

MODERNIZING THE *MOSHAV*: ISRAEL'S SOCIOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF
MIZRAHI JEWISH SETTLEMENT, 1948-1967

by

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Introduction

In 2017, the documentary series “The Ancestral Sin” re-ignited public controversy in Israel regarding the conditions under which Middle Eastern and North African Jewish (Mizrahi) immigrants settled in Israel-Palestine in the 1950s and 1960s. As the production team set up special screenings for Israeli government officials, news anchors debated the film’s implications on air. In response to public outcry following the film’s depictions of Israeli bureaucratic racism and the brutal conditions of Mizrahi immigrant settlement, Israel’s justice minister announced that the film’s sources at the Central Zionist Archives would be made public (Aderet and Lis, 2018). In the documentary, these archival documents, alongside testimonials of Mizrahim, draw attention to the racist ideology and “cruel practice” of police and settlement authorities (The Ancestral Sin, 2017). Among those interviewed in the documentary are director David Deri’s elderly parents, who emigrated from Morocco to Israel in the 1950s and were forced to settle in the Negev desert. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Israeli authorities settled families like Deri’s in tent cities and poorly-supplied agricultural villages in an effort to substantiate Israeli claims to Palestinian territories through inhabitation. The harsh economic conditions in these spaces led to widespread class inequality between the Mizrahim and the predominantly Ashkenazi (Eastern European Jewish) residents already in the region. Today, these and other stories—of stolen babies put up for adoption by Ashkenazi families, of police brutality, of immigrants being sprayed with DDT upon entering Israel, and of medical experimentation—are emerging within the context of an ongoing glasnost regarding the human costs of Israeli settlement on Middle Eastern and North African Jews, both within and outside of academic texts.

However, Zionism's other human toll—on Palestinian communities—remains controversial within these discussions. A number of scholars explore the ways that Israeli social and land planning practices paired the settler colonial depopulation of Palestine with the racialized settlement of Mizrahim (Shohat, 1988; Abdo and Yuval-Davis, 1995; Tzfadia, 2006; Yiftachel, 2006; Cohen, 2013; Lubin, 2016; Roby, 2015; Cohen and Gordon, 2018). In an effort to understand the coupling of Palestinian displacement with Mizrahi settlement, this project examines the theories and practices developed by Israeli sociologists and land settlement planners to facilitate Mizrahi settlement within the nascent nation's periphery. I address the confluence of sociological theory and Mizrahi settlement practice to examine the significance of social management to the production of Palestine's racial settler capitalist landscape. I argue that this synthesis of sociological knowledge and settlement "expertise" laid the groundwork not only for the physical distribution of Mizrahi and Ashkenazi settlement in Palestine, but also for the emergence of Israel's racialized settler-colonial regime within the territory of Palestine. In particular, I examine how theories and practices of Mizrahi social management emerged from the scholarship of the Hebrew University's Department of Sociology, the settlement practices of the Jewish Agency's Land Settlement Department, and their combined work within the Joint Council for Social Affairs.

I am specifically interested in the project of Mizrahi "modernization", a term that encapsulates a slew of social management efforts that sought to transform Mizrahi immigrants into productive Israeli agriculturalists. Israeli land settlement authorities drew on sociological findings not only to develop immigrants' agricultural skillsets but also their adaptability to market-oriented production cycles, Western gender norms, and emerging Israeli ideas of national

loyalty. Many of these changes were enacted through a program of “instructors”—extension workers who lived within Mizrahi agricultural communities, ostensibly to facilitate their assimilation. Throughout the work, I explore the confluence of modernization theories and settlement practices aimed at securing Mizrahi participation as a racialized agricultural class in the Zionist project of settling Palestine.

Historical Context

During the Ottoman period, Mizrahi Jews made up more than half of the Jewish population in Palestine (Smooha, 1978, p. 57), which co-existed peacefully with its neighbors until the nationalist upheavals of the early twentieth-century (Klein, 2014). In 1918, as a result of World War I, the Ottoman empire ceded the territory of Palestine to British rule. Global Zionist organizations—international groups with roots in Europe and the United States seeking to create a Jewish state in historic Palestine—escalated their support of Jewish immigration into the region. Jewish immigration to Palestine increased, but the British Protectorate restricted Jewish settlement through the use of immigration quotas in a way that sidestepped political and moral questions regarding Jewish immigration into Palestine (Alatout, 2009, p. 368). In advocating for these quotas, for example, Winston Churchill emphasized that Jewish immigration should be limited by “whatever may be the economic capacity of the country at the time to absorb new arrivals” (quoted in Alatout, 2009, p. 368). Consequently, the Zionists adapted the paradigm of *absorption* for describing the process of Jewish migration into Palestine. Of the Jews arriving in Palestine during the British Mandate, 90 percent arrived from Europe and the United States, and only ten percent were permitted to immigrate from the Middle East and North Africa. This ten

