The Decline of Israeli Sociology

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Ten years have passed since the publication of *Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives*, a collection of essays by prominent Israeli sociologists which has proven to be a turning point in the academic study of Israeli life. Addressing the Jewish state's most intractable problems, including its ethnic and social divisions, its military policies, the treatment of women, and the Palestinian question, *Israeli Society* presented not only a wide range of subjects and a prestigious group of contributors, but also a sweeping new critique—one consistently wary of, if not downright hostile to, the State of Israel and its national ethos. Uri Ram, the book's editor and a sociologist at Ben-Gurion University, explained its unifying principle:

> For a long time Israeli social science seemed to be little more than a monotonous echo of official Israeli ideology. In this it did not much differ from other instruments of cultural transmission, such as the press, the schools, or literature. But this began to change in the 1970s, and since then, critical Israeli sociology, which views official Israeli ideology as a subject of inquiry and not a starting assumption, has been gaining strength.

> There is no question that critical sociology has had a decisive effect on today's sociological agenda. This book is proof of that fact, and also part of the trend.[1]

While such claims might once have seemed exaggerated, in the past few years they have proven surprisingly accurate: In the space of a decade, "critical" sociologists have moved from the fringes of the academic establishment to the center, and their views have come to dominate the social sciences, which are now a powerful engine of radical ideology on Israeli campuses.

The significance of this trend should not be underestimated. Over the past two decades, the number of Israelis earning degrees in the social sciences has doubled, with sociology one of the most popular disciplines.[2] More than five thousand students receive their B.A. in the social sciences each year, and more than two thousand go on to receive advanced degrees. Many of these graduates end up working in the government and non-profit sectors, and having a significant impact on public policy. Yet during their most formative years, many of Israel's future leaders are exposed almost exclusively to the radical outlook that dominates the field.

In this essay I intend to explore how critical sociology became the leading school of thought in the study of Israeli society. As I will make clear, the scholars of this school are so dedicated to advancing their ideology that they have come to focus far more on rewriting Israel's history than on examining the issues of greatest concern to Israeli society today. Their proclivity for myth-smashing, coupled with their commitment to imported theoretical models, precludes any serious discussion of the unique aspects of Israeli life, and causes them to downplay, or even distort, historical facts.

These problems are so acute that they call into question the credibility of sociological research in Israel. Although criticism is no doubt an essential research tool—a fact of which the traditional sociologists were well aware—its employment in the service of ideology not only delegitimizes what was

once a prestigious academic discipline, but also alienates sociology from the society it purports to study. Given the field's role in shaping a society's self-perception, and the impact its students have on Israeli public life, "critical sociology" is something supporters of the Jewish state cannot afford to ignore.

<center>II</center>

Long before the rise of critical sociology, critical analysis was an integral part of social research in Israel. The founders of Israeli sociology, far from feeling beholden to the political establishment, did not hesitate to voice their objections to government policy. Yet unlike today's critical sociologists, who reject the very idea of a Jewish nation state, Israeli sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s maintained a commitment to the core beliefs of Zionism, as well as a critical independence of thought and research.

Scholarly interest in Jewish society in the land of Israel began before the founding of the state, in the period of the British Mandate. While most scholars who wrote on the topic were based in Europe, several of those in Mandatory Palestine offered a valuable insider's perspective, including the sociologist and demographer Arthur Ruppin, who arrived in 1908; the anthropologist Shlomo Dov Goitein, who came in 1923; and the political scientist Siegfried Landshuth, who came in 1936. The creation in 1947 of the Hebrew University's Department of Sociology produced the first generation of scholars who observed Israeli society from within, devoting their energies to analyzing its unique aspects. These were depicted, for example, in Samuel Noah Eisenstadt's *Israeli Society* (1967) and in *Social Stratification in Israel* (1968), a collection of articles he edited; Joseph Ben-David's

Agricultural Planning and Village Community in Israel (1964); Moshe Lissak's *The Elites of the Jewish Community in Palestine* (1981); and two books jointly authored by Lissak and Dan Horowitz, *Origins of the Israeli Polity* (1978) and *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (1989).[3]

Radical perspectives, too, found expression in those early years, although they were far from dominant. During the pre-state period, two scholars with a "cosmopolitan" outlook were appointed professors of sociology at the Hebrew University: One, Arthur Ruppin, was head of Brit Shalom ("The Peace Association"); the other, Martin Buber, was a founder of Ihud ("The Union Association"); both groups opposed the idea of exclusive Jewish sovereignty, calling instead for the establishment of a binational state. Their influence, however, was limited: Ruppin died in 1943, before the university's Department of Sociology was officially established, and Buber, the first head of the department, retired in 1950 and was succeeded by Eisenstadt.

The first generation of Israeli sociologists, especially Eisenstadt, echoed David Ben-Gurion's belief in the authority of the state and its institutions, and advocated a centralized government.[4] In this they were no different from scholars in other disciplines, though their studies adopted a more objective tone.[5] "While it is true that no sociologist praised Ben-Gurion the way several Israeli writers had done," writes Michael Keren of the Institute for Study of the Jewish Press and Communications at Tel Aviv University, "the field of sociology was undoubtedly permeated by his views on the authority of the state."[6] Yet despite what critical sociologists claim today, the early sociologists hardly served the establishment blindly.[7] Eisenstadt and Judith Shuval, for example, argued in the 1950s that Israel's "melting pot" policy had failed to achieve its goals, as evidenced by the socioeconomic divide that persisted between Ashkenazim and Sephardim well into the second generation.[8] Aryeh Simon, Leah Adar, and Sarah Smilansky took issue with the policy of "uniformity" in Israeli education, arguing in a series of articles in 1956 and 1957 in *Megamot* ("Trends"), the leading

Hebrew-language journal of sociology and psychology, that standard teaching and testing methods were inappropriate for Sephardi students because of their cultural background.[9] Moshe Lissak and Judah Matras also demonstrated that Israeli society was highly stratified, in spite of claims to the contrary by the country's leaders. They described how social and demographic factors such as ethnicity, length of time in Israel, and level of religious observance affected social status.[10] Clearly, the sociologists' identification with the Zionist ethos did not prevent them from examining government policy critically and proposing alternatives.

Those years, moreover, were a period of rich academic pluralism, with journals such as *State, Government, and International Relations* and *Megamot* offering a variety of outlets for scholarly work. It was common, for example, for these journals to publish opposing viewpoints side by side, a practice which is surprisingly rare today.[11] Universities throughout the country established sociology departments, research methods became increasingly sophisticated, and Israeli sociology achieved international recognition.

Yet all this changed in the 1970s. The work of two scholars in particular, Yonatan Shapiro of Tel Aviv University and Sammy Smooha of Haifa University, redrew the boundaries of sociological discourse, giving it a sharply anti-establishment tone that grew only more strident with time.

