinians first formally met to negotiate peace in 1991, twenty-four years into the occupation and fourteen years since the first Likud-led government, there were 132,000 settlers in East Jerusalem but only 90,000 settlers in the rest of the West Bank. Twenty-five years later, the numbers of settlers in East Jerusalem had increased by about 60 percent, while the number of settlers in the West Bank had more than quadrupled, and this despite the freeze on new settlement construction to which Israeli was forced to agree during the Oslo process. An analysis of the increase of Jewish settlers in the West Bank during these years reveals that the level of Jewish migration to the West Bank does not fluctuate according to the changing composition of the Israeli government—Likud-led or Labor-led—but rather increases during periods of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, when there is less violence. This suggests that "the peace process" actually bolsters Israel's settlement project, while violence impedes it (Gordon and Cohen 2012).

Moreover, during Oslo, the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B, and C, which were drawn according to a biospatial logic and which determined the distribution of powers by creating internal boundaries, each one with its own specific laws and regulations (Said 2007). In Areas A and B, which were more densely populated with Palestinians, the Palestinian Authority was given more responsibilities, while in Area C, which contained almost 60 percent of the land and only 4 percent of the Palestinian population, Israel retained full responsibility for security and public order as well as for civil issues relating to territory (planning and zoning, etc.). Oslo reveals that the biospatial logic underlying Israeli settler colonialism not only constitutes space as racialized but also divides and organizes space, determining, in this case, its contiguity. Because Areas A and

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B were densely populated by Palestinians, they were divided into 131 clusters, scattered like an archipelago across the terrain (fig. 4) and separated by strategic corridors that facilitated Israeli control, while Area C remained contiguous. It is also in the context of such biospatial strategies that one needs to understand the "unauthorized" Jewish outposts that were erected in the West Bank in the wake of the new millennium. These outposts are populated by relatively few—about ten thousand—Jews, many of them second- and third-generation settlers, but they manage to ensure effective control of large swaths of land.

The way Israel enumerates its population bolsters this logic. Following the 1967 war, it began including all the people residing within the pre-1967 borders and annexed East Jerusalem, but in the West Bank it counts only those residing in Jewish settlements and leaves out the indigenous population. Statistical virtuosities of this kind—counting Jewish residents while ignoring the existence of millions of Palestinians within the same region is not practiced in Jerusalem, which had been annexed de jure—provide a distorted picture of reality. They reflect and help reproduce the de facto annexation of this region by engendering a biospatial link between Jews and this area, while severing the link between Palestinians and their land.

Following Oslo, Israel has made immense strides in the demographic race in the West Bank. Of the 420,000 settlers currently living in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), approximately 150,000 are ultra-Orthodox Jews. This settler group has grown thirtyfold—from 5 percent of the settler population in 1991 to 35 percent today—and is the major cause of the exponential growth of Jews in the region. The ultra-Orthodox community became Israel's demographic silver bullet, facilitating the rapid racialization of space. Not unlike the move of Mizrahi Jews to the periphery in pre-1967 Israel, the government exploited their poverty and offered them inexpensive housing and a series of other subsidies if they relocated to the West Bank. In this case, however, the government has taken advantage of this community's extremely high birth rate, about seven children per woman, which guarantees that the natural growth rate (births minus deaths) is considerably higher among Jewish settlers than it is among Palestinians; indeed, natural growth is now the main cause of settler proliferation, and even if the Israeli government were to stop moving its citizenry to the West Bank, the number of settlers would still increase substantially and the space would increasingly become more Jewish.

The Colonial Leviathan Recoils

Following Israel's success in Judaizing large parts of the West Bank, it has turned back inward, and, not unlike the trajectory of a boomerang, it is now completing