percent faced pervasive discrimination in Palestine. They received inferior social services and were barred from attending Ashkenazi schools, which were funded by global Zionist organizations. For almost twenty years, Zionist authorities prevented Yemenite Jews working in Palestine from owning land (Lubin, 2016, p. 87). Moreover, with the influx of Ashkenazi Jews, Jewish and Arab nationalist groups began to gain political momentum. Zionists began referring to Jewish society in Palestine as the New Yishuv—an early iteration of a Jewish state. By the 1940s, the Jewish community in Palestine had largely embraced a Zionist vision of Jewish statehood. The formation of the Haganah—a Jewish nationalist militia—precipitated escalating conflicts over land between Zionists, Palestinians, and British Protectorate troops.

Throughout 1947 and 1948, the Haganah (later reformed as the Israeli Defense Forces) expelled hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and lands in what became known by Palestinians as the Nakba.¹ With the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Israeli authorities began to prioritize massive Jewish immigration, viewing it as a necessary component of state-building. Of the million Jewish immigrants to Israel in the 1950s, half were from the United States and Europe, and half were from the Middle East and North Africa. Between 1948 and 1952, most of the non-Ashkenazi immigrants arrived from Yemen, Iraq, and Iran, settling near urban centers. In two subsequent waves, from 1955 to 1957 and 1961 to 1964, the composition of the Mizrahi immigration changed, with Jews from Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia making up the majority of the immigrants. Mizrahi settlement emerged as a matter of strategic concern: at a time when most European Jews were unwilling or unable to emigrate to Palestine,

¹ Palestinians refer to their expulsion from their homes as the “Nakba”, meaning disaster or catastrophe. For many scholars, the Nakba commonly refers to the expulsions that took place in 1947-8, while other scholars argue that the Nakba began long before 1947, and continues to this day (Masalha, 2012).