Shapiro is, in large measure, the father of the "critical" revolution in Israeli sociology.[12] In books such as *The Formative Years of the Israeli Labor Party* (1975) and *Democracy in Israel* (1977), he explored the oligarchical role of the Israeli political elite and the harm it caused to the development of Israeli democracy.[13] In later works he assailed the political establishment, particularly Ben-Gurion's Mapai party, for failing to encourage a sense of civic duty among Israelis.[14] Yet Shapiro was not nearly as hostile as the critical sociologists writing today. In a memorial issue of *Israeli Sociology* in 1999, editors Hanna Herzog, Adriana Kemp, and Lev Luis Grinberg attested that Shapiro actually viewed his work as an expression of fidelity to Zionism. "Although he himself was one of the major critics of the dominant narrative, and encouraged many younger scholars who helped bring

about the collapse of the Zionist narrative," they explain, "he did not consider this a destructive or unpatriotic act…. Shapiro believed that criticism was vital to Israeli democracy and its ability to craft new policies that could save us from the errors of the founding generation."[15]

The works of Sammy Smooha, especially his pioneering essays on the status of Arabs in Israel, reveal the beginnings of a more radical approach. Smooha directed his criticism not only at the political establishment, but at the very idea of a Jewish state. According to Smooha, the desire to build a nation led "of necessity" to "institutional segmentation and the absence of biculturalism." Israel might have boasted of its aspirations to democracy, but it systematically oppressed its Arab minority. Smooha wrote in 1980 that for Israeli Arabs, "not only is there no assurance of minority rights or any limits to the government's authority, there is also the problem of the 'tyranny of the majority'… and the extensive use of governmental power to keep the minority in its place."[16] Discrimination against Arabs, he argued, is inherent to Israeli society, and the integration of Arabs into that society is primarily a result of "negative and involuntary forces such as economic dependence, political coercion, and ecological-social isolation."[17] At the root of this continued oppression, he argues, lie economic interests:

> The establishment takes additional steps… intended to ensure the continuation of the present, oppressive situation…. For only if Israeli Arabs remain an unorganized and vulnerable minority can the state be assured of a constant supply of cheap, low-quality labor… and can it get away with investing much less than average in services to and development of the Arab sector.[18]

In the last two decades, claims of this type have become very popular with Israeli academics, and have increasingly come to define the agenda of the social sciences as a whole. Yet it would be a mistake to say that Shapiro and Smooha are solely responsible for this trend. Their views, in fact, must be understood in the context of the larger theoretical developments in sociology over the past half-century, in Israel and abroad.

Starting in the 1960s, Israelis studying abroad came under the influence of the new intellectual trends on American and European campuses. The spirit of the New Left, which attacked the "repressive" order of the capitalist West, soon made itself felt in Israeli universities as well: In Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Beersheba, young lecturers and students emerged who saw themselves as the intellectual vanguard of the revolution.

The surprising defeat of the Labor Party in the 1977 Knesset elections, and, even more so, the outbreak of the war in Lebanon in 1982, also sent shock waves through Israeli campuses.[19] These events—which for many students and faculty signaled the demise of the reigning views on politics and the military in Israel—increased the radicalization of Israeli intellectuals, who expressed their discontent in works of a clearly ideological nature. The diplomatic process that began with the Oslo accords in 1993 also had a significant impact.[20] At the time, many scholars accepted Sammy Smooha's view that "the Israeli-Arab conflict is coming to an end. It has been fading for two decades. The end of the conflict is a non-reversible process, which advances in stages, backed by international support and grounded in both Jewish and Palestinian public opinion."[21] The belief that peace was at hand, that Israel's existence was no longer threatened, transformed the sociological discourse. Scholars began to devote their research to the advancement of the peace process, and were increasingly vocal in their condemnation of Israeli policy towards Arabs in general, and Palestinians in particular.

Finally, as improved communication strengthened ties between Israeli scholars and international academic associations, Israeli sociologists looking to enhance their international standing adopted, to some extent, the anti-Israel attitude common in foreign academic circles since the 1980s, and still prevalent today: In 2002, for instance, when an international academic boycott was organized to isolate Israel for its "war crimes" against Palestinians, Baruch Kimmerling of the Hebrew University distributed an open letter to his colleagues overseas, insisting that severing ties with Israeli academics would only interfere with their own vigorous opposition to the "fascist rule" of the Israeli government.[22]

The critical trend has become so dominant in Israel that it has effectively ended genuine pluralism in Israeli sociological research. The radicalization that began in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Beersheba later spread to nearly every center of sociological research in Israel. Two milestones were passed in 1993: The publication of Uri Ram's *Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives*, which I discussed earlier; and the founding of the journal *Theory and Criticism*, which has become the flagship of post-Zionist writing. In 1999, *Theory and Criticism* published a special issue, entitled *Fifty to Forty-Eight: Critical Moments in the History of the State of Israel*, which attempted to present an alternative, critical history, but was really little more than a catalogue of the crimes purportedly committed by an Israel that is "totalitarian, oppressive, and lacking in tolerance towards others."[23] The journal's editor, Adi Ophir of Tel Aviv University, explained that the essays were written "out of fear that control over the Palestinians in particular, and the adoption of the political forms of an ethnocentric and racist nation state in general, are turning Israel into the most dangerous place in the world for the humanity and morality of the Jewish community, for the continuity of Jewish cultures, and perhaps for Jewish existence itself."[24]

As part of their critique of the country's founding ideology, most critical sociologists prefer to assail Zionism as a repressive and racist enterprise, rather than to undertake a dispassionate study of Israeli society. "Despite the diversity of its practitioners' approaches and beliefs," writes Michael Shalev, until recently chairman of the Department of Sociology at the Hebrew University, "critical scholarship has consistently called into question taken-for-granted assertions and assumptions that have been central to the legitimacy of Zionism and the authority of the Israeli elites."[25] In this spirit, Ben-Gurion University's Oren Yiftachel, who since the late 1990s has edited the quarterly *Israel Social Science Review*,[26] lists the injustices the Jewish state has committed since 1948:

> Immediately after the founding of the state, Israel began a radical stage of territorial restructuring… the heart of this strategy was the "Judaization

of the region." This strategy was motivated by the consistent goal of Jewish colonization and expansion, which was also adopted by the nascent Jewish state.... This Judaization, which involved dispossessing the Arab population, destroying their villages, and precluding the Arab refugees' return, relied not only on the coercive power of the state, but also on the state's ability to portray Arab citizens as potential enemies, and to explain its actions to the international community as "legitimate" methods utilized by sovereign states to handle their internal problems.[27]

