

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the early 1980s, Israel was in deep crisis. The economy was in trouble with a triple digit inflation, a large deficit, and no prospects for economic growth. Tensions between ethnic and religious groups had risen and political language escalated. The delicate pluralistic structure of Israeli society was in danger. "Pluralism" implies structured dialogue between social groups while deep social cleavages and life under hyperinflation, in which individuals are worried over their diminishing savings, lead to disregard for any form of dialogue. There were many signals of cracks in the pluralistic structure: the rise of a racist political party, a hand grenade thrown into a crowd of demonstrators, and the surfacing of an underground movement. As one observer had noted, "the moral bonds of society were loosened."<sup>1</sup>

Populist trends surfaced in Israeli society. "Populism" refers to the replacement of structured dialogue between social groups by direct contact between the masses and political leaders who embody "the will of the people."<sup>2</sup> Populist movements were those in Russia and the Americas that stressed the notion of direct, emotional contact between leaders and followers.<sup>3</sup> Although no populist movement existed in Israel, many observers in the early 1980s were concerned about "public square politics," i.e., the passionate and emotional appeals by populist leaders to enchanted crowds.<sup>4</sup>

The populist trend was mainly associated with Menachem Begin, leader of the right-wing Likud party and Israel's prime minister between 1977 and 1983. Possessed by unusual rhetorical skills, he literally enchanted masses in public squares, especially during a heated election campaign in 1981, and served as father-figure to many. Begin's power base depended largely on a wide anti-establishment sentiment he generated among Jews of Asian and African origin who were critical of the Labor party that dominated Israeli politics until 1977. They blamed it for the

hardships suffered during their absorption process in the fifties and sixties. Begin was successful in portraying Labor as the “establishment” and Likud as party of the people, responding to their quests for short-range economic benefits and to their anti-Arab sentiment in foreign affairs.<sup>5</sup>

“When a party relies on the people, it has to give the people their dues,”<sup>6</sup> wrote Elazar and Sandler in their analysis of Likud. After Likud won the 1981 elections, the country’s financial reserves were stretched to the limit in order to raise personal consumption, and a new voice was heard in Israel—stressing its isolation in a hostile world. Begin’s supporters, many of whom were refugees from Arab states, were attracted to his harsh military policy and developed what Avner Yaniv has labelled “populist jingoism”<sup>7</sup> condoning the use of force against Arabs. As one commentator said, “the Israel Menachem Begin created in his own image was more narrowly Jewish, more aggressive and more isolated.”<sup>8</sup>

The cracks in the pluralist system and the populist trend worsened by the Lebanon war. On June 5, 1982, the Begin government made a decision to invade Lebanon in order to destroy PLO strongholds and secure Israel’s northern region. Soon, the military found itself engaged in an all out war, escalated through a piecemeal government decision process steered by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon who pursued his own agenda. Judging by his moves throughout the operation, Sharon was not satisfied with a limited campaign. Instead, he tried to expel Syrian forces from Lebanon, take over large parts of the country, and force a “new political order” dominated by Israel’s Maronite allies.

However, any hopes for a new order were frustrated when Maronite leader Bashir Gemayel was assassinated shortly after his induction as president of Lebanon. The three-year war, causing hundreds of casualties on both sides, became a major disaster. A massacre of Palestinians by Israel’s Maronite allies in Lebanon left a moral stain on the Jewish state, and the military emerged from the war hurt and divided.

When the failure of the Lebanon war became apparent, fundamental disagreement evolved within Israeli society. Large parts of the population continued to support the adventure and condoned the use of force. On the other side of the fence stood others, including most incumbents of the “knowledge elite,”<sup>9</sup> i.e., writers, journalists, scientists, scholars, and many professionals who felt that the government’s decision to launch a war to impose a new political order in Lebanon distorted the defense doctrine which prevailed in Israel since its establishment, one authorizing the use of military force only for defense purposes.<sup>10</sup>

