## The Politics of Uniqueness: The Status of the Israeli Case

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The Israeli case lives an uncomfortable existence in comparative research. The challenge of classifying and categorizing the Israeli experience leads many to question the suitability of the Israeli case. Neither East nor West, developed nor undeveloped, capitalist nor socialist. Third World nor First World, there is relatively little about Israel that automatically reminds us of other countries or their historical experiences. Israel is and is not a Third World state; while it received its independence alongside other postcolonial entries and experienced the very pains that characterized other latedeveloping economies, it is rarely discussed alongside other Third World or post-colonial states. Israel is and is not a western state; while it exhibits democratic forms of governance, rarely is it situated alongside the historical experiences of other western states. Israel is neither a capitalist or a socialist state; while its current economic structure hardly resembles that of its early, avowedly, socialist days, it is rarely mentioned alongside other socialist experiments or the lessons of the late-developers. The list goes on. For many social scientists the Israeli case represents an unapproachable challenge, its rich and complex history producing a case inappropriate for the comparative enterprise. Because Israel is unique in many dimensions, it slips through the cracks of social science inquiry into historical peculiarity.

Israel did not always have a qualified relationship to comparative social science. During the heyday of behavioral crossnational studies, Israel

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was not as routinely treated as a methodological suspect. In the search for general theories of politics, all countries were born relatively equal, and there were no real a priori grounds for Israel's exclusion. This once and past ease of the Israeli case is visible in development studies. At the peak of modernization theory, the Israeli case was frequently touted as a model of economic and political development; illustrative was Israel's prominent inclusion in various studies produced by Hollis Chenery and his associates, and within the modernization tradition. Israel was a case among many.<sup>1</sup>

The decided epistemological shift from crossnational inquiries to more contextually and historically-derived theories has undermined Israel's place in comparative politics. No longer obsessed with the pursuit of deductivelyderived laws or crossnational correlations, many social scientists are expressing greater appreciation for how social change and historical outcomes are a consequence of the interplay between slowly changing social structures and historically-bounded actions, that is, a confluence of forces. In this reading, macrohistorical outcomes are not the end point of a predetermined path, but rather "that when things happen within a sequence affects how they happen, that every structure or process consists of a series of choice points. Outcomes at a given point in time constrain possible outcomes at later points in time."2 Rather than searching for a single causal model that produces the observed outcome, the intent is to determine the possible historical variations and conditions that might account for it. Consider again Israel's place in the political development literature. The scholarly community's abandonment of earlier forms of modernization theory and adoption of more contextualized studies that examine the interplay of international and domestic forces rendered the Israeli case invisible. There is no real consideration of how the Israeli case speaks to the issue of late industrialization or possibly resembles other newly-industrializing states. The status of the Israeli case is shaped by the dominant methodological and epistemological assumptions guiding comparative analysis.

In many respects, the perceived unsuitability of the Israeli case derives from the social science community's understanding of the relationship between the Israeli case and the comparative method in general and what constitutes an appropriate case in particular. Israel maintains an ambiguous relationship to the standard categories used to select cases. It is this casing process that contributes to Israel's marginality.<sup>3</sup> Cases are frequently selected on the basis of their relationship to established categories and concepts.<sup>4</sup> Prominent in this regard are the categories that are used to capture complex social phenomenon: dependent/autonomous; socialist/capitalist; peripheral/core; strong/weak, modern/traditional; western/Third World, and so on. While these categories serve a number of functions—including typologizing and simplifying complex historical processes, constructing ideal

types to drive research and guide comparisons, and so on—of immediate relevance is that these categories and concepts offer an answer to: "a case of what?" In other words, these concepts and categories create cases, and it is upon this basis that states are selected (or not) as suitable cases. As Charles Ragin observes, "casing creates objects," and this casing process is both informed by prior theorizing and is a necessary step prior to any manipulation, observation, research, or further theoretical claims.<sup>5</sup> A state is selected as a case because it is believed to be representative of a designated population.

This casing process contributes to Israel's exclusion because Israel is viewed as not conforming to many of the categories and concepts that answer: "a case of what?" While nearly all states are more complex than the categories and concepts used to organize and classify social forces, Israel has an established reputation for being more defiant than most when it comes to categorization.

Consider whether Israel is a Third World state. This is a critical issue for much of comparative research, for it is the broad distinction between First and Third World states that informs many social sciences theories. For instance, as comparative politics "brought the state back in" and attempted to theorize about the nature of functions of the state, it frequently differentiated between the state in the Third World and that in advanced industrialized countries. For many, Israel is unquestionably part of the West because of its categorical or descriptive attributes. "Israel is the only western state in the Middle East," Yossi Beilin declares.<sup>6</sup> While Beilin does not reveal the basis of his claim, his judgement seems to be informed by the perceived differences between Israel and an Arab world that is undeniably part of the Third World, notably the former's stable democracy, level of personal, social, and economic freedoms, and civil liberties. In other words, he uses categorical indicators to identify Israel as part of the West (which makes sense since the Arab Gulf states have a higher per capita income than Israel but are not viewed as part of the West). Others scholar and policymakers use gradational indicators to establish Israel as part of the West, and note Israel's relatively high standard of living and structure of production that are more reminiscent of the West than they are of the Third World. In this reading, Israel sits in the West.

Alternatively, many scholars adopt different categorical indicators to place Israel in the Third World. For instance, Horowitz suggests that while Israel was once emerging from its Third World status prior to the 1970s, since then it increasingly embodies many "unseemly" characteristics that are associated with Third World states: high militarization, not simply to protect its territory but also as a mark of its national sovereignty; high capitalization, in which economic policy is designed to increase economic

growth at the expense of private wealth and consumption; centralized political authority, whereby governmental decision making and party organization is unified and hierarchically-organized despite the political institutions that are to underwrite pluralism and decentralization of power. These emerging attributes join Israel's other Third World qualities: the primacy of interstate conflict; the uncertainty of its border demarcations; nation-building amongst disparate national, ethnic, and language-based communities; and the role of guerilla and irregular forces in anti-colonial struggles. Israel resembles many Third World states in various social, political, and economic respects.