According to Yiftachel, the dispossession of the Palestinians and their characterization as enemies of the state are direct results of Zionist ideology. "The Judaization program," he writes, "was premised on a hegemonic myth cultivated since the rise of Zionism at the beginning of the century, which claimed that 'the land' belongs to the Jewish people, and only to the Jewish people. In time, this myth created powerful patterns of ethnic settler nationalism in Israel." This myth, Yiftachel asserts, is to blame for the oppression of ethnic minorities in Israel. Moreover, it impedes the country's political and moral development: "Continuing to define the state as 'Jewish' does not permit non-Jewish citizens full entry into the political collective, and thus, from the outset, precludes the founding of a modern democracy."[28]

A similar claim against the Jewish character of the state was made by Uri Ram. Recalling his participation in a 1988 protest against religious coercion in Tel Aviv, Ram offered the following critique:

> The common slogan in struggles by the secular is the "separation of religion and state".... Yet the problem of democracy in Israel is not "religion," nor even "the religious." The problem is inherent in the ethnic definition of the state.... It is therefore not sufficient to separate religion from state; identity and citizenship must be separated.[29]

The strict separation of ethnic identity from citizenship proposed by Ram would effectively bring an end to Israel as the Jewish state, and replace

it with a "state of all its citizens." Critical sociologists are fully aware of this; indeed, Ram's statement may be said to encapsulate the movement's entire ideological agenda, and in particular its effort to negate the central concept of classical Zionism. What was once considered a fringe position in Israeli sociology has, over the last generation, become a powerful movement in the field, and threatens to grow even stronger in the years ahead.

III

To understand the rise of critical sociology, it is important to recognize that it did not develop in a vacuum, but reflected the most popular post-modern trends in Western academia. The critical sociologists, following these trends, seek to unmask what they see as the political and social patterns of oppression that dominate Israeli society. In the 1980s and 1990s, two theoretical models, known as the Marxist and the post-colonial approaches, became especially popular.[30] These theories, long favored by academic elites in the West, provided Israeli sociologists with a conceptual foundation that was well attuned to their political predispositions. Yet in their fervor to prove the relevance of these theories, critical sociologists all but abandoned attempts to offer new analyses of Israeli society's unique features. At times, they even went so far as to distort historical facts in order to fit them into their guiding paradigms.

The Marxist approach took hold in Israeli sociology beginning in the late 1970s. In 1978, Haifa University's Department of Sociology began publishing a journal called *Mahberot Lemehkar Ulevikoret* ("Bulletins of Research and Criticism"), which attempted, in the words of founding editors Henry Rosenfeld, Deborah Bernstein, Shlomo Swirski, and Deborah Kalkin,

to foster analysis of the relationships of oppression, discrimination, alienation, and backwardness which are pivotal expressions of a class-based society… [and] to create in *Mahberot* a forum for a critical orientation that opposes the positivist methods and "neutral" conceptions common in the social sciences. These approaches constitute… an obstacle to understanding social reality, and also to changing it.[31]

From the outset, the Haifa scholars repudiated the very notion of academic objectivity, claiming it would be detrimental to "understanding social reality." No less important, they saw the Marxist approach as a means of changing that reality according to their own ideological program. For the first time, critical sociologists dropped all pretense of genuine scientific endeavor.

According to the Haifa scholars, Israeli society is made up of two groups: The "underprivileged classes," including Palestinians and the Sephardi proletariat,[32] and the predominantly Ashkenazi middle class, which benefited from the patronage of the dominant Mapai party. The true aim of Israel's foreign and domestic policy, they maintain, was not to build and preserve a state for the Jewish people as a whole, but to enable the Ashkenazi establishment to maintain control over society's resources. This theory explains, for instance, the nationalistic, militaristic line the state adopted when dealing with its Arab neighbors, and its patronizing attitude towards both the Palestinians and Sephardi Jews. Shulamit Carmi and Henry Rosenfeld, two of Haifa University's most prominent sociologists, illustrated this approach in a joint study published in 1989. In their version of Israeli history, the nascent state was faced with two choices: To become a binational, socialist society, or to follow the model of militaristic nationalism. The labor movement, they argued, chose the second option, in the process ignoring the problem of Palestinian nationhood altogether, and preventing the 1948 refugees from returning to Israel. Carmi and Rosenfeld lament this historic decision:

Socialism would have had to resolve the results of the 1948 war differently, by neutralizing and demilitarizing the area, by sharing responsibility for the refugee problem and the Palestinian Arab national problem, and by forgoing the immediate advantages and benefits that militaristic nationalism claimed as privileges of victory, and which it consolidated and institutionalized in the wars that followed....[33]

According to Carmi and Rosenfeld, the Zionist movement's choice transformed the conflict between Jews and Palestinians from a struggle between communities into a confrontation between nations, and "relieved Israeli society of the need to make any serious effort at coexistence."[34] Israeli statism succeeded in preventing any possibility of agrarian reform, of creating equality of economic conditions for all ethnic groups, of establishing a civil constitution, or of securing the national rights of Arabs. Carmi and Rosenfeld trace the social pattern that developed in Israel's early years to three distinct factors: The central role of the state in the country's economy; the large amount of foreign aid, which enabled the state to develop and arm itself while maintaining a reasonable standard of living; and an aggressive defense policy. This pattern was established to further the interests of the ruling class, which took advantage of the weaker citizens as a means of preserving and tightening its control over the country.

If Marxist socialism condemned Zionism as a regime of economic oppression, post-colonialism condemned it as a rationale for the expropriation of lands belonging to the indigenous Arab population, and the subsequent imposition of rule over Arabs and Sephardi Jews alike. This argument was advanced in a series of books, the most prominent of which were *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics*, by Baruch Kimmerling (1983); *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, by Gershon Shafir (1989); and *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951*, by the historian Ilan Pappe (1992).[35] According to these scholars, there is no essential difference between Zionism and the

European policy of colonization in Africa and Asia. Shafir, who teaches at the University of California, San Diego, and has served in recent years as president of the Association for Israel Studies, asserts that "there is a fundamental similarity… between the Zionist settlement activity and the European colonization process overseas.… The changes that occurred in Israeli society after 1967 are to be understood not as a transition from a Zionist-socialist society to a right-wing, colonial one, but as the continuation of the colonial project by means of a transition from one method of colonization to another."[36]

Like advocates of the Marxist approach, scholars of the post-colonial camp also inveigh against the Zionist settlement movement, dismissing its socialist aspirations as a fraud. Shafir, for example, argues that Zionism never really intended to create an egalitarian society in Palestine:

> The socialist component of their thought [i.e., of the workers of the Second Aliya] assumed an ironic bent. They opposed the exploitation of Arab workers, but solved the problem by means of a struggle to prevent the employment of Arab laborers altogether… the workers found their "Rothschilds" in the form of the World Zionist Organization… which attempted to recreate in the land of Israel a Prussian settlement from eastern Germany.[37]

Critical sociologists portray the Zionist "conquest of labor" as a transparent effort to create a Jewish monopoly over the labor market, thereby forcing out skilled Arab workers willing to work for low wages. Even the kibbutz, which for most people symbolized the idealistic yearning for a model society, is to the critical sociologists "the most blatant expression of the strategy of conquest of land and labor that was undertaken by the Jewish settler-workers."[38] Uri Ram summarizes this viewpoint when he writes that "the crowning achievement of socialist Zionism, the kibbutz, was not the Israeli path to an alternative society, but the Israeli path to settlement."[39]

These claims fit nicely into the post-colonial outlook, but they are difficult to reconcile with the historical reality. Jewish settlement, at least in its early stages, did not, in fact, aim to create a sectoral labor market in Palestine, nor did the patrons of the nascent Jewish settlement, foremost Baron Edmond de Rothschild, follow the pattern of colonial employers in the European tradition. Instead, as the historian Ran Aharonson has shown, during the twenty-two years of the First Aliya, Jewish laborers worked alongside Arabs under similar conditions.[40] The division occurred only later, when violent Arab opposition to Jewish immigration made continued integration of the labor force impossible.