The knowledge elite defined the disagreement over the Lebanon war as a clash between opposed subcultures—one of peace and one of war, one pragmatic and one messianic, one rational and one populist. And

there was no question what side it was on: "virtually the whole of the Israeli intelligentsia is on the left-liberal side of the fence," wrote law professor and Knesset member Amnon Rubinstein, "while the Likud is strongest among people who regard themselves as deprived outsiders." He clearly dissociated the former from "those who take a nationalist, traditionalist, anti-Arab and anti-intellectual approach to our country's problems."<sup>11</sup> Political writings by the knowledge elite in the early 1980s were those of a besieged community, alienated from the decisions and actions of a government supported by the masses.<sup>12</sup>

The Lebanon adventure was seen as an "upheaval,"<sup>13</sup> as leading to "new Zionism,"<sup>14</sup> as having created a state of "dissonance in Zion."<sup>15</sup> Begin's foreign policy was perceived as a wholly new phase in the life of the Jewish state, one defined as "a Neo-Revisionist psycho-ideological philosophy"<sup>16</sup> comprised of a pronounced emphasis on military power, a tendency to romanticize the nation as a source of all virtue, a presentation of the outside world as hostile, and the identification of internal opponents as undesirables.<sup>17</sup>

In an international conference on "totalitarian democracy" taking place at the Hebrew University during the first days of the war, Uriel Tal, a scholar on Jewish studies, gave the political disagreements in the country metaphysical proportions. He identified a Gogmagog clash between two divergent trends in Jewish religious nationalism—one of political messianism and one of political restraint. He considered the first as radical and uncompromising and the second as applying rational and ethical norms to political life.

Tal focused on the radical messianic interpretation, supported by the majority of settlers in the West Bank, according to which all biblical prophecies, including those about changes of a cosmic nature, relate to concrete redemptive times—which have allegedly arrived. The present era is interpreted as one of personal and national redemption, said Tal. An existential political situation of totality, rather than of tolerance, has been inaugurated. A total and uncompromising sanctity is attributed by messianic thinkers to Israel's post-1967 boundaries which implies that any withdrawal from them is prohibited.

According to Tal, the proponents of the second approach tend to be moderate and to urge compromise. They derive from Jewish religious sources an opposing lesson—one of political restraint. Jewish law is seen as a factor which throughout history has freed Judaism from an excess of ecstasy or asceticism, from political romanticism, and while the sanctity of the land is firmly maintained, territorial boundaries are conceived as historical phenomena, as results of political, strategic and moral considerations, and hence if necessary, subject to change. Ethical rather than

militant criteria are emphasized due to the belief that prolonged rule over ethnic or religious minorities such as the Arab population of the Land of Israel cannot but distort the democratic and ethical foundations of Jewish society.<sup>18</sup>

By 1984, the clustering of political disagreement, social strife, and messianic feelings resulted in a deep cultural and political rift.<sup>19</sup> Labor supporters felt besieged by irrational masses while Likud supporters felt threatened by arrogant supremacists. As one scholar observed at the time, "the world is perceived through the prism of binary opposites: 'them' against 'us' or the forces of light versus the forces of darkness."<sup>20</sup> Elections held in July 1984 thus turned by the knowledge elite into a moment of truth in which "political restraint" had a chance to overcome "political messianism."

Incumbents of the knowledge elite were not particularly fond of Labor's conduct, nor were they politically homogeneous, but many of them hoped for a Labor victory, a hope reinforced by polls predicting a Labor landslide.<sup>21</sup> As several analysts had indicated, the 1984 elections constituted one of the most crucial electoral contests in Israeli history as it tested the durability of the alignment between Likud and its oriental constituency.<sup>22</sup> Writing shortly before the elections, a Labor supporter assessed that an electoral victory for Likud irrespective of the failures of the economy and the quagmire in Lebanon "will assure the Likud regime of power for many more years."<sup>23</sup>

The election results were stunning; the country found itself in a political stalemate. The vote was split between the Labor party headed by Shimon Peres and the right wing Likud party headed by Begin's successor, Yitzhak Shamir, with none of them able to form a viable political coalition.<sup>24</sup> When the stalemate between the two parties became apparent, observers concluded that the socio-cultural trends which brought Likud to power in 1977 were profound. The subculture represented by Likud was equal in power to that represented by Labor and the two fundamentally opposed forces in Israeli society, each conceiving itself as "the children of light" and the other as "the children of darkness" were now to share the burden of government.