Regardless of whether the researcher adopts gradational or categorical indicators, Israel seems to have one foot in the West, the other in the Third World. As a spatial bridge connecting Europe, Asia, and Africa, and as a conceptual bridge between East and West, Israel appears to exist in both and in neither the West nor the Third World. The result is that Israel is not considered to be an appropriate case for generating theories of comparative politics that begin with the distinction between the West and the Third World. Israel is rarely if ever included in surveys of western states; nor is it wholeheartedly welcome in the literature on the Third World state. For instance, Joel Migdal notes that a major criticism he received of his Strong Societies and Weak States was the inclusion of the Israeli case; many suggested that it was not "typical" of the Third World experience, and therefore not an appropriate case. While I was on the job market discussing the Egyptian and Israeli war-making experiences, eyebrows and suspicions were raised concerning the appropriateness of the Israeli case—though never the Egyptian case. Suspending for the moment that these categories are the product of cultural and ideological reasoning, Israel is not alone among states in exhibiting qualities of both worlds; many states are a spatial and conceptual bridge.

Although nearly all states retain conceptual-defying characteristics, Israel is frequently assumed to be unrepresentative of any population, and therefore treated as a methodological suspect. It is this issue of comparability that underlies most challenges to the Israeli case. "Implicit in most social scientific notions of case analysis is the idea that the objects of investigation are similar enough and separate enough to permit treating them as comparable instances of the same general phenomenon." Because Israel does not neatly correspond to many social science categories, it is perceived to be unlike any other state, the causal forces that produced the observed outcome in the Israeli case are viewed as unlikely to be present in, or important to, other countries. In short, its social, political, and economic make-up is too different to support any theoretical claims. Israel is comparable to none.

Yet to what extent is Israel unlike any other state? Better yet: what constitutes a unique state? Two possibilities present themselves. A unique state might be one whose outcomes are sui generis. That is, any historical outcome must be understood on its own terms and cannot be approached from categories and conclusions derived elsewhere. Fred Halliday terms this "historical particularism, according to which the specificities . . . can only be comprehended in the light of the particular historical formation of the societies and politics of the region."10 Israeli democracy, corporatism, war preparation, economic development, and so on, are a result of historical conditions and causal forces not present in other instances. Yet many scholars of Israel have reinterpreted the Israeli case with categories and theoretical frameworks that are derived from other regions and periods; offered a theoretically-driven understanding of the Israeli case; used knowledge generated from the Israeli case to contribute to social science theory; built theoretical conceptual bridges between Israel and other historical and regional locales; and, demonstrated the less than unique character of Israeli history. Few outcomes in Israel defy macrohistorical categories or cannot be placed within a comparative context.11 In short, the accumulated empirical evidence suggests that what operates in the Israeli case operates elsewhere, and visa-versa. The contributions to this volume and elsewhere testify to Israel's "normalcy."12

A second, perhaps more common, claim for Israeli uniqueness is that its attributes and defining characteristics are juxtaposed and assembled in a unique way. In other words, Israel's uniqueness derives not from any one outcome or attribute but rather how these outcomes and attributes combine to produce a country like none other. This is largely true of Israel. But, then again, this is also true of all states. All states are unique in how the myriad of historical, political, cultural, and economic forces interact to produce a distinctive personality. No two states resemble each other in their entirety or have an identical profile. The issue in social science research and case-based methodology is not whether each unit resembles each other in its totality, but rather whether there is a reasoned basis for comparing the outcomes in two or more states. This reasoned basis is never made following a complete inventory of each state's features and attributes, but after a careful consideration of the variables and background factors that might be relevant to the outcome. 13 All states are unique in some way because of the interplay of both domestic and international forces. and the interaction of political, economic, and cultural factors; yet all states are typical in others. The state's unique or typical features, its particularistic or universalistic qualities, depends on the comparative context in which it is situated. 14 King, Keohane, and Verba argue that many scholars mistake complexity for uniqueness, that "inherent uniqueness is part of the human condition, . . . that the real question that the issue of uniqueness raises is the problem of complexity . . . [and] the point is not whether events are inherently unique, but whether the key features of social reality that we want to understand can be abstracted from a mass of facts." If the same criteria used to justify Israel's exclusion were extended to all countries there would hardly be a comparative enterprise.

Even if Israel does exhibit some atypical qualities—and it does—this does not justify its exclusion as a case. The idea of using exceptional and atypical cases for theory development has become a more widely accepted methodological practice in recent years. In the cross-national, variablebased research that dominated the behavioral studies, outliers were those cases that resided outside the statistical norm or representative population. and, therefore, were viewed as an obstacle to generalization. Rather than investigating these outliers, they were made obstacles to statistical causation, high correlations, and theory development, which was "consistent with the overall strategy of achieving generality at the expense of comprehending or appreciating complexity."16 More recent scholarship, however, uses them to identify potential theoretical nuances and to understand the commonalities that unify residuals.<sup>17</sup> In this line of argument, Israel's utility for theory-building emerges as a consequence of the same criteria that once was used to exclude it: because it is asymptomatic. Yael Yishai posits that while Israel's blend of corporatist, elitist, interest group politics is unique among democracies, this uniqueness highlights some important hypotheses that might be relevant for understanding other democratic polities. 18 Outliers become an important site for theory development because the outcome under investigation is accentuated the causal mechanisms producing it are more easily observed. Michael Shaley argues that Israel is a case of extreme relative autonomy of the state. Rather than suggesting that Israeli state autonomy is sui generis, however, he borrows from the state literature to uncover the underlying causal processes that are responsible for this autonomy. These identified causal processes, in turn, provide the basis for making some broader theoretical claims concerning state autonomy, class conflict, and corporatist arrangements in capitalist societies. 19 In general, outliers can be a highly suitable locale for identifying and uncovering the causal mechanisms that produced the outcome under investigation. In this respect, using cases that defy or toy with conceptual boundaries is an important part of theoretical development.