Determination to make the facts fit a historical narrative of oppression and exploitation also explains the arguments made by Yehuda Shenhav, the former head of Tel Aviv University's Sociology Department and now editor of *Theory and Criticism*, in a 1998 article in the daily *Ha'aretz* entitled, "The Perfect Robbery." The essay, which attempted to revisit the history of the immigration of Iraqi Jewry to Israel in 1951, described the State of Israel as seeking to exploit both the Palestinians and the Iraqi Jews:

> The immigrants from Iraq lost all the property that they left behind in their homeland as the result of a cynical political exercise by the Israeli government, intended to avoid paying compensation to the Palestinian refugees…. In those years, 1948-1951, the Israeli government found itself faced with two intersecting claims. One was the demand by the United Nations and the governments of the United States and Britain to compensate the Palestinian refugees of 1948 for their property, which had been nationalized by the custodian general of the State of Israel. The second was that of Iraqi Jewry and their representatives in the Israeli government, such as Minister [of Police] Bechor-Shalem Sheetrit, to compensate them for the nationalization of their property by the Iraqi government. Trapped between these two claims, the Israeli government took advantage of the opportunity that had come its way, created a

linkage between the property of the Arabs of 1948 and that of Iraqi Jewry, and thereby freed itself of both claims.[41]

Shenhav's claim is remarkable: He appears to believe not only that Israel did not have Iraqi Jewry's best interests in mind, but that it should, in effect, have compensated both the Jews whose property was nationalized by Iraq *and* the Arabs whose property was nationalized by Israel; and that the linkage was, in essence, a scheme to avoid having to do either one. According to Shenhav, most Iraqi Jews "were well-established bourgeoisie" until the Zionist activists intervened, triggering what he calls a "psychosis of *aliya*." Shenhav accuses both Zionism and the Israeli government of destabilizing the world of Iraqi Jewry and of driving a wedge between Iraqi Jews and the local Arab population. He concludes that only "towards 1947-1948 did the situation of Iraqi Jewry begin to be become intolerable" as a result of "the aggressive activity of the Zionist movement…. At the same time, nationalist chauvinism intensified in Iraq and adopted an anti-Jewish stance."[42]

The distortions and half-truths in Shenhav's essay were pointed out in a rejoinder by Shlomo Hillel, former speaker of the Knesset and *aliya* activist in Iraq. Hillel demonstrated that Iraqi hostility towards the Jewish population did not emerge as a result of Zionist activity in 1947-1948, but in fact appeared as early as 1933, after the Iraqi declaration of independence and the death of King Faisal I, when the country was swept by a wave of xenophobia. Tension again turned to violence on the eve of Britain's 1941 invasion of Iraq—an attempt to thwart the Iraqi government's alliance with Nazi Germany—which triggered anti-Jewish riots in Baghdad on the Jewish holiday of Shavuot. No fewer than 179 Jews were murdered, many others were injured, and scores of businesses and homes were looted—all of which Shenhav conveniently neglects to mention.[43]

Lapses of this sort, it would appear, attest to critical sociologists' reluctance to let facts stand in the way of a good theory. However, their

theoretical orientation has an additional consequence, no less problematic than the damage it does to their credibility: In their attempt to fit Israeli life into imported theoretical models, they end up ignoring those unique features of Israeli society which ought to be of greatest interest to their field. Thus one finds scholars such as Deborah Bernstein of Haifa University arguing that, "Israeli society in the past and the present can be understood by a comparative analysis, since its singularity does not fundamentally differ from the essential singularity of any historical case."[44] For critical sociologists, denying the uniqueness of the Zionist enterprise serves an important purpose, for it allows them to apply off-the-shelf theoretical models to Jewish and Israeli history, and simultaneously frees them of the need to formulate new research methods for dealing with Israeli society. The result, in many instances, is the outright distortion of their research.

The clearest example is the way in which the remarkable differences between historical Zionism and European colonialism are either downplayed or ignored. Baruch Kimmerling, for example, has this to say about Jewish attitudes to the land of Israel during the centuries of exile:

> The two thousand years of longings by the Jews for Zion are a cultural and historical fact, and are indeed part of the "narrative" as it should be studied. Nevertheless, this does not in any way change the "colonial situation," that is, the situation whereby groups of people from different locations immigrated to a certain place and built a society and state on the ruins of another society. They did not succeed in eliminating this society, nor did this society succeed in expelling them, as happened in other, very well-known instances.[45]

Nowhere does Kimmerling mention that the founders of the Zionist settlements rejected classical hierarchical structures in favor of a community founded on the principle of equality, an aspiration completely alien to European colonizers. Furthermore, unlike the European settlers, the Jews living under the British Mandate did not enjoy preferential treatment, and

in many cases suffered from clear discrimination at the hands of the British authorities—a fact that is nearly impossible to square with the claim that Zionism was a British colonial project. Finally, the Zionists' attempt to effect a Jewish cultural renaissance in the land of Israel, including a revival of the Hebrew language, *without* imposing their culture or language on the indigenous population, has no parallel in the history of colonialism.[46]

The critical sociologists' failure to recognize the unique aspects of the Zionist enterprise is merely one symptom of a much larger trend. A study of the articles presented from 1998 to 2002 at the annual conferences of the Israeli Sociological Society, at which the most important subjects in Israeli sociology are addressed, shows that out of approximately five hundred papers delivered, only one in seven was devoted to anything uniquely Israeli or Zionist.[47] Of these, for example, five essays addressed anti-Semitism and the memory of the Holocaust; six mentioned Israel-diaspora relations; and five dealt with the social and psychological characteristics of life in settlements over the Green Line. In contrast, 320 articles—about two out of every three—mentioned Israel only in connection with phenomena not particular to Israeli society, while 73 others made no mention of Israel at all.

Nor is this trend limited to academic publications in Hebrew: Of the 18 sociological studies about Israel that have appeared in the world's five leading sociological journals since 1989, *not one* has addressed uniquely Israeli or Zionist issues.[48] In other words, it has been at least fifteen years since international sociological discourse has included any discussion of issues particular to Israeli society.