A national unity government was formed in which the two contending parties and their allies among the smaller parties gained an equal number of seats. The national unity government, supported by an overwhelming majority of the 120 members of the Knesset (Israel's parliament), was anything but united. A rotation agreement was signed according to which the prime minister's position rotated between Peres, who became prime minister for the first two years, and Shamir who served as prime minister in the last two years. The government was comprised of 25 ministers with a

dozen ministers from each of the two contending blocs (9 Labor, 1 Yahad, 1 Shinui and 1 Ometz vs. 10 Likud, 1 Morasha and 1 Shas), as well as one minister from the National Religious Party.

This arrangement promised deadlock on every important issue both in the government and in the inner cabinet comprised of five Labor and five Likud ministers. For any cabinet decision to be brought before the government, the consent of both Peres and Shamir was required. As one political scientist has explained, the idea was to assure that none of the two big parties would ever find itself in a minority position on any important issue, as long as it maintains its inner unity.<sup>25</sup> The complex arrangements made by the political parties in a long negotiation process signalled a pragmatic attitude among the politicians but did not eliminate the danger of populism. To the contrary, the parity in the government increased the probability that major political issues, on which no agreement could be reached, would be brought directly to "the people."

No one was more threatened by populism than Labor's leader Peres who had been demonized by public square demagoguery in the early eighties; he was successfully made into an embodiment of Labor's sins. The very mention of his name in Likud election rallies was sufficient to generate intense hate and resentment. This was facilitated by his reserved personality, which stood in direct contrast to Begin's charismatic appeal, and by the fact that Peres, a technocrat and long-time politician, had indeed epitomized much of Labor's history.

Born in 1923, Peres was active since an early age in the No'ar Oved youth movement, which was affiliated with the workers' party—Mapai. In 1940 he joined, as member of No'ar Oved and its secretary general, Kibbutz Alumot in the lower Galilee. Israel's first prime minister and head of Mapai, David Ben-Gurion, recruited him to fulfil several tasks concerning weapons acquisition and manpower policy during the War of Independence.

After the war, Peres served in the ministry of defense for many years. In 1953, at the age of 29, he was nominated its director general, and from 1959, when he became Knesset member, served as deputy minister of defense, a position he held until 1965. In 1965, with Ben-Gurion's resignation from Mapai, Peres joined him in forming the small Rafi party, and as its secretary general led the move towards its reunification with Mapai and other parties to form the Avoda (Hebrew for "Labor") party in 1969. Since that year, Peres held various cabinet positions in Labor governments. After the rise of Likud to power in 1977, he served as chairman of the Labor party and headed the opposition.<sup>26</sup>

The results of the 1984 elections signalled to Peres that the causes of Labor's failure to gain a plurality of the vote, in spite of the state of the economy and the dissatisfaction with the results of the war in

Lebanon, were deeply rooted in the political culture. Begin was no longer in power but populism was now embodied in political figures like General (Res.) Ariel Sharon, known for his tough stand vis-à-vis the Arabs, and David Levy, a construction worker turned Likud leader who became a spokesman for the lower classes. Large parts of the electorate still seemed more influenced by nationalist rhetoric than by moderate reasoning, and politicians promising short range economic benefits were more popular than those willing to combat hyperinflation and the mounting national debt. Peres's political survival depended on a fundamental change in these conditions. The populist mood had to be tamed and discourse between social and economic groups had to be reinstated.