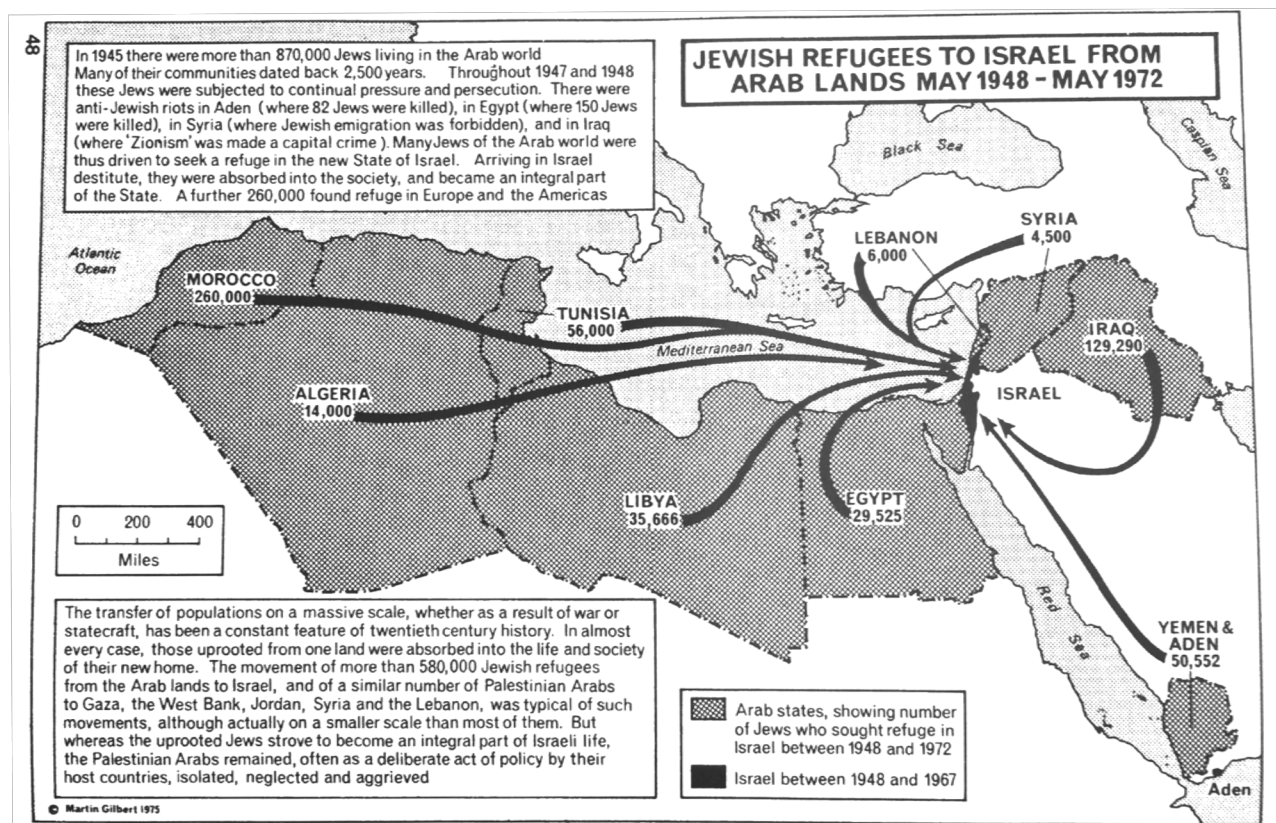


Figure 1: Map depicting countries of origin and populations of Mizrahi immigrants arriving in Israel, May 1948-May 1972. While anti-Jewish sentiment was not uncommon throughout the Middle East and North Africa, Zionist representations of migration often overstated the threats to Jewish communities. (Gilbert, 1975).

Israeli authorities expected Mizrahi immigrants to make up the bulk of the population in agricultural colonization. When neighboring countries began to boycott Israel in response to the state's land appropriation and displacement of Palestinians, Israeli authorities looked to Mizrahim to help develop a strong economic base and domestic food supply through their agricultural labor. Settlement authorities worked to carry out the "ingathering of the exiles", a term that described a melting-pot approach to settling Jewish immigrants from around the world with the intention of producing a homogeneous Jewish society. Additionally, authorities believed that if Mizrahim settled in the nation's periphery, including in the homes abandoned by Palestinians during the Nakba, then they could serve as deterrents for Palestinians seeking to reclaim their land and establish control over the Galilee and Negev, where greater numbers of Palestinians remained (Tzfadia, 2000, p. 57). As a result, Israeli authorities directed Mizrahim to settle in villages and towns that had been partially or completely depopulated by the violence of the Nakba.

Israeli planners worked to actualize their vision of a "melting pot" society, which utilized the American ideal that immigrants should be assimilated into the normative culture of the country to which they move. In the Israeli case, Zionist planners envisioned that this culture would be based on the European Jewish ideal. Settlement authorities drew on Biblical ideas of the Return of the Exiles, in which the Jewish people expelled from Palestine would return, adapting the common language of Hebrew (Gorny, 2001, p. 55). Drawing on the visions of the melting pot and the return of the exiles, settlement planners adopted a framework of immigrant "absorption". The absorption framework assumed that Mizrahi (and, to a lesser extent, Ashkenazi) immigrants to Israel would relinquish their cultural identities in favor of a

homogeneous Israeli culture that centered a Jewish, Western European identity (Ya'ar, 2005, p. 93). In fact, the language of absorption suggested a one-way process of adaptation: the immigrants, in becoming one with Israeli society, would adopt its qualities without significantly altering its cultural, economic, or political systems. Throughout the decades of Mizrahi settlement, the framework of absorption was challenged by Mizrahi protests, which eventually resulted in a more pluralistic framework for Israeli immigration.