In sum, Israel maintains an uneasy existence in the comparative social sciences because of its perceived relationship to dominant social science categories and concepts, which help to define a state as a "case of what"; Israel slips through the cracks because it is perceived as existing outside or blurring most conceptual boundaries and categories. Yet many scholars

have ignored the warnings of historical uniqueness and methodological unsuitability, and have successfully used macrohistorical concepts to both situate the Israeli case and to use the case to develop new theoretical insights. This volume provides only a sample of such efforts. Moreover, even if Israel does not closely conform to many conceptual boundaries, this does not make it unique. Most states defy ideal types, easily blur the dichotomies that are used to guide research and drive comparisons, yet they are not summarily excluded from the comparative enterprise. If the historical uniqueness claim that is used as the criteria for Israel's exclusion were extended to all states, there would hardly be a comparative enterprise.

## Section II: The Politics of Uniqueness

The examination of the object is not an isolated act; it takes place in a context which is coloured by values and collective-unconscious, volitional impulses. In the social sciences it is this intellectual interest, oriented in a matrix of collective activity, which provides not only the general questions, but the concrete hypotheses for research and the thought-models for the ordering of experience.

-Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia

The absence of analytical or methodological reasons for Israel's current status leads to a consideration of the social and political practices, and the discourses in the social sciences and elsewhere, that generate the image of Israeli uniqueness. An underlying theme of the previous section was that this image is largely a consequence of how the academic community understands Israel's relationship to the various categories and concepts it uses to organize history. Said otherwise, any discussion of Israel's perceived uniqueness should involve a consideration of how the academy produces, organizes, and treats knowledge of Israel.

The sociology of knowledge focuses on the distribution of belief and the various factors which influence it . . . .how is knowledge transmitted; how stable is it; what processes go into its creation and maintenance; how is it organized and categorized into different disciplines or spheres.<sup>20</sup>

There is an institutional context of knowledge, production, and reproduction.

This perspective highlights how a variety of mechanisms—including but not limited to the referee process that filters articles and manuscripts on Israel, Israel's status and place in graduate training, the presentation or

the very absence of materials on Israel at professional conferences, and so on—translate and transmit individually-held beliefs into collectively-held understandings and assumptions of the academic community. These and other factors undoubtedly contribute to the current status of the Israeli case in the social sciences. So long as Israel is perceived as outside the categories and concepts constructed by the social science community to organize and classify historical and political processes, then the Israeli case will continue to be treated as a methodological and theoretical suspect. "What we treat as knowledge is created by people in groups... What is generated as knowledge and what is taken as knowledge reflects the values and the sociological features of the society."<sup>21</sup>

Although traditionally much more suspicious of how the social sciences classify and approach historical and political developments, Middle Eastern studies also treat Israel as a marginal or peripheral case because of its defining and organizing principles. Area studies and regional disciplines are organized not only along geographical and spatial boundaries, but also with the intent of producing knowledge that is specific to a historicalcultural region. That the boundaries of the region are not given but rather determined by the sociological dimensions of the academic community was eloquently and keenly observed in Edward Said's Orientalism. This process is particularly evident following the cold war, when many European and (post) Soviet studies departments are attempting to determine which countries belong in which departments. This is also true of many Middle Eastern studies programs that are re-evaluating what constitutes the Middle East since the independence of the Islamic and Turkic territories of the former Soviet Union; in this respect, while the Arab-speaking countries are assumed members, others states are "less taken for granted." While there are many factors that influence the degree to which a country is considered a "natural" fit within an area studies department, it is not limited to geographical considerations alone.

Israel's marginal status in Middle Eastern studies is driven by political and sociological considerations. Notwithstanding the many factors that situate Israel within Middle East studies—its geographic locale, Hebrew's linguistic relationship to Arabic, the fact that the majority of its population is either Arab or of Arab descent, and that it seems a better fit here than in any alternative areas studies home—there are as many or more factors that drive Israel's marginal existence, notably Middle Eastern studies' intellectual agenda, Israel's relationship to the categories that define the study of the Middle East, and other political and sociological variables.

Perhaps the most prominent factor in the latter category is the Arab-Israeli conflict, which contributes to Israel's isolation in three ways. The passions inflamed by, and positions staked out on, the Arab-Israeli conflict

undoubtedly make collective projects difficult on the Middle East. In other words, while scholars of Israel and the Arab world potentially share any number of theoretical and substantive concerns, the polarizing Arab-Israeli conflict dominates most discussions and research. Not only do various Arab historians frequently argue that Israel represents an alien and unwelcome presence, and a remnant of western imperialism in the region, but Israeli scholars and partisans also claim that Israel has less in common with its neighbors than it does with the West. The result is that both scholars of Israel and the Arab world reinforce the theoretical and conceptual boundaries that separate them. Although there is welcome evidence that this is changing since the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, there remains a strong Arab-Israeli divide. Second, and related, while Arabs and Israeli interact at professional conferences held outside the Middle East, it is nearly unheard-of for Israeli or Arab scholars to travel to the other's country for meetings (though this is largely because Arab governments strongly caution against if not outrightly prohibit such occurrences). Despite a recent warming of professional relations, the overriding tendency is for each to look warily at the other, and this is particularly true when one nationality conducts research on the other. Intellectual discussions reflect the Arab-Israeli conflict in miniature. Third, research on the Middle East (and this is particularly true of Israel) tends to be crisis-driven, keenly focussing and commenting on contemporary events and happenings. While other regions have their share of scholars that attempt to be policy relevant, the Middle East is arguably second to none on this score. The combination of crisis-driven research and the Arab-Israeli conflict derails many attempts to promote studies that are inclusive of Israeli and Arab histories.