This also had been crucial to the survival of the Labor party. Formerly a hegemonic party, dominating Israeli politics from the turn of the century to 1977, when it was replaced by Likud, Labor depended on a structured polity, in which the party could function "as a screening mechanism for pressure groups and policy making."<sup>27</sup> Long before the establishment of the state, Labor's predecessor Mapai successfully installed itself as mediator among the most important organized interests and between them and the state, showing an extraordinary capacity to use its economic leverage in order to structure immediate distributional flows and longer-term patterns of social stratification.<sup>28</sup> In its relationship with its client groups, which encompassed almost the total sphere of economic and social activity in Israel, it utilized a complex system of institutions, e.g., the General Federation of Labor (Histadrut), the Health Insurance Fund, the Kibbutz movements and other bodies which allocated material and symbolic resources and gained political support for the party.<sup>29</sup>

The establishment of the state in 1948 weakened the power of the mediators, as it was now possible for citizens from all strata of society to gain direct access to the political center. This process came to fruition in 1977 when Likud gained the popular vote. In their analysis of Israeli society, Horowitz and Lissak stressed this process which, in their opinion, created the conditions for direct contact between the citizens and the political establishment, and entailed the "atomization" of the citizenry and its conversion from an organized public into a mass.<sup>30</sup>

Restoring the mediating role of the Labor party, and the status of the Histadrut and other institutions affiliated with it, had become Labor's main concern in 1984. This concern lay behind the goals set by Peres when he became prime minister in 1984 on all three fronts—domestic affairs, foreign policy, and economics. His main goals included (1) calming down social tensions and encouraging adherence to the rule of law, (2) pulling the military out of Lebanon and renewing the peace process in the Middle East, and (3) halting inflation and stabilizing the economy.

From the Labor party's point of view, accomplishment of these goals would weaken the appeal of populist leaders, untie the link between domestic frustration and foreign policy, and reassert the role of the Histadrut as main partner in what Peres called a "social contract" between economic forces.

However, the road to fulfillment of these goals was hardly paved. Peres headed a government portrayed by every cartoonist in the country as a dragon having two tails leading in opposite directions and a rotating head. Time seemed very short, the problems were overwhelming and yet the power to solve them was not given to him (especially as most economic portfolios were in the hands of Likud). The broad coalition he headed was split, his own Labor party was torn by internal strife, mainly between Peres supporters and those of his long-time opponent Yitzhak Rabin who became a rather autonomous minister of defense, and although Israeli prime ministers usually gain popularity while in office, he could not count on mass support.

Peres's address to the Knesset on September 13, the day he presented his new government,<sup>31</sup> reveals some of the choices he made as a result of the formidable tasks he faced as well as the limitations on his power to act. Leading a divided government, his main strategy was to handle first matters on which there was relatively more agreement—bringing the troops home from Lebanon and stabilizing the economy—and gradually gain support for additional policies, especially those related to the peace process.

Loyal to a long Israeli tradition of "doism," Peres believed that a great amount of initiatives and activities would allow him to overcome political constraints. "Intensive activity," he said in his speech, "is necessary to calm the stormy economy, to stabilize the economy, to renew Israel's (economic) growth, to reduce inflation, to improve the balance of payments, to prevent unemployment, to increase productivity, and to maintain the fair income of every working person."<sup>32</sup> Peres aimed at many targets in order to hit some; he walked many routes in order to reveal where the obstacles were too hard and where they could be overcome. He aimed at no less than bringing Israel "into the forefront of the advanced nations in the spheres of science, technology, education, industry, agriculture, and tourism."<sup>33</sup>

These words were addressed at the knowledge elite, which was his only ally at the time: "Our country is endowed with human assets, and with a latent dedication which can be mobilized to build a productive and modern system in a competitive world, a world of science and technology which are advancing at a dizzying pace."<sup>34</sup> During his two years in office, Peres, lacking enough support by the party, the coalition, and the

public, established an alternative power base by mobilizing the knowledge elite. He did so in a variety of ways. He formed a close circle of academically trained aides, worked closely with government-employed professionals, consulted with scientists, founded ongoing and ad hoc policy making forums, met with heads of universities and media organizations, and formed a network of informal contacts between his office and academia. A knowledge–power nexus was formed, comprised of formal and informal contacts centered mainly in the prime minister’s office. Government and non-government scientists, analysts, experts, pollsters, jurists, etc. were called in frequently to plan, make, and explain policy. They wrote memos, conducted meetings and negotiations, went on diplomatic missions, wrote studies, appeared in public, in short, they aided in performing the necessary tasks of ruling a complex, modern, industrial state.