IV

There is one area, however, in which critical sociologists do address something that is uniquely Israeli: When they abandon the study of present-day Israeli society altogether and turn their efforts to rewriting the Zionist past.[49] One of critical sociology's principal targets is Israel's own collective memory, which, like any historical consciousness, is shaped by symbols, milestones, and narratives. Laurence Silberstein, in his 1999 study, *The Post-Zionism Debates*, which is generally sympathetic to the critical school, explains the true impact of sociology's challenge to the Zionist narrative:

> For Israelis, as for all national groups, the narratives of their nation's past provide a framework through which to interpret the events of the present. In calling into question prevailing Israeli historical narratives, the new historians, together with a group known as critical sociologists, render problematic the very foundations on which Israeli group identity has been based.[50]

The majority of critical sociologists, like the "new historians" who have pursued similar goals in history departments across Israel, regard the disproving of the Zionist narrative as a means of effecting far-reaching political and social change.[51] Only if Israel is freed from the ideological grip of nationalist chauvinism, they claim, can it become a progressive and enlightened country, a "state of all its citizens." Uri Ram presents the debate as follows:

> A struggle is being waged in Israel for our collective memory…. This is a battle among three main historical approaches: The *national* approach to history, with its inherent and insoluble contradiction between democracy

and Jewishness; the *nationalist* approach to history, which resolves the contradiction by forgoing democracy; and the approach to history based on *citizenship*, which resolves the contradiction by relinquishing the ethnic past. This is a conflict between a past that seeks to bury the future, and a future that looks to shake off the past. This is the choice: A troubled past, or a reasonable future.[52]

In Ram's view, Israeli society has no choice but to adopt the third, "citizenship" approach, the implication of which is that only by overcoming the Zionist obsession with Jewish history will Israel see any real progress. "The historiographical change signals the beginning of the end of a historical consciousness suited to a time of conquest, settlement, and nation-building…," he writes, "and the beginning of the creation of a new historical consciousness characteristic of a civilian, consumer, and perhaps even multicultural society."[53]

In 1999, at the thirtieth annual conference of the Israeli Sociological Society, Uri Davidson spoke in a similar vein. Israeli education, he argued, is held captive by Zionist indoctrination, which in turn leads to intellectual stagnation. In his view, the centralization of Israeli education under government authority

lent the Zionist narrative a monopoly in education…. Exclusive legitimacy was given to the Hebrew language, and the historical consciousness linked to the pre-diaspora period. This intellectual fixation has existed since the founding of the state, and has brought about stagnation in the national educational system… which remains locked into the old ideals, and is at an evolutionary dead end. It is capable of imparting knowledge, but incapable of fashioning a personality suited to a global, post-modern society.[54]

Such statements, made frequently by prominent Israeli sociologists, have helped place historical questions at the top of Israel's sociological agenda. As Baruch Kimmerling correctly observes, "Every statement connected to

the past immediately makes waves, and is naturally linked to the present, and possibly also to the future."[55] The boundaries between the recent and distant past are therefore blurred in the work of many critical sociologists, since both can serve as a "usable past," a selective narrative employed for political and cultural purposes.[56] Two books published in the mid-1990s serve as powerful examples of this approach: The first, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (1995), by Yael Zerubavel of Rutgers University, shows how the dominant Israeli "meta-narrative of memory" transformed debacles such as the fall of Masada, the Bar Kochba rebellion, and the defense of Tel Hai into heroic tales.[57] The second, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (1995), by Nachman Ben-Yehuda of the Hebrew University, seeks to expose the ways in which the "heroic" story of Masada was fabricated, promoted, and maintained by pre-state Jewish underground organizations, the Israeli army, archaeologists, the mass media, and the tourism industry.[58] In his recent book on the same topic, *Sacrificing Truth: Archaeology and the Myth of Masada* (2002), Ben-Yehuda accuses Yigael Yadin, the archaeologist who excavated Masada in the 1960s, of going down "a dubious road which was to include suppressing information, concealing evidence, and structuring a historical tale of Masada which was falsified and deceptive," a narrative that concocted a "twentieth-century myth of Jewish heroism."[59]

But of all the historical "myths" being addressed, by far the most popular concern the Israeli-Arab conflict and Zionist history, both of which have attracted so much attention from critical sociologists that it is often difficult to distinguish their writings on these topics from those of their "new historian" colleagues. Indeed, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, and other revisionist historians frequently quote sociological works in their own analyses of the encounter between the Jewish national movement, the Palestinians, and the Arab states. Likewise, sociologists Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, in their book *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (1993), engage in a socio-political analysis of the War of Independence that relies in large part on arguments and data provided by Benny Morris

in his landmark work, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949.*[60]

The sociological literature on the root causes of the Israeli-Arab conflict leaves little doubt, of course, as to who is at fault. In the critical sociologists' view, the Jews bear direct, if not exclusive, responsibility for the creation and perpetuation of the conflict. Gershon Shafir, for instance, blames the Zionist immigrants, whose "goal… was to successfully colonize Palestine while at the same time justifying the creation of a homogeneous Jewish settlement through an intensifying denial of Palestinian national aspirations." Shafir argues that this Zionist-colonialist policy was "the main reason for the intractable nature of the conflict…."[61] Other scholars claim that it was in the interest of the leadership of the *yishuv* and later the state to perpetuate the violent conflict between Jews and Arabs. In *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (1998), Uri Ben-Eliezer of Haifa University maintains that Arab violence provided the perfect opportunity for the younger generation of Zionist leaders to assure their place in the leadership of the *yishuv*.[62]

Yagil Levy, a student of Yonatan Shapiro's at Tel Aviv University, who also examines the roots of Israeli "militarism," takes an even more radical approach. In a 1998 essay in *Theory and Criticism*, Levy offers the following analysis of Israel's early years:

> As the hostilities intensified, the main Jewish groups benefited…. Direct achievements such as material resources, social prestige, electoral gains, and the like, combined with indirect achievements resulting exclusively from acts of reprisal, such as gaining Palestinian lands and property and removing Arab workers from the labor market, in order to perpetuate the conflict. Moreover, the more the escalation of the conflict established the state's superiority internally… the greater was the state's ability to legitimize the construction of a non-egalitarian society in which Ashkenazi groups were dominant.[63]

Thus the various theories that drive critical sociology are woven into a comprehensive indictment of Israel in general, and Zionism in particular.