While the politics of the Arab-Israeli conflict contributes to Israel's isolation, perhaps more important is the intellectual agenda within Middle Eastern studies. Middle Eastern studies asks questions that are intended to envelope a region of common ancestry, history, and culture: that is, of Arab-Islamic society. Whereas most textbooks and contributions that survey the region usually include Israel, many theoretically-inclined writings on the Middle East tend to exclude it. Although the reasons behind Israel's exclusion from these theoretical contributions is understandable—for scholars are attempting to uncover patterns that are common to a historical-cultural system, and Israeli and Arab history are different in some very important ways—Israel is rarely cast as a social-historical phenomenon that might have some shared characteristics with others in the region, and is reduced to a geographical entity. A result of such endeavors is that Israel is treated as an alien entity that is a recent, and not well-integrated, newcomer; an (unintended) message from Israel's exclusion is that it is not part of the Middle East.

Yet it is worth considering the extent to which Israel is different from the rest of the region. Although Israel differs from most Arab countries in some fundamental ways, many of the questions currently being asked of Israel—the rise of religious fundamentalism, maintaining a democratic polity with a significant ethnic component and religious character, reforming a heavily statist economy, and so on—also dominate the research agenda of the Arab states. More research should follow the example of Waterbury and Richards, Telhami, and others who apply the same analytical framework to envelope both Israel and the Arab states.<sup>22</sup>

Not only might Israel and the Arab states share many of the same traits and concerns, but these shared characteristics might have similar origins. For instance, because of intense war-making processes, both Israel and the Arab states exhibit high levels of militarization, high debt ratios, and highly militarized economies. These war-related outcomes might not only constrain Israeli and Arab leaders in very similar ways, but they might also produce similar dynamics within state-society relations and the political economy. It is worth considering the extent to which tightly-integrated conflict dynamics produced a degree of equafinality among the states of the region. In any case, whether Israel and the Arab states are "converging" in some respects because they participate in the same regional dynamics and are located within relatively similar structural positions in the international system is an empirical question that deserves further consideration. Approaching Israel from a broader theoretical framework fosters both comparison between the Israeli and Arab experiences, and potentially greater dialogue between scholars from Israel and the Arab world.

If macrohistorical concepts and categories are frequently employed to situate a state's historical development within a dominant narrative, the resistance to doing so for Israel on the grounds of its historical uniqueness has the consequence of viewing it as "outside history." These categories and concepts are used to understand socio-historical processes, to situate a state's history in comparative perspective; therefore residing outside or on the margins of these categories has the effect of situating it outside the historical patterns and developments that define those states within the relevant community. Because of its (perceived) unique history-from the beginning of the Zionist movement, to the institutional developments of the Yishuv, to the role of religion, war, and socialist-Zionism in the state formation process—the assumption is that Israel's historical trajectory is not easily understood with the categories, concepts, and frameworks that are employed to understand other countries. This is true of both comparative social science and Middle Eastern studies. If Middle Eastern studies sees Israel's history as very different from others in the region, so too does much comparative social science locate Israel outside the concepts that are

generally employed to situate other countries' historical experiences and political processes.

In general, both Middle Eastern studies and comparative social science creates and generates a perception of Israeli uniqueness. This is not because of analytical or methodological reasons, but rather the sociology of the academic community that organizes and evaluates knowledge of Israel. Israel does not firmly exist within comparative social science or within Middle Eastern studies; it is not perceived as conforming to dominant categories that define either enterprise. The consequence is that Israel is seen as outside the defining characteristics of each community of scholars, and, accordingly, outside the categories each community uses to organize history.

The Israeli case's estrangement from social science and from Middle Eastern studies is not solely a product of imposed isolation by the dominant community; scholars of Israel have also contributed to the sense of Israel's otherness and peculiarity in various ways. To begin, they evidence a close interest in the case in and of itself, seemingly uninterested in linking Israel to more enduring themes in comparative politics, or using recent theoretical developments to situate and interpret the Israeli case. Lustick's review of the literature on the Intifada notes how it has proceeded nearly oblivious to the work on collective action, revolution, and mass mobilization.<sup>23</sup> Not only do Israeli scholars fail to build bridges but they are frequently among the first to caution the reader that Israel defies all categories and expectations, conveying the impression that any attempt to either use social science theories to reinterpret Israel or to use the Israeli case as a locale to challenge and refine existing theories is foolhardy. Many are forewarned of the dangers that accompany any attempt to make sense of a nearly nonsensical country. Frankel begins his book with the following cautionary tale: "'You are writing a book on how Israel works,' repeats my Israeli friend thoughtfully, and then, after a pause, 'That's brave,' 'Foolhardy,' I replied, 'Well,' he responded, 'there are rules even in a lunatic asylum.' "24 It is noteworthy that many scholars of Israel feel compelled to highlight Israel's unique character. Frankel's attempt to convey the lunacy of any effort to make sense of the Israeli case is duplicated, though with less theatric overtones, by other scholars of Israel, Uri Bialer begins his comprehensive study of Israel's foreign policy during its formative years on the following note: "Among the nations of the world Israel is unique."25 Daniel Elazar's very first sentence reads: "The State of Israel is, in many respects, sui generis."26 Yehezkel Dror concludes this volume with a compelling statement concerning the functional importance of Israelis to believe in their historical uniqueness, and how this self-image translates into a particular stance concerning the peculiarity of the Israeli case and Israeli history.<sup>27</sup> In many respects, the stance taken by many scholars of Israel is

reminiscent of William James's observation in *The Variety of Religious Experience:* 

The first thing that the intellect does with an object is to class it along with something else. But any object that is infinitely important to us and awakens our devotion feels to us as if it must be *sui generis* and unique. Probably a crab would be filled with a sense of personal outrage if it could hear us class it without ado or apology as a crustacean, and thus dispose of it. "I am no such thing," it would say; "I am MYSELF, MYSELF alone."<sup>28</sup>