The professionalization of government in the Peres era became a frequent theme of discussion by the public and a source of grievance by the Labor party machine. Frequently, Peres faced party activists who felt they were not consulted enough and complained about the technocratic style in his office: “the team surrounding you is too professional” one activist contended while another agonized over the fact that the prime minister did not listen to the grassroots but to “what the professors say.”<sup>35</sup> There was little Peres could do to refute this charge; although he travelled the country back and forth to meet with the grassroots, his term in office was marked by a knowledge–power alliance.

This makes the two-year Peres government an interesting one to observe. A thorough observation of this government reveals a great deal about the nature and operation of Israel’s technocratic stratum, which has not yet received its due attention by observers of modern Israel. By “technocratic stratum” I refer to scientists and professionals, managers in the public and private sectors, and their allies in the political system, who have a stake in the modern industrial state. They compose a knowledge–power alliance marked by a common notion of the good society as an advanced society utilizing the fruits of science and technology. This stratum is not identical with the knowledge elite, which often includes elements opposed to the technocratic alliance,<sup>36</sup> although in the mid-1980s, due to the political circumstances prevailing in Israel, many incumbents of the knowledge elite—writers and scholars as well as scientists and professionals—supported it.

The knowledge–power alliance in the Peres government had deep historical roots dating back to Peres’s tenure in the ministry of defense, where he played a major role in the development of defense-related industries. Under his leadership, the defense ministry took over the arma-



ments industry, expanded the aviation industry, established electronics industries, and constructed the nuclear reactor in Dimona.<sup>37</sup> Peres formed close relations with defense establishments in foreign countries, especially France, Germany, and the United States, and encouraged collaboration with them on defense-related research and development. During these vast development efforts, a relatively large group of technocrats had come to the fore sharing an interest in technological development and a belief in the mobilization of professional knowledge as a means to overcome the external and internal fundamentalist forces posing a danger to Israel.

These technocrats were mostly ignored by Israeli historiography, dominated for many years by fellow travellers of the Labor movement which fought them fiercely. The Mapai elite, operating in the name of a socialist ideology, feared the so-called new class taking over the means of production and demanding political control.<sup>38</sup> The "Lavon affair" of the 1960s, a major succession struggle in Mapai over Ben-Gurion's inheritance, was, to a great extent, a struggle between the technocratic stratum, nurtured by Ben-Gurion, and the party elite. The latter's victory in the struggle resulted in Ben-Gurion's formation of the Rafi party in 1965 which adopted a technocratic program, calling for a modern, industrialized Israel as an alternative to outdated socialist visions. Although after the reunification of Rafi with Mapai in 1969 this program was no longer associated with a specific political party, its propounders continued to play an important role in Israeli political life, notably in the formation of the Democratic Movement for Change of the 1970s, in the Peres government, and, as will be shown later, in the peace process of the 1990s.

This study, then, throws light on Israel's technocratic stratum and its ongoing struggle over the nature of Israel as a modern technological society. I study the struggle in one of its most crucial manifestations: the combat against populism in the 1980s. I reveal the politics of technocracy as it ventured to combat populist trends believed to endanger Israeli democracy and investigate what accounted for successes and failures in that combat.