Yet unlike the scholars of the Zionist Left, who tend to blame the country's ills on the "occupation" that began in 1967, critical sociologists locate the roots of evil in Israel's War of Independence, or even earlier. Yoav Peled and Yagil Levy stress this point in a 1993 article published in *Theory and Criticism*: "To our mind, the Six Day War was not a turning point, but rather an integral part of the Israeli-Arab conflict that has been going on for a hundred years. This conflict in itself… constitutes a cornerstone of the Israeli socio-political order."[64]

The inevitable price for this preoccupation with history is, of course, the neglect of subjects far more relevant to what is traditionally associated with sociological inquiry. The ongoing violence between Jews and Arabs, for example, continues to play a decisive role in shaping Israeli society, yet such issues are surprisingly ignored in most of today's sociological research. The impact of continued terror attacks on the Israeli public, the societal repercussions of the collapse of the Oslo accords, and the increasing extremism among Israeli Arabs have gradually been removed from sociological discourse. Indeed, of some 500 articles presented at the annual conferences of the Israeli Sociological Society between 1998 and 2002, only 4 focused on the societal implications of the current Israeli-Arab conflict.[65] Moreover, of 18 studies on Israel appearing in the top five international sociology journals since 1989, only 2 have addressed the current conflict, and both focused on the Palestinians from a sympathetic point of view, presenting them as victims of Israeli oppression and occupation.[66] Finally, of the 30 doctoral theses in sociology approved by Israeli universities from 1999 to 2002, only 1 discusses current aspects of the conflict.[67]

These statistics are grim indeed: A generation of sociologists has emerged that is dedicated not to the objective study of Israeli society today, but to furthering their ideological agenda and undermining their country's collective memory. It is no surprise, then, that critical sociology has become little more than an offshoot of post-Zionist historiography.

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While it is still too early to gauge the impact of critical sociology on Israeli public opinion, the movement has already damaged the credibility of Israeli sociological research and, perhaps more importantly, has had significant influence on thousands of students in Israeli sociology departments. None of this is meant to deny the importance of critical thinking; on the contrary, it is only through the critical eye that intellectual endeavor maintains its credibility. In the case of Israeli sociology, however, criticism has taken the place of a sustained analysis of what makes Israeli society different from other societies—that is, of what makes Israelis who they are. Critical sociologists may fear that a scholarly commitment to Israel's uniqueness will make them less respected by their colleagues abroad, yet it should be remembered that the founding generation of Israeli sociologists attained worldwide recognition through their pioneering studies on precisely the subjects that today's scholars ignore. The early sociologists understood that Israel is an unparalleled social laboratory precisely because it does not fit into preconceived theoretical models.[68]

There remains a wealth of topics neglected by Israeli sociologists, and much that both Israelis and outside observers could gain from examining them in depth. These include the renaissance of the Hebrew language and culture; the establishment of democratic institutions and their functioning in an ongoing state of emergency; the impact of terrorist attacks on Israeli society; the lack of a sense of unity in Israeli culture and identity in the past decade; the failure of the kibbutzim and moshavim to create an egalitarian society; the social and psychological aspects of life in the West Bank settlements; the memory of the Holocaust and its ongoing impact on Israeli culture; Israel-diaspora relations; and the military service of women and

new immigrants. Some of these subjects were studied in the past, and are in need of renewed attention, while others have never been properly examined.

A revival of the pluralistic spirit in Israeli sociology would be good news not only for scholars, but for Israeli society as a whole. For in the final analysis, the importance of sociology goes far beyond the realm of pure intellectual inquiry. Sociology holds up a mirror to society, contributing to its understanding of itself and its ability to address its own shortcomings. To fulfill this role, however, Israeli sociologists must also learn to cast a critical look at themselves.

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Notes

1. Uri Ram, ed., *Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives* (Tel Aviv: Breirot, 1993), p. 5. [Hebrew]

2. According to data from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of students enrolled in programs in the social sciences at major universities rose from 14,475 at the end of the 1970s to 33,680 at the end of the 1990s.

3. S.N. Eisenstadt, *Israeli Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1967); Joseph Ben-David, ed., *Agricultural Planning and Village Community in Israel* (Paris: UNESCO, 1964); Moshe Lissak, *The Elites of the Jewish Community in Palestine*

(Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1981) [Hebrew]; Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Origins of the Israeli Polity: Palestine Under the Mandate* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978); Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (Albany: SUNY, 1990).

4. At that time, the dominant sociological paradigm, both in Israel and abroad, was the functionalist approach, which perceives society as a self-sustaining system that preserves cultural cohesion and a structural-functional division. The criticism currently directed at functionalism does not change the fact that it was this approach that brought Israeli sociology professional prestige, and paved the way for cutting-edge research in the social sciences.

5. Cf. Alek D. Epstein, "Defending Democracy and Civil Rights: Jerusalem's Academic Community in the Era of State-Building," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 13 (Spring 2001), pp. 63-103.

6. Michael Keren, *The Pen and the Sword: Israeli Intellectuals and the Making of the Nation State* (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 1991), p. 74. [Hebrew]

7. See, for example, Uri Ram, *The Changing Agenda of Israeli Sociology: Theory, Ideology, and Identity* (Albany: SUNY, 1995), pp. 23-46.

8. Their findings were summarized in S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants* (London: Routledge, 1954), and Judith Shuval, *Immigration on the Threshold* (New York: Atherton, 1963).

9. Aryeh Simon, "On the Scholastic Achievements of Immigrant Children in the Lower Elementary Grades," *Megamot* 8 (October 1957), pp. 343-368; Leah Adar, "A Study of the Scholastic Difficulties of Immigrant Children," *Megamot* 7 (April 1956), pp. 139-180; Sarah Smilansky, "Children Who Fail in the First Elementary Grades and Their Parents," *Megamot* 8 (October 1957), pp. 430-445.

10. Moshe Lissak, *Social Mobility in Israeli Society* (Jerusalem: Israel Universities, 1969); Judah Matras, *Social Change in Israel* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965).

11. Thus, for example, an article by Sammy Smooha, "Ethnicity and the Military in Israel: Theses for Discussion and Research," appeared in the December 1983 issue of *State, Government, and International Relations* along with a response by Moshe Lissak, "A Reply: Theses for Discussion or Preconceived Notions?" *State, Government, and International Relations* 22 (Winter 1983), pp. 5-38. In February 1985, *Megamot* published another critical article by Smooha, "A Critique of an Updated Establishmentarian Formulation of the Cultural Perspective in the Sociology of Ethnic Relations in Israel," *Megamot* 29 (February 1985), pp. 73-92; and six months later a response by Eliezer Ben-Rafael was published in the same journal, "Ethnicity: Theory and Myth," *Megamot* 29 (August 1985), pp. 190-204.