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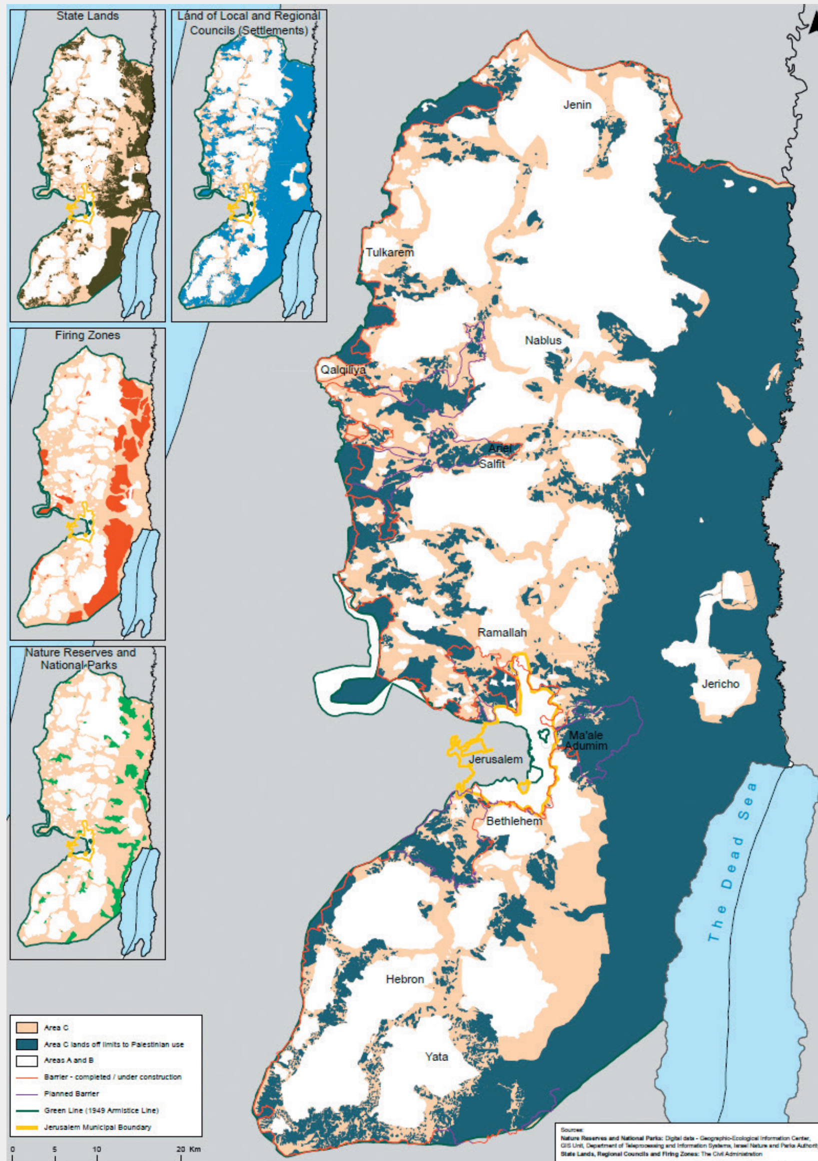

Figure 4 The West Bank archipelago (B'Tselem)

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the project it left unfinished in the Negev. Approximately 712,000 people currently live in the Negev, which contains about 60 percent of the country's land but is home to only 8 percent of its population. Of this population, 35 percent are Palestinians, the vast majority of them Bedouin, who, due to extremely high fertility rates (similar to ultra-Orthodox Jews), increased from 11,000 in 1948 to about 250,000 today. Nonetheless, only 18 localities out of the 144 in the region are designated for the Bedouin community, while about 65,000 Bedouin citizens continue to reside in 35 villages classified as "unrecognized" by the Israeli government (fig. 5) (Rotem and Gordon 2017). This means that they are prohibited from connecting their houses to the electricity grid or the water and sewage systems. Construction regulations are strictly enforced, and in the past year alone about a thousand Bedouin homes and animal pens—usually referred to by the government as structures—were demolished. There are no paved roads, and signposts to the villages from main roads are prohibited (Nasasra 2017). Moreover, the villages do not appear on maps. As a matter of official policy these localities do not exist, while demographically their inhabitants (who are Israeli citizens) are linked to tribes rather than to a locality, thus detaching their connection to their land. Actually, until recently, three of the eighteen Bedouin localities recognized by the state were considered not localities but rather "places" in the state registry. This was because they were deemed empty, according to the official records. Informed by biotechniques that sever this group from their land, Israel's actions indicate that it plans to demolish most of the unrecognized villages and relocate at least thirty thousand inhabitants into already established Bedouin towns.