My concern with the politics of the technocratic stratum requires some reconceptualization of "technocracy." Traditionally, this term referred to the domination of the polity by professionals. Professionals, defined as skilled and learned experts concerned with the application of knowledge to the affairs and in the service of others,<sup>39</sup> were expected to overwhelm the political process rather than take part in it and, especially, to introduce new qualities and norms into the political arena which are inconsistent with pluralist democracy. To democratic thinkers, societal decisions must be based not on preferences of the enlightened but on negotiations between interest groups. And since professionals were seen as having little

patience for negotiations, it was claimed that democratic politics would diminish with their increasing influence. Professionals in government were thus described as forming a "tyranny of experts,"<sup>40</sup> a "new priesthood,"<sup>41</sup> or a cult whose rationalist norms cannot coexist with those of democracy and which deprives the traditional political forces of their power.<sup>42</sup>

However, there is no reason to consider professionals apolitical or anti-democratic by definition. This attitude is largely the outgrowth of fear by other components of the knowledge elite, especially writers, over the increasing prominence of professionals in the political discourse of modern industrial societies. If in the past it were writers like Tolstoy, Dostoevski, and Dickens who were prominent in the political discourse over war and peace, crime and punishment, or poverty, today these issues are debated by the atomic physicist, strategic analyst, psychologist, criminologist, welfare economist, and television reporter.<sup>43</sup> These professionals are more influential than traditional writers ever were because they are welcomed guests in technocratic alliances which the former could only aspire to be part of.<sup>44</sup> But this does not make professionals less "political." To the contrary, today professionals play an important role in the distribution and redistribution of societal resources, which is what politics is all about. Nor does this imply that professionals are anti-democratic since so many of them throughout the world, especially in Israel, look up to the United States as a role model of the advanced industrial state.

Rather than expecting professionals to dominate political action, they may be conceptualized as participants in "discursive fields" in which the distribution of material and symbolic resources is determined. This term has been proposed by Magali Sarfatti Larson in reference to the institutional circles in which political discourse in society takes place. She defined "discursive fields" as "battlefields, wherein different kinds of experts fight for preeminence and where other, 'non-expert' forces also intervene."<sup>45</sup> In these battles that crosscut existing institutional structures, professionals play an important role due to their ability to claim exclusive authority in strategic matters and thus tend to occupy the core regions in each discursive field.

This conceptualization is useful because it draws our attention to the political claims of each group participating in the discourse. Just like politicians, professionals are taken to participate in political discourse as part of their intrinsic interests, trying to accumulate symbolic and political capital. As Randall Collins has claimed, professionals derive their status from their possession of esoteric and easily monopolized skills and their political engagement may be seen as a means to increase the scope of issue areas in which those skills can be demonstrated. The more

social matters are discussed in professional terms, the more symbolic assets are translated into economic and political gains.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the professional who advises the prime minister must be analyzed in the same terms reserved for other social groups competing for resources. To quote Eliot Freidson, insofar as those with access to knowledge gain access to power, they "must operate like politicians."<sup>47</sup>

But what does operating "like politicians" mean? Does it imply that professionals lose the unique attributes gained in their education and socialization? What norms and practices associated with their field of expertise do they preserve in their interaction with power and which do they give up? How do they turn these norms and practices into political assets and how do administrators and politicians make use of them? How do discursive fields differ from each other and how are the symbols negotiated in them reflected in the actual and symbolic output of policy making?

In spite of its short duration, the Peres government provides rich data on these questions and serves as an interesting case study of the politics of technocracy. It allows us to follow in depth the mutual interests and modes of interaction of the participants in the knowledge–power alliance, their strategic decisions, the possibilities and limits of cooperation between them and the relationship between different modes of knowledge–power interaction and political outcomes. Although it is not easy to assess the impact of the Peres government on long-term changes in political and economic cultures, especially since many of its policies were reversed after the rotation of 1986, we may investigate the contribution of professionals to several instances of policy failures and successes and thus learn about the conditions under which technocracy may support pluralist democracy against the challenge of populism.

In what follows I will now analyze the three main events of the Peres era: the General Security Service (GSS) scandal, a major scandal over the killing of two Palestinian terrorists which, unforeseen during the goal-setting stage, posed the greatest challenge to the rule of law in the 1980s; the efforts to renew the peace process in the Middle East which, after the pullout from Lebanon, became Peres's main preoccupation; and the economic program of July 1985 which reduced inflation and stabilized the economy. I discuss the role of professionals in these cases, demonstrating the role of jurists in the GSS scandal, the role of strategic experts in the efforts to renew the peace process, and the role of economists in the making of the stabilization program.