The research agenda of Israeli studies also contributes to Israel's lack of integration in both comparative social science and Middle Eastern studies. Much research on Israel focuses on the Arab-Israeli conflict. While this potentially elevates Israel's importance as a social laboratory for conflict dynamics, it also contributes to a crisis-driven research program that frequently focuses on the historical particularities of the conflict.<sup>29</sup> By and large, the Arab-Israeli conflict casts a long shadow over Israeli studies, and produces an agenda that remains isolated from more theoretical and comparative themes. Moreover, studies of state- and nation-building have also accentuated the particular. While Horowitz and Lissak, Eisenstadt, and others have employed theoretical models to situate Israeli political development, a dominant theme of the literature stresses intra-party politics and rivalries, and the role of the kibbutz and ideology in nationbuilding.30 The research agenda's particularism is evident in not only what is studied but what is not. Paralleling Middle Eastern studies, conspicuous is the absence of any tradition in political economy. The works by Cohen, Shafir, and Shalev are notable for employing categories derived from political economy to situate the Israeli case.31 The research agenda helps to generate an image of Israel's sui generis quality. It is imperative. therefore, to recognize that Israel's estrangement from comparative social science and Middle Eastern studies is not only because of the social science community's actions but also because of the beliefs and activities of scholars of Israel.

What is striking is that Israel's estrangement and alienation within the academic community is duplicated within the international community. Although the former is a product of "methodological" guidelines, and the latter is attributed to politics, namely Israeli policies, and the ability of the Arab states to exploit their material and (occasional) ideological resources to expel Israel from many international forums and associations, I want to suggest that Israel's dominant historical narrative, its collective identity, is not consistent with the principal communities of states that have existed since World War II. Israel is and is not within the

First World, the Third World, the Middle East, and the West. How do we understand Israel's history? As an outgrowth of imperialism or as self-emancipation and self-determination? As part of the western project or as an anti-western movement? As linked to and part of the capitalist world-economy or as a socialist (though failed) experiment? As part of Middle Eastern history or as an intruder in Middle Eastern history? The hesitant responses to these questions highlights how Israel's history is not anchored within a single historical narrative; indeed, it is embedded with contradictory storylines.

To participate and to be counted as a member of a community requires fulfilling some minimal requirements. The actor must proclaim oneself as a member of the community, and express and uphold those values and norms that constitute it. To do so the actor must have a stable identity that has the "capacity to keep a particular narrative going." While this is more or less a challenge depending on internal and external circumstances, maintaining a stable identity means that: "In order to have a sense of who we are," Charles Taylor writes, "we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going."33 The community becomes an important source of that identity and that narrative. Moreover, others within the community must consider and recognize that actor as being a legitimate member. This means that they must treat the actor as a member of the community, with all the rights, duties, and obligations of membership. Finally, the actor's behavior must be relatively consistent with that narrative. There is generally some positive relationship between the actor's expressed identity and membership in the community and its behavior; said otherwise, the behavior cannot be totally inconsistent with selfproclaimed identity without challenging both the actor's and other's sense of oneself.

Israel has trouble maintaining a singular identity that is wholly consistent with these various international communities, and, hence, exists at the margins of any number of them.<sup>34</sup> This began at independence. Neither the West nor the Third World welcomed Israel into those institutions that expressed their collective identity. As a recently decolonized, undeveloped state, many of Israel's attributes resembled the Third World and was a poor candidate for the West's social and economic institutions. Yet Israel was not welcomed into the Third World's institutions. Though perhaps a bit overstated, Segre captures the logic underlying Israel's exclusion from the Third World at the 1955 Bandung Conference:

The representatives of over two billion Third World people declared the Jewish state to be the standard-bearer of colonialism and the most dangerous enemy which the family of new nations had to face. These were not

mere words: the very absurdity of the accusation indicated the inner tension and fears expressed towards a state different from all others.<sup>35</sup>

This ideological isolation from the dominant themes of the Third World peaked in 1973 with the United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism. The occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the Intifada, only reinforced the image of Israel as part of a West that repressed the aspirations of Third World peoples. And while Israelis might claim that their future depends on becoming more firmly embedded in and accepted as a Middle Eastern state, that Israel and the Arab states hardly treat each other as members of the same community is painfully obvious. In sum, Israel's identity is not firmly ensconced in the storylines that dominate these various communities.

Equally prominent in producing this sense of estrangement is Israel's self-proclaimed identity. As Segre, Kimmerling, Horowitz, and others have noted. Israel's identity is highly problematic, rooted in potentially contradictory storylines and narratives. 36 In other words, Israel has had a difficult time keeping a single narrative going, particularly one that was consistent with the dominant narratives of either the Third World or the West. The story of Israel is the story of ambivalence towards and rejection of the West. Zionism, a response to the Jewish community's exclusion from European Christian society, maintains an ambivalent relationship to the West. While Zionism's roots to socialism provides a link to a western, modernist, tradition, this was a weak link because of Zionism's underlying premise that Jews were unsafe in the western community until it was transformed from a capitalist to a socialist entity. Moreover, the Holocaust has profoundly shaped Israel's identity, sense of purpose, and acts as a constant reminder of Israel's precarious relationship to a western (Christian) community.<sup>37</sup> In this respect, Israel does not fully participate in maintaining the West's narrative; indeed, its existence serves to undermine and to challenge the community's self-presentation of enlightenment and progress. Nor would most Israelis claim to be part of the Third World. While the story of oppression by the West, self-emancipation, liberation, and self-determination is consistent with the dominant narrative of, indeed gives expression to, the Third World, Israelis frequently object to any comparisons to the Third Word, and proclaim that they are part of the West, a democratic state that upholds the western values and beliefs that derive from a common Judeo-Christian heritage.

In general, both the social science and international communities continue to deny Israel historical normalcy because of the belief of Israel's particularism: the very creation, maintenance, and understanding of the Jewish state is viewed as "outside" history. If part of Zionism was about

attempting to give the Jews a new conceptual status, to categorize them so that they would become less strange, then the modern project of comparative social science has helped to reproduce their status as outside history. This sense of Israel being outside history is produced by both academic and political communities, by scholars and supporters of Israel. Dror notes that the debate over post-Zionism is partly fueled by the detente between Israel and the Arab states, which raises the important relationship between unfolding historical events and, first, the development of scholarship, and, second, Israel's possible collective understanding within the community of states.