12. For the intellectual heritage of Yonatan Shapiro, see Ze'ev Sternhell, "Yonatan Shapiro: A Pioneer of Critical Research," *Israeli Sociology* 2:1 (1999), pp. 11-21. [Hebrew]

13. Yonatan Shapiro, *The Formative Years of the Israeli Labor Party: The Organization of Power, 1919-1930* (London: Sage, 1976); Yonatan Shapiro, *Democracy in Israel* (Ramat Gan: Masada, 1977). [Hebrew]

14. See the following books by Yonatan Shapiro: *An Elite Without Successors: Generations of Political Leaders in Israel* (Tel Aviv: Poalim, 1984) [Hebrew]; *The Road to Power: Herut Party in Israel*, trans. Ralph Mandel (Albany: SUNY, 1991); *A Society Held Captive by Politicians* (Tel Aviv: Poalim, 1996). [Hebrew]

15. "A Word from the Editors," *Israeli Sociology* 2:1 (1999), p. 7. [Hebrew]

16. Sammy Smooha, "Existing and Alternative Policy Toward the Arabs in Israel," *Megamot* 26 (September 1980), p. 33. Cf. Sammy Smooha, "Existing and Alternative Policy Toward the Arabs in Israel," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5:1 (January 1982), p. 80, where Smooha states that "the Jewish majority has neither an ideological commitment nor a willingness to invest the immense resources to shatter the institutionalized ethnic stratification…. As much as measures are taken to promote equality… they are directed towards achieving other goals, viz. to strengthen Arabs' loyalty to the state, to prompt them to resign themselves to their fate as a vulnerable minority and to keep them away from the Palestinian people"; and p. 93, where he argues that Israel "managed to neutralize Arabs as a threat to… the Jewish-Zionist nature of the state as well as to harness their services in manpower, lands, and other resources." Cf. also Sammy Smooha, "Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution: National Security and the Arab Minority," in *National Security and Democracy in Israel*, ed. Avner Yaniv (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), p. 109: "Discriminatory policies, widespread Jewish ethnocentrism, persistent Arab-Jewish socioeconomic inequalities, a virtual exclusion of Arabs from the national power structure, and systematic denial of Arab institutional autonomy all act to discourage Arab loyalty. These phenomena are no doubt reinforced by genuine security concerns, but the pronounced ethnic nature of Israeli democracy is a prime source of alienation from the state for the Arabs."

17. Sammy Smooha, "Arabs and Jews in Israel: Minority-Majority Relations," *Megamot* 22 (September 1976), p. 420.

18. Smooha, "Existing and Alternative Policy," p. 17.

19. For the importance of the Lebanon War in shaping the political identity of Israeli academics, see Keren, *The Pen and the Sword*, pp. 93-98.

20. Cf. Eliezer Ben-Rafael, "Critical Versus Non-Critical Sociology: An Evaluation," *Israel Studies* 2:1 (Spring 1997), p. 190.

21. Sammy Smooha, "Changes in Israeli Society: After Fifty Years," *Alpayim* 17 (1999), p. 249.

22. As Baruch Kimmerling wrote in his open letter of April 6, 2002, distributed by e-mail: "Many of the Israeli academic community strongly oppose the present regime in Israel. In fact we're the only effective opposition to this fascist rule…. Boycotting us is counterproductive and causes great damage for the cause of ending the subjugation of the Palestinian people."

23. Henriette Dahan-Kalev, "The Events of Wadi Saliv," in *Fifty to Forty-Eight: Critical Moments in the History of the State of Israel*, ed. Adi Ophir (Jerusalem: Van Leer, 1999), pp. 148-157. [Hebrew] Published as a special issue of *Theory and Criticism* 12-13 (1999). Cf. Assaf Sagiv, "Fifty Faces of Post-Zionism," Azure 8, Autumn 1999, pp. 23-31.

24. Adi Ophir, introduction to *Fifty to Forty-Eight*, p. 12.

25. Michael Shalev, "Time for Theory: Critical Notes on Lissak and Sternhell," *Israel Studies* 1:2 (Fall 1996), p. 170.

26. Upon Yiftachel's appointment, he changed the name and tone of the journal, which is now called *Hagar: International Social Science Review*.

27. Oren Yiftachel, "Ethnocracy, Geography, and Democracy: Notes on the Politics of the Judaization of Israel," *Alpayim* 19 (2000), p. 80. Cf. Oren Yiftachel, "Ethnocracy: The Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine," *Constellations: International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 6:3 (September 1999), p. 372, where he claims that "1948 should be regarded as a major political turning point… as the beginning of a state-orchestrated, and essentially non-democratic, Judaization project."

28. Yiftachel, "Ethnocracy, Geography, and Democracy," p. 97.

29. Uri Ram, "The Secret of Secular Weakness," *Ha'aretz*, May 14, 1998.

30. This is also the place to take note of the radical feminist approach, whose proponents do not concentrate exclusively on women's place in the social order, but also analyze the social order from the viewpoint of women they define as "underprivileged." A considerable portion of the research by Deborah Bernstein, Barbara Swirski, Dahlia Moore, Henriette Dahan-Kalev, Tamar Rapoport, and other scholars has been written from this perspective. While they generally accept the fundamental assumptions and findings of the Marxist scholars, they believe that the Marxists pay insufficient attention to sexual discrimination.

31. Deborah Bernstein, "Seen from Above and from Below: Major Trends in Israeli Historiography," *Israeli Sociology* 2:1 (1999), p. 30. [Hebrew]

32. See Shlomo Swirski, *Israel: The Oriental Majority* (London: Zed Books, 1989).

33. Shulamit Carmi and Henry Rosenfeld, "The Emergence of Militaristic Nationalism in Israel," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 3:1 (Fall 1989), p. 40.

34. Shulamit Carmi and Henry Rosenfeld, "The State Economy of Militaristic Nationalism in Israel," in Ram, *Israeli Society*, pp. 286-287.

35. Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983); Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1989); Ilan Pappe, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1951* (London: Tauris, 1992).

36. Gershon Shafir, "Land, Labor, and Population in the Zionist Colonization: General and Unique Aspects," in Ram, *Israeli Society*, pp. 104-119; quotation found on p. 105. Cf. also Gershon Shafir's "Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach," in *Israel in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Michael Barnett (Albany: SUNY, 1996), where, on pp. 230-231, he claims that "the dilemma facing the early Zionist immigrants in Palestine was whether to aim for an ethnic plantation or a pure settlement colony. It was the pure, or homogeneous, type of colonization that won out.... Many of the unique characteristics of Zionist colonization were rooted not in the purportedly non-colonial character of Zionism but were intended to compensate the settler-immigrants for the adverse conditions prevailing in the land and labor markets of Palestine precisely in order to ensure the successful colonization of Palestine and the creation there of a pure, or homogeneous Jewish, settlement."

37. Shafir, "Land, Labor, and Population," p. 112. Cf. Shafir, "Zionism and Colonialism," pp. 233-234, where he says that "in 1905... Jewish workers abandoned the aim of downward wage equalization and substituted for it a struggle for the 'conquest of labor'.... This attempt to monopolize for Jewish workers, at first all manual labor, subsequently at least skilled jobs, indicated a desire for exclusion of Palestinian workers from the new society in the making.... The directors of the World Zionist Organization's Palestine Land Development Company sought to emulate in Palestine the 'internal colonization' model developed by the Prussian government in order to create a German majority in its eastern, Polish, marches."