While many Jewish communities immigrated willingly to Israel, this was not always the case. A number of recent studies highlight the coercive, occasionally violent conditions under which Israeli authorities coordinated Jewish immigration from abroad (Massad 1996; Meir-Glitzstein, 2011; Picard, 2013). In one case, mismanagement by immigration authorities resulted in hundreds of deaths of Yemeni Jews en route to Israel (Meir-Glitzstein, 2011). Moreover, in spite of their geopolitical importance to the state, Mizrahi immigrants did not receive a warm welcome upon their arrival to Israel. Shortly after the establishment of the state, the Ashkenazim in charge of the Jewish Agency—the organization whose Settlement Department oversaw Mizrahi immigration—argued in a brochure that if Mizrahim were to settle in the cities, they would produce “quarters of poverty, filth, unemployment and crime” (quoted in Yiftachel, 2000, p. 424). The Jewish Agency’s racialized anxieties about Mizrahi settlement in urban areas wove together economic, hygienic, and legal panics. These anxieties justified a racial segregation scheme, carried out by the Jewish Agency’s Land Settlement Department on the national scale. Backed by the settlement logic of the “population dispersal” policy, the Settlement Department forced immigrants to settle in make-shift rural resettlement camps called *ma'abarot* rather than allowing people to move to the region’s urban centers. The *ma'abarot* consisted of little more

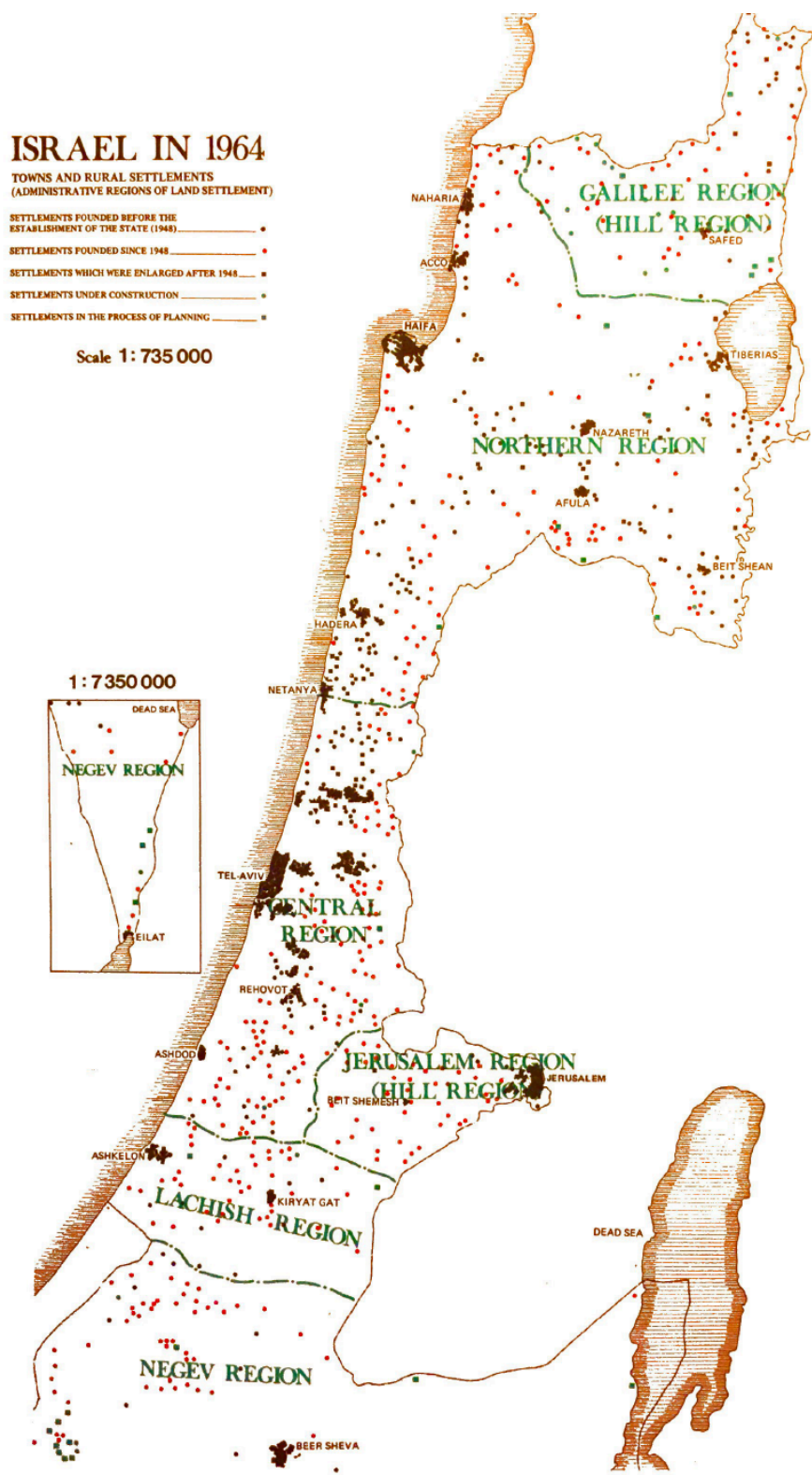


Figure 2 This map represents the development of Jewish settlements, before and after 1948, throughout the territory of Israel. (Weitz, 1971b).