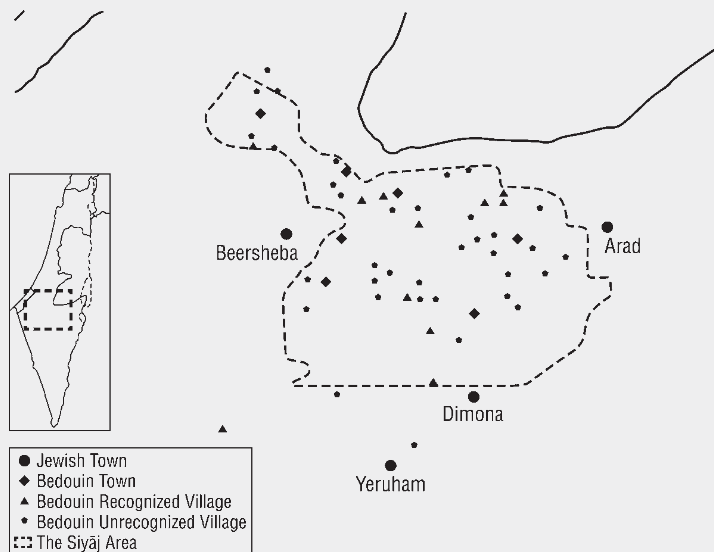

Figure 5 Bedouin towns and villages in the Negev (Michal Rotem / NCF)

While the confiscation of the Negev's land was accomplished in the state's early years, over the past decade the government has intensified its attempts to strengthen its effective control of this area and to Judaize it fully. The production

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Figure 6 Israeli authorities with pickup trucks and tractors plowing "illegal" Bedouin fields east of Lakiya, February 5, 2014 (Michal Rotem / NCF)

of the biospatial link, which effectively racializes space, is achieved through the CBS's classification and the by now familiar twofold strategy of dispossessing and settling. On the one hand, the government is restricting Bedouin development within the confined borders of the towns it created and the eleven villages it recently recognized, while transferring many of its military bases to the Negev, deploying a draconic policy of home demolitions in the unrecognized villages, and, until 2007, spraying "illegal" agriculture plots with poison and, since 2007, by simply plowing over them (fig. 6). On the other hand, it has been reinforcing the civilian presence on the ground, establishing new Jewish settlements and encouraging Jews to move to the region, while planting thousands of "Jewish trees" provided by the Jewish National Fund on large strips of Bedouin land (Rotem and Gordon 2017).

Initially, the government decided to allocate plots of land to some sixty Jewish families, scattering farms across the Negev terrain to restrict and circumscribe the space that its non-Jewish citizens could occupy. What is unique about these farms is that they connect existing strategies of Judaizing the land with neoliberal entrepreneurship projects. These new farms stifle Bedouin expansion as they prosper from boutique guesthouses and homemade wines and cheeses catering to the bourgeois tastes of Tel Aviv tourists. Thus space not only becomes increasingly Jewish, but it also acquires a specific entrepreneurial valance. More recently, the government has decided to build fifteen additional Jewish settlements in the region to consolidate the Judaization of the land. Indeed, Blueprint Negev, a Jew-

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ish National Fund flagship project, aims to attract 250,000 Jews to the Negev in the coming years.

An illustration of how the colonial leviathan is turning back inward is perhaps most obvious in Umm al-Hiran, a village of about 350 Bedouin citizens destined to be destroyed and replaced by a Jewish settlement called Hiran. Just a few kilometers away from this Bedouin village, about thirty Jewish religious families have been living in a makeshift gated community, waiting patiently for the government to expel the Bedouin families from their homes. This gated Jewish community is made up of houses scattered around a playground and a new kindergarten. Needless to say, this bucolic setting is both unnerving and surrealistic, considering its violent undertow. Ironically, the people who are destined to dispossess the residents of Umm al-Hiran are West Bank settlers who made an ideological decision to return to Israel to "redeem Jewish land" from "Bedouin invaders." Because the land is itself constituted as Jewish, the Bedouin who inhabits it is rendered an "invader," thus revealing not only the classic colonial inversion between the colonist and the colonized (Perugini and Gordon 2015) but also how the spatial-racial nexus produces the biocriminal—the person who is deemed a felon due to the racial status ascribed to him or her (Foucault 2003). In Israel, Foucault's notion of the biocriminal is further developed since space itself is racialized and the racial mismatch between space and the subject who occupies it is sufficient to transform the latter into a criminal.