38. Shafir, "Land, Labor, and Population," p. 112.

39. Uri Ram, "Society and Social Science: Established Sociology and Critical Sociology in Israel," in Ram, *Israeli Society*, p. 31. It is important to note that Ram here uses the word *hitnahalut* for "settlement," rather than *hityashvut*, the former

having a negative connotation and an implicit connection to West Bank settlement after 1967.

40. See a more comprehensive discussion of the subject in Ran Aharonson, "Baron Rothschild and the Initial Stage of Jewish Settlement in Palestine (1882-1890): A Different Type of Colonization?" *Journal of Historical Geography* 19:2 (April 1993), pp. 142-156; Ran Aharonson, "Settlement in Eretz Israel: A Colonialist Enterprise? 'Critical' Scholarship and Historical Geography," *Israel Studies* 1:2 (Fall 1996), pp. 214-229.

41. Yehuda Shenhav, "The Perfect Robbery," *Ha'aretz* weekend supplement, April 10, 1998, pp. 14-15.

42. Shenhav, "The Perfect Robbery," p. 16.

43. Shlomo Hillel, "The Perfect Distortion," *Ha'aretz* holiday supplement, April 29, 1998, pp. 51-52.

44. Bernstein, "Seen from Above and from Below," p. 31.

45. Baruch Kimmerling, "The Anxiety Merchants," *Ha'aretz* weekend supplement, June 10, 1994, pp. 50-52.

46. For a comprehensive critique of the colonialist analogy, see Moshe Lissak, "'Critical' Sociology and 'Establishment' Sociology in the Israeli Academic Community: Ideological Struggles or Academic Discourse?" *Israel Studies* 1:1 (Spring 1996), pp. 247-294.

47. A total of sixty-nine such studies were presented, that is, approximately 14 percent of the total number of studies.

48. These journals are *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *British Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, and *Social Problems*.

49. Shlomo Sand of Tel Aviv University observes that to a large extent, the critical sociologists led the opposition to the Zionist historical narrative:

> The ideological and institutional limitations of the corps of historians specializing in the areas of Zionism and Israel led to the appearance of researchers with a critical, comparative, historical approach, specifically in sociology. *Zionism and Territory* [by Baruch Kimmerling] was not the only book that denied the traditional conventional conceptual narratives. From many points of view, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* by Gershon Shafir… complemented the work of Kimmerling, but instead of restricting himself to specific aspects of the conquest of the land, he preferred to focus on the development of the world of labor in the Zionist undertaking…. What is fascinating is that it is the clearly sociological modes of expression… that imparted universal legitimacy to the negation of the uniqueness traditional historiography attributes

to it. The struggle by the historiographical establishment to maintain this uniqueness… began to be undermined from an unexpected direction.

Shlomo Sand, "The Post-Zionist as an Agent of 'Unauthorized' Memory: On the Structures of the Production of the Past in Israel," *Alpayim* 24 (2002), pp. 224-225.

50. Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Post-Zionism Debates* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.

51. For a summary of the parallel development in Zionist historiography, see Daniel Polisar, "Making History," editorial, Azure 9, Spring 2000, pp. 14-22.

52. Uri Ram, "The Right to Forget," in Ophir, *Fifty to Forty-Eight*, p. 349.

53. Uri Ram, "Memory and Identity: The Sociology of the Dispute Among Historians in Israel," *Theory and Criticism* 8 (1996), p. 20.

54. Uri Davidson, "Rigidity and Evolution in the Educational Narrative in Israel," lecture delivered at the Thirtieth Annual Conference of the Israeli Sociological Society; see the booklet of abstracts from the conference (Rishon Letzion: Hamichlala Leminhal, 1999), p. 14. [Hebrew]

55. Baruch Kimmerling, "The Debate over Zionist Historiography," lecture delivered at the Center for the Study of Zionism, the Yishuv, and the History of the State of Israel (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1994), p. 1. [Hebrew]

56. Yaakov Shavit, "Nationalism, Historiography, and Historical Revision," in Pinhas Ginossar and Avi Bareli, eds., *Zionism: A Contemporary Controversy* (Sede Boker: Ben-Gurion Research Center, 1996), p. 264. [Hebrew]

57. Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995).

58. Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1995).

59. Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Sacrificing Truth: Archaeology and the Myth of Masada* (New York: Humanity, 2002), p. 180.

60. Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

61. Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), p. xiii.

62. Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington: Indiana, 1998); see also Uri Ben-Eliezer, "State vs. Civil Society? A Non-Binary Model of

Domination Through the Example of Israel," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 11:3 (September 1998), pp. 370-396.

63. Yagil Levy, "Belligerent Policy, Interethnic Relations, and the Internal Expansion of the State: Israel 1948-1956," *Theory and Criticism* 8 (Summer 1996), p. 218.

64. Yagil Levy and Yoav Peled, "The Breaking Point that Never Was: Israeli Sociology in the Mirror of the Six Day War," *Theory and Criticism* 3 (Winter 1993), p. 115.

65. Only the article presented at the 1998 conference by Tamir Sorek, then a master's student at the Hebrew University, was concerned with an analysis of the terrorist activities of the Palestinian organizations. Cf. Tamir Sorek, "The Sacrificing of Life in a Society with a Religious-National Identity," lecture delivered at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Conference of the Israeli Sociological Society; see the booklet of abstracts from the conference (Haifa: Haifa University, 1998), p. 40. [Hebrew]

66. See James Ron, "Savage Restraint: Israel, Palestine, and the Dialectics of Legal Repression," *Social Problems* 47:4 (November 2000), pp. 445-472; Andre Elias Mazawi and Abraham Yogev, "Elite Formation under Occupation: The Internal Stratification of Palestinian Elites in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," *British Journal of Sociology* 50:3 (September 1999), pp. 397-418.

67. This thesis, entitled, "The Influence of Continuing Uncertainty on Personal and Social Processes: Individual and Community in the Golan Heights under the Threat of Uprooting in the Years 1995-1996," [Hebrew] was submitted by Sarah Arnon and approved by Haifa University.

68. A similar understanding was also reached by political scientists engaged in the study of Israel, as is stressed by Asher Arian:

> Political scientists who compare political systems find difficulty in fitting Israel into their schema. Discussing political parties, Giovanni Sartori found the extended dominance of Mapai exceptional; Arend Lijphart, in his study of relations between major ethnic, religious, and language groups, left Israel outside his framework because of its uniqueness; when studying the relations between the military and civilian sectors, or the success in curbing runaway inflation without causing large-scale unemployment or political and social upheaval, Israel is often regarded as special; and discussions of political modernization point to Israel as falling outside many general patterns.

Asher Arian, *The Second Republic: Politics in Israel* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham, 1998), p. 4.