than rows of canvas tents or metal huts with a few bathrooms and showers, often serving over a hundred individuals. Located predominantly in areas with higher Palestinian populations such as the Galilee and the northern part of the Negev desert, these tent villages were the first in a series of attempts to tip the regional ethnic balance towards a Jewish majority.

Mizrahim often resisted settling in peripheral regions, choosing instead to move to the cities. In 1950, settlement authorities only managed to meet a third of their quota for settling the *moshavim*²—agricultural villages designed for Mizrahi agricultural production. Between 1948 and 1954, the *moshavim* experienced a 46 percent abandonment rate (Weintraub, 1971; quoted in Picard, 2013, p. 32). In response, Israeli land planners attempted to devise other strategies for orchestrating Mizrahi settlement within the nation’s outskirts. One of the settlement policies enacted by the Settlement Department was known as the Ship to Village Plan. Developed in response to Mizrahi immigrant settlement in urban centers, the Ship to Village Plan relocated Mizrahi immigrants directly from their home countries to peripheral outposts of the newly-Israeli territory, avoiding any urban layovers that would allow immigrants to bypass rural settlement (Picard, 2013). Immigrants would sign contracts upon boarding the ship to Israel, and when the ship docked, settlement authorities would direct entire communities onto trucks, which would drive immigrants directly to tent cities. When immigrants would refuse to off-board in protest, settlement authorities would simply park the trucks and wait, effectively coercing their passengers to settle in relatively isolated, rural areas (Picard, 2013). While the subsequent Direct

² The *moshavim* (singular: *moshav*) where Mizrahi immigrants were settled differed from existing *moshavim*, populated by prior generations of Ashkenazi immigrants. While Ashkenazim had been allowed to shape the development of their agricultural communities, the Jewish Agency exercised authoritarian governance of the *moshavim ovdim*, or “work villages”, to which Mizrahi immigrants moved.

Absorption plan offered Eastern European immigrants flexibility regarding their settlement destinations, the Ship to Village Plan forced Mizrahim to settle and farm in places deemed strategic by the Israeli authorities (Picard, 2013). Working in concert, these programs—together with the displacement of Palestinians through land purchase, coercion, and intimidation—established much of the groundwork for Israel's racial and ethnic stratification.

By 1954, Mizrahi resistance to the corruption and dire living conditions in the farming villages and rural development towns threatened the settlement project. Mizrahi immigrants protested in the *ma'abarot*, development towns, and major urban centers. In addition to abandoning the *moshavim* in massive numbers, *moshav* residents conducted work strikes to protest the low wages and corruption that characterized the agricultural economies in their villages (Willner, 1969). In an effort to quell the unrest and address the tensions in the communities, the Settlement Department began to collaborate with the Hebrew University's Sociology Department to develop more advanced strategies for the social management of new immigrants. Coming together under the auspices of the Joint Council for Social Affairs, representatives of the two groups combined their sociological and experiential knowledges to shape settlement practice. Through the Joint Council, the representatives discussed and addressed issues as they emerged, publishing several papers that outlined frameworks for immigrant settlement in Israel (Weitz and Rokach, 1968; Weintraub, 1971). These works, which were based on assessments of Jewish immigrants' ethnic qualities, shaped future policies and strategies for managing the racialized settlement geographies of Israel/Palestine. The Land Settlement Department implemented these policies and strategies through a network of Israeli settlement “instructors”, who were tasked with teaching new immigrants to adapt to Israeli life (Bar-Yosef

1968; Weitz, 1971a; Weintraub, 1971). At the same time, Israeli sociology continued to adapt to the task of managing Mizrahi communities, growing into a theoretical system that connected immigrants' ethnic qualities to their capacity for agricultural settlement, productivity, and national allegiance (Weitz and Rokach, 1968).