Conclusions

One obvious conclusion when examining the political ecology in the Jewish state is that the common tendency to single out Israel's policies in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem as representing an epiphenomenon or some kind of deviation is misguided. In the past seventy years, four related strategies have governed Israel's preoccupation with biospatial policies with remarkable regularity and little change. First, Israel has adopted biotechniques and has developed a series of classifications to help constitute Jews and Israelis while distinguishing them from Palestinians. The second strategy—even if only partially achieved—aims to create and maintain a solid Jewish majority not only in the entire territory between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean Sea but also in each and every district (except Areas A and B). The third is the country's extreme residential segregation, where over 99 percent of the 1,214 localities listed by the CBS are either exclusively Jewish or Palestinian. This segregation is crucial for the state's biospatial project, since it not only encourages the Jewish localities to expand across

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space while stifling the development of the Palestinian localities, but it also helps ascribe and inscribe Jewishness to and in space. These three strategies inform the fourth, namely, the Judaization of land.

There are, of course, differences between the demographic and spatial strategies introduced on each side of the Green Line. Even though land has been seized using very similar mechanisms, and the state's efforts to enhance effective control by dispossessing the colonized and settling the Jews are nearly identical in all areas under its control, Jews and Palestinians are segregated differently in each region. Due to these differences, the efforts to Judaize the land are beginning to produce contradictions within the pre-1967 borders that have yet to materialize in the West Bank. Consider Nazrat Ilit (literally, Upper Nazareth), a Jewish town that was built in 1957 on a hilltop overlooking Palestinian Nazareth. Notwithstanding the Jewish town's role in the Judaization of the Galilee, the acute housing shortage propelled by restrictions on the expansion of Palestinian municipal boundaries and on housing construction within Nazareth and nearby villages has led middle-class Palestinians to move to Nazrat Ilit. Despite the fierce opposition of many of its Jewish residents and their elected officials, by the end of 2016 Palestinians made up 25 percent of the Nazrat Ilit's population of over forty thousand. A similar process, albeit much smaller in scale, has been identified in some of the Jewish "neighborhoods" in East Jerusalem (Pullan and Yacobi 2017). The significant point is that the movement of Palestinian citizens to Jewish cities "contaminates" the Jewish city's purity and thus undermines, even if very gradually, the biospatial link and the construction of space as Jewish. The strict segregation in the West Bank does not allow for such "spatial miscegenation" processes. Indeed, the settlements in the West Bank consist of Jews only.

Israel's obsession with demography and this obsession's intricate connection to space is not new. Indeed, the major feature distinguishing the different camps within Zionism has to do with the political significance each camp ascribes to demography and territory. Labor Zionists have always aspired to create a homogeneous Jewish society and, therefore, eventually preferred demography over geography, often resisting their desire for territorial expansion (Shafir and Peled 2002). The Zionist Right, by contrast, wanted the fledgling Jewish state to include parts of the East Bank (i.e., Jordan), thus emphasizing geography over demography. Over the years the language has changed somewhat, but the guiding principles continue to be the same. Liberal Zionists who currently support territorial compromise champion the creation of a Palestinian state primarily because they want to minimize the number of Palestinians within Israel's territory. Even among this camp, Palestinian basic rights and UN resolutions are of secondary importance,

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since the logic overriding everything else is biospatial: guaranteeing a solid Jewish majority within a given space.

By way of conclusion, it might be important to state the obvious. Historically, states have frequently connected the bio with the spatial at least since the eighteenth century, at times with horrific consequences. Contemporary manifestations also abound, ranging from the biospatial strategies Europe has recently adopted to deal with the massive refugee crisis through US President Donald Trump's Muslim ban and all the way to Myanmar where Rohingya Muslims are being ethnically cleansed from Rakhine State. Nonetheless, excavating the specificities of each case remains vital. Before Israel's establishment, for instance, the 1937 Peel Commission and the 1947 UN Partition Plan clearly based their recommendations on a biospatial logic (i.e., the division of territory according to certain population classifications produced by the colonial power). The difference between these partition plans and the Oslo archipelago is instructive, however, since in the latter the biospatial logic was used not to harness and maximize the population's forces or to enable self-determination but rather to guarantee the ongoing subjugation of the colonized Palestinians. Notwithstanding this difference, both the long history of biotechniques and the different geographical settings in which they are currently being mobilized suggest that Israel is not really an innovator. The novelty of Israeli colonialism is that for decades it has not merely managed to survive but has actually flourished. This is because it receives the unconditional support of almost all liberal democracies, something that is striking in the postcolonial era and is due in part to these countries' perception of Israel as a democracy. The tragic irony is that Israel's biospatial politics have given birth to a reality of a single, Jewish-Palestinian, apartheid state.

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