All three groups played their part in the combat against populism by serving as watchdogs of the rule of law, enhancing a moderate foreign policy and reversing populist economic measures. However, their

degree of success in these respective tasks varied. The first case ended in mixed results, the second in failure, and the third in success. I explain this variance by the adherence of the three groups to three theoretical models of knowledge–power interaction. These models are referred to respectively as the autonomy model, the cooptation model, and the exchange model. In the first model, knowledge maintains a distance from power, in the second model, knowledge is coopted by power, and in the third model, a balance between knowledge and power is kept.

### **The Autonomy Model**

The autonomy model is the closest to the ideal type of the professional familiar from early sociological writings.<sup>48</sup> At the core of the discursive field reside the possessors of knowledge who are familiar with the political advantages of distinction and autonomy. They constitute a professional community marked by a language acquired only by access to the profession which itself is limited in a variety of ways. Entry into the profession may require participation in its training institutions and the passing of exams intended to assure proper socialization and regulation of the number of entries. Mobility of the professionals, including mobility to politically relevant roles, is also determined by internal criteria as are professional norms, codes of ethics, etc.

Discourse with political authorities is mainly formal. Professionals fulfil a variety of official roles, and their contacts with power are mostly in their official capacities. Diversion from formal contacts may be considered improper or illegal. The formal role, even if dependent upon those in power, provides professionals with an independent power base. The attorney general derives power from the civic society; the surgeon general from the norm of public health. However, these professionals are limited in their capacity to mobilize actual political support for their cause. Also, except for very few cases such as Supreme Court judges nominated for life, they are replaceable since their official positions may always be filled by others.

Therefore, this discursive field is characterized by avoidance of political conflict by the professionals. At times, formal positions may be occupied by powerful individuals with great effect on policy outcomes. But there is a limit as to how much formal role-holders may further professionally-based norms and ideas in the realm of politics. During a political crisis, this model would be irresistible to political pressure if only because the profession, having a stake in its continued distinction and autonomy, could not be expected to support its members who get into political trouble.

## **The Cooptation Model**

The second model represents a different type. Here, the discursive field does not have a clear professional core, and its participants are not necessarily obliged by an explicit set of professional codes and traditions. Access to the discursive field may be the main reward associated with it and its avoidance—the main sanction. Access is determined on a personal basis by those in power and denial of access does not require any formal act. One may simply not be invited for lunch, say, at the prime minister's residence. Therefore, those who gain access would be rather concerned with satisfying the powerful whose norms and preferences become a major reference point.

Even if participants in this discursive field are noted professionals, the language spoken is not based on a distinct jargon, definitely not one incomprehensible to politicians. To the contrary, as a means to gain access and prominence, the discourse may be dominated by simple language intended to inflict fear and other emotions in the hearts of politicians and their constituencies. The strategist warning of a nuclear disaster or the water engineer promising a green revolution and a bright future may dominate the discussion. However, as creative as persons of knowledge may become in this sense, policy options considered in this discursive field could not be expected to alter the status quo. This is assured by the easy mobility in and out of the field which allows politicians to regulate it so as to converse only with those sharing, or appearing to share, their ideological and political preferences. Obviously, once the discourse is conducted within the parameters set by politicians, it makes it easy for them to ignore altogether messages conveyed by persons of knowledge.

The blending of knowledge into power, characterizing this model, is both a source of strength and of weakness to professionals. On the one hand, participation in this discursive field may endow them with prestige, closeness to charisma, personal acquaintances and some political positions reserved for loyalists among them. On the other hand, the rewards available here are mainly temporary and personal. The political scientist making a radio appearance, for example, may gain temporary fame but this is rarely translated into benefits for the profession as a whole, which may thus respond with punitive measures, such as defining the politically involved political scientist as betraying the profession's creed.