The mixture of development and social science that guided Mizrahi agricultural settlement took shape within the context of Cold War-era international development, where sociological interventions were deployed to modernize Third World populations. Under the banner of “modernization theory”, institutions such as UNESCO, USAID, and the USDA enlisted social scientists to support projects of agricultural modernization. Social scientists received training at institutions such as the Michigan Institute of Technology’s Center for International Studies and Harvard’s Department of Social Relations (Ekbladh, 2010, p. 173; Latham, 2010, p. 55). Through programs of “social engineering” that sought to change individual and collective psychology and behavior, practitioners of modernization theory believed that they could address the root cause of poverty: underdevelopment (Ekbladh, 2010, p. 158). For these practitioners, development necessitated material transformations in land planning and agricultural technologies, but it also required social interventions which would transform people into skilled workers by instilling values and logics to maximize agricultural output. As a result, the techno-scientific interventions of the green revolution—the introduction of fertilizers and farming machinery—were accompanied by a parallel social scientific move, which sought to understand human society as a machine to be modernized and made productive.

Israel’s development paradigms drew heavily on the school of modernization theory developed in the United States following the end of World War II. After World War II, as a

sociological framework which offered to guide processes of national reconstruction, American modernization theory supplanted German sociology as a dominant model (Spohn, 2011; Ram, 2018, p. 35). American modernization theory drew on Weber for its critique of Marx while retaining the Marxist view of modernization as an essential, teleological process for national reconstruction. The resulting theoretical synthesis justified attacks on Communism at home and the advancement of colonial capitalist development initiatives abroad (Gilman, 2003, p. 93). By this point in time, the notion that sociologists could play an important role in nation-building was already circulating within American political and social science departments. Responding to the populist upheavals of World War II and global decolonization struggles, Howard Lasswell—a mentor to several prominent American modernization theorists—argued for a series of “policy sciences”, which would support social scientists acting as “guardians of democracy” (Lerner and Lasswell, 1951). Lasswell’s enthusiasm for socio-political expertise, undergirded by his skepticism of populist power, stemmed from his observations of the rise of Nazism and was shared by many of his contemporaries. Among them was Talcott Parsons, the modernization theorist who most influenced the formation of Israeli sociology. Parsons’ engagement with modernization theory resulted in a branch of sociology called structural functionalism, which frames “society as an integrated and coordinated system of institutions (the structural aspect), which address common imperatives (the functional aspect)” to maintain social cohesion (Ram, 2018, p. 35). In the wake of World War II and with the rise of decolonization efforts around the world, Parsons and his contemporaries at the Harvard University Department of Social Relations sought to “contribute to the establishment of a general theory in the social sciences” (Parsons et al., 1965, p. 3), which would address human tendencies for social upheaval and nationalism. For

Parsons, this general theory would have global implications as “the basis of rational ‘engineering’ control” of individuals, societies, and nations (quoted in Herman, 1995, p. 57). This systematic control of individuals, societies, and nations would come to be described as a program of “social engineering” in the Israeli context.

Operating within the geopolitical context of the Cold War, American structural functionalists sought to create a theoretical framework that could guide social intervention on behalf of democratic national interests (Latham, 2010, p. 3). As “the most explicit and systematic blueprint ever created by Americans for reshaping foreign societies” (Gilman, 2003, p. 5), modernization theory offered “a metalanguage that supplied not only a sense of the ‘meaning’ of postwar geopolitical uncertainties, but also an implicit sense of directives for how to effect positive change in that dissilient world” (Gilman, 2003, p. 5). In spite of this new framing, American modernization theory echoed colonial, Enlightenment-era paradigms, which called for “an altruistic, benevolent West to provide both material assistance and moral tutelage to direct the course of the less “advanced” (Latham, 2000, p. 14). This project, essentially a modern version of Enlightenment-era civilizing missions, took on both racial and temporal qualities. Edward Shils, the modernization theorist who introduced Israel’s leading sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt to Talcott Parsons, argued that the “backwardness” of colonial and postcolonial societies resulted from their attempts to “maintain the past in the present” (Shils, 1960, p. 267). For American sociologists, this cultural backwardness required a sociological fix. At the same time, modernization theory offered a counter-insurgent application of the development project, seeking to transform not only agricultural and economic practices, but political and social formations. Indeed, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara emphasized, “[s]ecurity is

development. Without development there can be no security. A developing nation that does not in fact develop simply cannot remain secure” (Ekbladh, 2010, p. 201). By justifying the imposition of capitalist values and Western styles of governance through a framework of development, American modernization theory sought to counter the influence of communist thought in developing nations. In Israel, Shmuel Eisenstadt adapted Parsonian modernization theory to address Israeli nation-building project, which sought to destabilize Palestinian claims to land by settling the land with Jewish communities and creating an agricultural economy.