As important as it is to identify the various mechanisms in the social science and international communities that create an image of Israeli uniqueness, it is equally important to recognize that scholars and partisans of Israel are also guite active in promoting this image. There is a longstanding debate in Zionist history and scholarship between those who champion Israel's uniqueness and those who champion its normalcy. Not simply desirous of a unit of protection, one of Zionism's primary tenets was the belief that the Jews were a marginalized people within the West because they were a nation without a state: therefore, the path to a normalization of Jewish life was the establishment of their own state. By acquiring a state, the Jewish people would normalize their existence—they would return to history. One part of Zionism, therefore, was to normalize Jewish existence, to bring it back into history. Yet another voice demanded that the state not be just like any other but be "a light unto nations." The world did not need one more state, but rather a Zionist state that would serve as an example to the rest. For every statement by an Israeli leader that held Israel to higher standards and claimed that Israel must be different, another demanded that the international community judge Israel by the same criteria and categories used to judge most states. There is little new about this tension between those who promote a normal Israel and those who forward a unique one.

Not all are content with viewing Israel as outside history. Many within the academic and policymaking communities attempt to normalize Israel. Early Zionist and Israeli leaders, and partisans, attempted to normalize Jewish existence and to create a state accepted like any other in the international system, respectively. Scholars of Israel have certainly attempted to make Israel less strange, to bring Israel back into history. An ongoing project is to demonstrate Israel's normalcy, that it can be understood with the same analytical categories deployed successfully elsewhere. Although Israelis have probably focussed on certain subjects, such as security and nation-building, because they have a comparative (and professional) advantage, perhaps an additional reason is the attempt to normalize Israeli history. As Kimmerling reminds us, in Israel the discipline of sociology was shaped partly by an attempt to normalize Israel's existence, to connect it

to the historical developments and intellectual debates in the West.<sup>38</sup> By employing structural-functional models that were the dominant method of interpreting the evolution of western society, by creating a bridge between Israel and the West, Israeli sociologists were not only masking conflicts and turmoils within Israel but also were attempting to normalize Israel's existence by claiming that it was becoming a western state. One reason for establishing the Association for Israel Studies was to "normalize" Israeli history, to promote an analytical and depoliticized treatment of its social, political, and economic development.

The articles in this volume place Israel in comparative perspective. They use categories derived elsewhere to reinterpret the Israeli case and to make Israel less strange, to use the Israeli case to rethink concepts and categories, and to confront the charge that Israel provides a weak methodological foundation for theorizing because of its myriad historical anomalies and eccentricities. To better counter the claim of Israeli uniqueness, the contributors have used categories derived from other historical experiences to make sense of the Israeli case, and/or demonstrated how the processes existing in Israel exist elsewhere, and/or have identified an attribute or outcome of Israeli political or historical development that is routinely viewed as unique but becomes less so once placed in comparative context. In sum, each contributor has: situated Israel's history in comparative perspective; employed macrohistorical concepts to re-examine the Israeli case, and in doing so built a bridge between Israel and other historical experiences; and used Israel as a laboratory to modify and reconsider existing social science theories.

The first section examines Israel's foreign policy and place in international politics. Shibley Telhami situates Israel's foreign policy within its global and domestic context. In doing so, he attempts to bridge the tendency in studies of Israeli foreign policy that present a dichotomous understanding of the influences on its foreign policy behavior. Specifically, some analysts perceive Israel as the paragon of a "realist" state whose behavior is best explained by paramount security considerations, and others see it as a state whose culture, ideology, and historical genesis makes it a state like none other. By aspiring to differentiate these variables both conceptually and empirically, by arguing that the weight of each set of variables has changed historically, and exploring this element more fully in the post-cold war period, Telhami suggests how Israeli foreign policy can be understood as reflective of some more generalized domestic and international constraints.

Another unique feature of Israeli politics is its relationship to the Jewish Diaspora. Or is it? Tremendous population changes produced by economic dislocation, war, and political turmoil have drawn greater atten-

tion to this phenomenon in international politics, the rise of diaspora communities, the voluntary migration in pursuit of better political and/or economic conditions that maintain loyalties and identities to their new and old homeland. In this respect, although the Jewish Diaspora is certainly unique in its longevity, other diaspora communities contain similar traits and processes. Not only does Gabriel Sheffer extend our knowledge and understanding of the diaspora communities in global politics through the Israeli case, but he also draws attention to how the existence of such diasporas can create internal debate within Israeli politics. Sheffer's examination of Israeli-Diaspora relations offers important lessons and observations for future research on diaspora communities.

Mark Tessler and Ina Warriner analyze original public opinion data from Israel and Egypt against the background of growing analytical interest in the connections between gender and international relations. More specifically, they ask whether: 1) there is a relationship between attitudes toward issues of war and peace and toward issues of gender equality; 2) there is a difference between men and women in the nature of this relationship; 3) education, religion and several other personal status attributes affect this relationship; and, 4) patterns observed in Israel are similar to or different from those found in Egypt. By drawing some important parallels between the Israeli and Egyptian cases—two cases that have very different political and cultural systems, they demonstrate that the Israeli case is not unique, but rather shares with its Arab neighbors important similarities in the formation of attitudes about peace and war. This chapter offers insight into the relationship between gender and international relations found in Israel and elsewhere.

Michael Barnett explores the issue of Israel's rapid economic development. The shift from modernization to post-modernization and dependency approaches altered Israel's status in many ways—including a reversal from model of economic development to agent of imperialism—but perhaps none more perplexing than Israel's virtual disappearance from the development literature. Barnett reintegrates Israeli political economy into more recent debates by situating Israel's economic ascendance in both global and comparative context, and argues that it can be understood with many of the same concepts, categories, and conclusions derived from the East Asian case. By identifying similarities between Israel and East Asian cases, he suggests how the "East Asian" model is not a spatial-cultural phenomenon, and that prior attention to the Israeli case might have alerted scholars to many of the patterns later uncovered in the East Asian case.