## **The Exchange Model**

The exchange model is one in which knowledge has been politicized enough to become an active actor in the power game over resources. In

that game, the profession at the core of the field keeps its distinct features, especially its jargon, but also popularizes it in order to mobilize public support and build political coalitions. The profession maintains a large degree of control over its incumbents who participate in public discourse. Not only are these bounded by codes and norms determined by their colleagues, with whom they must keep contact as a means to gain power vis-à-vis politicians, but their selection to public roles such as economic adviser, political commentator, or medical expert writing a column in the newspaper, is largely dependent upon their prominence in the profession.

In this model, the relations between knowledge and power are neither the outgrowth of formal roles nor of personal preferences but a combination of both. The degree to which these relations are structured may vary but the exact structure is determined as much by professional traditions as by political needs. For example, professions encouraging financial competition between practitioners, such as architects or computer programmers, would be more careful than teachers to supervise the nomination of their incumbents to public committees and other visible forums.

The interaction between knowledge and power in this model consists of an exchange of political assets that are crucial to all sides. Although political assets are involved in any discursive field, here, the profession participates in the discourse not because it is its formal duty, nor because of marginal gains, such as closeness to charisma, but because in the process of its politicization, it defined a set of assets to be acquired, which had been internalized as major goals of the profession. I refer, for instance, to economists seeking economic stability as a means to assert their leadership in the economic policy making process, or to journalists fighting a battle over freedom of speech which affects them directly. Since the knowledge–power battles are over real assets (material or symbolic), political crisis cannot be avoided, nor can professionals agree to cooptation. Rather, they develop the strategies and tactics necessary to win political battles.

Foremost among these strategies and tactics is the professionals' attempt to convince others that their exclusive knowledge is an exchangeable commodity. Much effort is devoted to undermining other forms of knowledge, such as the politician's intuition. A major strategy consists of convincing politicians that policy processes are too complex to be steered by them and that the only way to proceed is by utilization of scientific theories. Although these theories are often untested or impossible to test, e.g., military deterrence theory or certain macro-economic theories, they are presented as the only ones which can bring favorable results while alternative approaches cannot.

In the following chapter I elaborate on the nature of the knowledge–power alliance in the Peres government. Subsequent chapters are devoted to the role of jurists, strategic experts, and economists in the combat against populism. Failures and successes in that combat are explained by reference to the above models. Jurists adhered mainly to the autonomy model, strategic experts to the cooptation model, and economists to the exchange model. I conclude that the contribution of knowledge elites in a pluralist democracy depends on their capacity to find the right balance between professionalism and politics.

This conclusion stems from the relative success of economists in the combat against populism. I show that the “politicization” of Israel’s economists in the 1980s resulted in wider use of political strategies and tactics than could be found in the other discursive fields and hence to greater impact. The exchange model is prescribed as a useful strategy for professionals willing to have an impact in discursive fields.

This prescription becomes possible due to the assumption that the adherence of professional groups to the three models is not deterministic but rather open to strategic choice. As tempting as it may be to propose fixed, long-lasting sociological determinants of professionals’ political behavior, such as the profession’s patterns of recruitment, incentive structures, etc., I refrain from doing it, first because the professionals I studied were not chosen as representatives of their professions but as participants in the discursive fields of the Peres era; second, because even in the Israeli context, we may find variance over space and time in the political behavior of professionals (e.g., secluded economists, coopted legal professionals or—as during the peace negotiations between Israel and the PLO in Oslo in 1993—rather politicized strategic experts); and finally because of the mutual learning process which takes place among different professions in a modern world. Legal professionals who choose to assert their power through professional exclusion may easily adopt the strategy used by the politicized economist and vice versa. Therefore, I make no attempt to offer a predictive scheme of the political behavior of professionals; the three cells of the above typology represent three modes of interaction in discursive fields, not fixed characteristics of any profession. My study is confined to three groups of professionals who found themselves at an important crossroad in Israeli political life. Their decisions, actions, and modes of knowledge–power interaction, as will now be demonstrated, were of utmost importance to Israeli democracy.