Analytical Intervention

Within this research, I embed the histories of Mizrahi settlement within broader contexts of sociological knowledge. Mizrahi settlement practices drew on Israeli sociological frameworks of immigrant modernization and assimilation, which were developed within international networks of modernization expertise. Several scholars have critically engaged with theories of Mizrahi modernization developed at the Hebrew University’s Department of Sociology (Bernstein and Swirski, 1982; Ram, 1995; 2018). A larger body of scholarship has addressed the ways that Israel’s racial and ethnic inequalities became enshrined through the first three decades of Mizrahi immigration to Israel. The latter works mostly examine Israel’s segregating settlement policies and the inequitable allocation of educational resources, housing, or employment (Klaff, 1973; Lipshitz, 1991; Shafir and Peled, 1998; Khazzoom, 2005; Yiftachel, 2006; Tzfadia, 2006). Other scholars have analyzed the Direct Absorption Plan, which contributed to Israeli ethnic stratification by facilitating Ashkenazi settlement in the cities (Efrat, 1991; Doron and Karger, 1993; Shuval and Leshem, 1998; Picard, 2013). However, researchers

have not yet addressed the theoretical frameworks which informed these actions. In fact, Israeli experts developed an entire body of modernization knowledge to guide the mechanics of the settlement project (Samer Alatout, personal communication, September 10, 2017). My research analyzes the role of sociological modernization theories within the settlement of Mizrahim. Israeli sociologists took up modernization theory, adapting it to resolve the challenges posed by the forced settlement and agricultural assimilation of Mizrahi immigrants. Throughout the rural communities inhabited by the Mizrahim, settlement instructors, agricultural instructors, and home economics “instructresses” operated under the guidance of sociologists to address popular resistance to hardships in the *moshavim*. This project contributes to contemporary scholarship on Israeli ethnic stratification by exploring the role of sociologists in supporting Israel’s practices of racialization and segregation.

Smadar Sharon’s work is the first to discuss immigrant instructors and their attempted modernization of Mizrahi immigrants through Said’s framework of Orientalism (Sharon, 2017). However, Sharon frames the project of Mizrahi settlement as being driven by Israeli planners’ “Eurocentric bias” rather than a systematic practice of racial state-making. Within my analysis, the ideology that undergirded Mizrahi settlement in Israel was not simply one of bias, but a rational framework of social engineering that drew on racialized paradigms to construct a cohesive, stratified social order. This approach demanded the modernization of immigrants within a developmental teleology that justified immigrant “productivitization” while settling Mizrahi communities into contested border spaces within a project of bioterritorial management that regulated populations, landscapes, and their relationships for settler colonial ends (Samer Alatout, personal communication, September 10, 2017; Alatout, 2006). Israeli theorists of

modernization forged an entire project that encompassed not only labor and language skills acquisition but also gender norms, relationships to capitalist time, and kinship structures as arenas of social transformation. Moreover, Israeli sociologists crafted these theories in conversation with modernization theorists abroad, who also were attempting to regulate, productivize, and stabilize societies through racial categorization.

The emergence of social engineering in Israeli settlement was formalized through the Joint Council for Social Affairs, which integrated sociological knowledges with settlement practices. To date, the Joint Council and its successor, the Settlement Study Center, have received no scholarly attention. As a result, Israeli engagements with critical sociology and settlement history remain deeply siloed: Israeli sociologists critique their predecessors' Orientalizing portrayals of Mizrahi immigrants without foregrounding the mobilization of these knowledges within settlement practices, while Israeli historians of settlement largely disregard the sociological modernization frameworks that guided settlement administrators' interventions into Mizrahi communities. In short, both the sociological and historical approaches fail to explore Israeli applications of modernization theory in producing deeply unequal social policies and processes, saying little of the specific analytical practices employed by Israel's sociologists in studying Mizrahi communities.