The articles in Section II provide various readings of Israeli identity, the nature of Israeli democracy and society within an ethnically-divided society, and the relationship between political identity and social space.

These articles explore a number of key issues that have become quite prominent in the post-cold war era, an era increasingly marked by the fluctuating boundaries between identity and space. Not only does identity politics affect competing conceptions and understanding of social space, but changes in territory and political boundaries can significantly affect identity politics. These issues, which have always been quite prominent in Israeli politics, are increasingly important for understanding contemporary events. By situating these various features of Israel's political development in broader comparative context, Lustick, Migdal, Kook, and Shafir are able increase our understanding of the relationship between political identity and political space, and demonstrate how various historical processes that are prominent in the Israeli case provide a window into some more enduring and emerging themes in comparative politics.

Ian Lustick's provocative reading of Jerusalem reminds us that political space is premised on a "naturalization" process. When many Israelis and Palestinians exclaim that any future peace agreement is premised on having control over Jerusalem, Lustick immediately responds: "Which Jerusalem?" Jerusalem's territorial boundaries have been highly fluid as a consequence of ideological and material forces, and underlying this fluidity is a subtle and not so subtle recognition by various societal and state actors that these boundaries are not "taken for granted." As a consequence of its less than hegemonic status, Israeli political elites on the Left and the Right engage in discursive practices that reveal its highly fluid nature. Lustick's hegemonic analysis offers an important approach for thinking about the politics of space, and demonstrates how even the "unique" case of Jerusalem can be situated in comparative context and be illuminated by macrohistorical analysis. Said otherwise, by approaching the question of Jerusalem—an issue frequently characterized as unique—from a broader set of theoretical and methodological concerns, he demonstrates how Jerusalem can actually be compared to other cases of contested territories.

Migdal argues that the balance between those who study state formation and those who study society-formation has swung decidedly toward the former, causing us to forget the latter and to ignore their mutually constitutive relationship. In an attempt to redress the current statist bias, Migdal resurrects a twofold typology of society-formation—ethnic and civic—offered three decades ago by Clifford Geertz, and uses these categories to examine the changing nature of Israeli society-formation. While pre-1967 Israel followed a "civic" society-formation, the opening of the territories catapulted Israeli politics into a debate between civic and ethnic conceptions of society. Specifically, the indeterminate nature of the state's boundaries caused by the occupation of the territories forced Israeli society to reconsider its collective identity. By investigating the countervailing and

competing conceptions of society, and linking them to ongoing debates on Israel's relationship to the territories captured in the 1967 war, Migdal provides not only a way for thinking about Israeli politics but also a framework for considering other polities that are embroiled in debates over exclusionary and inclusionary definitions of the polity.

Kook offers a complementary look at Israeli society and polity. Where Migdal examines the debates between civic and ethnic definitions of society, Kook argues for a re-examination of the very concept of identity in Israeli politics, and argues that such a re-examination should also include another look at the very concept of citizenship in democratic polities in ethnically-divided societies. Indeed, her rational choice analysis suggests how democracies in general and governments in particular might create and benefit from ethnically-divided cleavages. In doing so, she offers not only an interesting reinterpretation of Israeli politics, but demonstrates how this case provides an important vehicle for exploring the establishment and maintenance of democratic politics and rule within other ethnically-divided societies.

Gershon Shafir also explores the relationship between Israel and the territories, and wants to understand how it can be viewed in some respects as both a continuation and departure from the pre-1948 state-building dynamic. His reading draws on political economy categories, and attempts to demonstrate how Zionist and Israeli patterns of state-building resembled and departed from European colonial projects. While Migdal draws from Geertz to examine the political and ideational side of Israel's relationship to the territories, Shafir employs a class-based model to offer an alternative view that is more firmly rooted in material structures and economic dynamics.

Dror concludes this volume by returning to the issue of social science theory and our understanding of Israeli history. Isolating the tension between the universal and the particularistic tendencies in both scholarship of Israel and comparative social science, Dror reminds us that the personal is political, and that the boundaries between social science research and praxis are more permeable than are frequently assumed.

## Notes

- 1. See, for instance, W.W. Rostow, *Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), and Hollis Chenery, *Structural Change and Development Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
- 2. Charles Tilly, As Sociology Meets History (New York: Academic Press, 1981), p. 76.
- 3. The search for more context-dependent theories has elevated the importance of, and focused greater attention on, case-based methods. For various

statements on case-based methods, see Arend Lipjhart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," American Political Science Review 65 (September 1971), pp. 682–93, and "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," Comparative Political Studies 8 (July 1975), pp. 158–77; Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in Paul Lauren, ed., Diplomacy (New York: Free Press, 1979); Charles Ragin, The Comparative Method (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Robert Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Beverly Hills: Sage Press, 1989); David Collier, "New Perspectives on the Comparative Method," in D. Rustow and K.P. Erickson, eds., Comparative Political Dynamics (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), pps. 7–31; and Charles Ragin and Howard Becker, eds., What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

- 4. What is a case? Harry Eckstein defines the case as a "phenomenon for which we report and interpret only a single measure on any pertinent variable," and a comparative study as "the study of numerous cases along the same lines, with a view to reporting the interpreting measures on the same variables of different 'individuals.' "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 7*, p. 85. Charles Ragin argues that cases can be generically understood as a bounded place or time, yet acknowledges that "most social scientists would give multiple answers. A case may be a theoretical or empirical reality, or both; it may be a relatively bounded object of a process; and it may be generic or universal or specific in some way." "Introduction: Cases of 'What is a Case?' " in C. Ragin and H. Becker, eds., What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 8.
- 5. Charles Ragin, "'Casing' and the Process of Social Inquiry," in C. Ragin and H. Becker, eds., What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 219.
- 6. Yossi Beilin, *Israel: A Concise Political History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 1.
- 7. Irving Horowitz, "From Pariah People to Pariah Nation: Jews, Israelis, and the Third World," in Michael Curtis and Susan Gitelson, eds., *Israel in the Third World* (New Brunswisck, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), pp. 378–80.
- 8. There are, of course, a host of problems associated with these methods for identifying a "Third World."
- 9. Charles Ragin, "Introduction: Cases of 'What is a Case?' " in C. Ragin and H. Becker, eds., What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1.
- 10. Fred Halliday, "The Middle East in International Perspective: Problem of Analysis," in R. Bush, et al., eds., *The World Order: Socialist Perspectives* (London: Polity Press, 1987), p. 217.
- 11. While there are many approaches that maintain this methodological spirit, it is arguably most closely associated with historical sociology. See Philip Abrams,

Historical Sociology (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), Theda Skocpol, ed., Vision and Method in Historical Sociology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). This approach is consistent with Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Falleto's "historical-structural" methodology, Dependency and Development in Latin America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), and George's "structured, focussed comparison", "Case Studies and Theory Development."

- 12. See Michael Barnett, Confronting the Costs of War: Military Power, State, and Society in Egypt and Israel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Gershon Shafir, Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ian Lustick, "Israeli State-Building in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: Theory and Practice," International Organization 41 (Winter 1987), pp. 151–71, and Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank/Gaza (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Shibley Telhami, Power and Leadership in International Bargaining: The Path to Camp David (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Joel Migdal, "The Crystallization of the State and the Struggles Over Rulemaking: Israel in Comparative Perspective," in B. Kimmerling, ed., The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries and Frontiers (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pps. 1–27; Gabriel Sheffer, ed., Modern Diasporas in International Politics (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1995); and David Garnham and Mark Tessler, eds., Democracy, War, and Peace in the Middle East (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
- 13. Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," Comparative Political Studies 8 (July 1975), p. 163.
- 14. Consider the issue of "American exceptionalism." Seymour Martin Lipset and others developed de Tocqueville's phrase to explain how the U.S. could be lacking either a strong labor party or socialist movement. These researchers were attempting to identify what made the U.S., as an advanced, industrial democracy, different from others, to isolate the critical variables that were absent from the American case, and to use the U.S. case as a vehicle to sharpen our understanding of labor politics and social movements. While there is a long history of American exceptionalism in a myriad of domains, scholars of American politics have rarely claimed that this exceptionalism excludes it from theory development or from comparative analysis. See Byron Shafer, ed., *Is America Unique?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) for an examination of America's exceptional attributes in comparative perspective.
- 15. Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Understanding Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 42.
- 16. Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 56.
  - 17. Joel Levine, Exceptions are the Rule (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).
- 18. Yael Yishai, *Land of Paradoxes: Interest Politics in Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 361.

- 19. Michael Shalev, *Labour and the Political Economy in Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 20. David Bloor, Knowledge and Social Imagery (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 5.
- 21. Tim Dant, Knowledge, Ideology, and Discourse: A Sociological Perspective (New York: Routledge Press, 1991), p. 3.
- 22. John Waterbury and Alan Richards, *Political Economy of the Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); and Shibley Telhami, *The Path to Camp David* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).
- 23. Ian Lustick, "Writing the Intifada: Collective Action in the Occupied Territories," *World Politics* 45 (July 1993), pp. 560–94.
  - 24. William Frankel, Israel Observed (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).
- 25. Uri Bialer, Between East and West (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 1.
- 26. Daniel Elazar, *Israel: Building a New Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 1.
- 27. Yet even in this regard, Israel might not be unique. While Dror might be correct in asserting that Israel stands alone in the *need* to believe in its historical uniqueness, students of American politics have long claimed that the U.S. is comparable to none, and that Americans frequently assert that they are on a special mission, and represent a "city on the hill." C. Van Woodward, "The Comparatibility of American History," *The Comparative Approach to American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).
- 28. Cited from Martin E. Marty, "Comparing Fundamentalisms" *Contention*, Vol. 4, no. 2, Winter, 1995, p. 19, pp. 19–39.
- Kenneth Stein, "The Study of Middle Eastern History in the United States,"
   Jerusalem Quarterly 46 (Spring 1988), pp. 49–64.
- 30. Daniel Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *The Origins of the Israeli Polity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), and *Trouble in Utopia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), and S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israeli Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985).
- 31. Mitchell Cohen, Zion and State (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Gershon Shafir, Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Michael Shalev, Labour and the Political Economy in Israel.
- 32. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 54; emphasis in original.
  - 33. Quoted from Giddens, Modernity and Self-Identity, p. 54.

- 34. It is important, however, to emphasize that Israel is not necessarily alone in this regard. Specifically, numerous political communities and states have contradictory biographies and storylines, and therefore have a difficult time keeping a particular narrative going. The same might be said for the Palestinians, the Egyptians (as exemplified by Anwar Sadat's *In Search of Identity*), the current debate in the United States over the national identity, and so on. As Edward Said commented, "We need to regard society as the locale in which a continuous contest between adherents of different ideas about what constitutes the national identity is taking place. I think that this is exactly what is occurring in Arab-Islamic society." "The Phony Islamic Threat," *The New York Times Magazine*, November 21, 1993, p. 62.
- 35. Dan Segre, A Crisis of Identity: Israel and Zionism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 136.
- 36. Segre, A Crisis of Identity; Baruch Kimmerling, "Between the Primordial and the Civil Definitions of the Collective Identity," in E. Cohen, M. Lissak, and U. Almagor, eds., Comparative Social Dynamics (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), pps. 268–82; and Horowitz, "From Pariah People to Pariah Nation."
  - 37. Tom Segev, The Seventh Million (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993).
- 38. Baruch Kimmerling, "Sociology, Ideology, and Nation-Building: The Palestinians and Their Meaning in Israeli Sociology," *American Sociological Review* 57 (August 1992), pp. 446–60.