In general, scholars of Israeli settlement often address the outcomes of settlement policy rather than its theoretical underpinnings: within most accounts, policies are simply made, and then communities are settled and different racializations of space are enforced through government programs and economics. As a result, no scholarly analyses exist linking global networks of development knowledge (modernization theory, green revolution, and counter-

insurgent social science) to the agricultural development of Israeli immigrant communities. Most scholars of Israeli immigration describe the organizing logic of Mizrahi settlement as simply one of Zionism—the imperative to settle Jews in Palestine. This kind of framing enables exceptionalist views of Israeli settlement practices, which do not connect the egregious violence of settler colonial land appropriation to the mundane violence, both within and beyond Palestine, of managing racialized populations within a racially- and territorially-stratified social order. True, the establishment of a colonial nation-state in the Middle East in 1948 was an unusual occurrence. However, colonial deployments of social scientific knowledge for managing racialized populations—be they Native American communities in North America, Vietnamese villages within the “strategic hamlet program” (Catton, 1999), Chile’s “Project Camelot” (Horowitz, 1974)—were no anomaly, particularly by the 1960s. Rather, sociologists understood that theirs was a project that could support a benign kind of nation-building, fortifying the national body in the face of global social and political upheavals.

To situate Israeli settlement practices within their global and historical contexts, scholars can engage the ways that Israeli settlement planners utilized and reworked modernization theories that were developed abroad. A focus on transnational networks of development expertise can offer a potent political intervention into the kinds of analyses that short-circuit not only global culpability in Israel’s politics of race and indigeneity, but also its relationship to global networks of academic research and racialized governance. In short, such an analysis could offer a more nuanced understanding of the exchanges between theories and practices of settlement and social management that characterized mid-century developmentalism around the world. Scholarly attention to the application of US-based modernization theory in

Israel/Palestine makes this analysis all the more politically potent because it draws out the salience of international flows of sociological expertise for settler colonial management of landscapes and people.

Literature Review

Throughout this research, I frame Israel as a racial settler capitalist state maintained through biopolitical and necropolitical modes of governance which took shape even before the Israeli economy assumed a capitalist character. Andy Clarno's *Neoliberal Apartheid* analyzes the intersecting processes of settler colonialism and racial capitalism as they have historically shaped Israeli statehood. Clarno argues that both settler colonialism and racial capitalism are essential analytical frameworks in the Israeli context, because settler colonialism draws attention to questions of land, race, and the state, while racial capitalism investigates the "shifting articulations between race and class" (Clarno, 2017, p. 5). For Clarno, appropriation of Palestinian land and the displacement of Palestinians allowed Israel to establish a "centralized, racialized Fordist economy" marked by Ashkenazi control of business and labor and the exploitation of low-wage Mizrahi and Palestinian labor (Clarno, 2017, p. 30). Clarno identifies the resulting contemporary social structure as a form of "exclusionary racial capitalism" which, in its establishment, rejected Palestinian labor in favor of securing Jewish political dominance. Following Clarno's analysis, I understand Israeli racial capitalism to have been constructed in part through the racialization of Mizrahim as an agricultural labor class.

Moreover, the exclusionary nature of Israeli racial capitalism is linked to the settler logics of Zionism. During the first *aliyah* (Jewish immigration wave) of the late 1800s, the Jewish

Agency purchased land from Arab landowners who employed low-wage Palestinian *fellahin* (agricultural laborers). After the land changed hands, most of the *fellahin* continued to farm the same lands and were thus allowed to maintain their livelihoods through agriculture. However, Jewish agricultural laborers began to complain of their difficulties in competing with *fellahin* for jobs. In response, leaders of the second *Aliyah* emphasized the “conquest of labor”—a project that prioritized Jewish labor on Jewish landholdings to the exclusion of *fellahin* (Khalidi, 1993; Bein, 1952, p. 41; Shafir, 1996; Lockman, 1996). Ashkenazi Jewish laborers often demanded higher wages and were less experienced with arid lands agriculture, so their employment was less economically efficient. However, in keeping with Zionist settler colonial ideology, Zionist authorities insisted on the necessity of maintaining Jewish political dominance through a Jewish economy. Reflecting on the institution of the “conquest of labor” in the second *aliyah*, Zionist historiographer Alex Bein wrote, “[t]oday it seems obvious that, had this trend [of employing Palestinians in agriculture] continued, the very existence of Jewish settlement would have been imperiled. For how long a period could a small stratum of Jewish gentleman farmers have gone on controlling a large number of Arab labourers?” (Bein, 1952, p. 36). Settler racial capitalism, informed by Zionist anxieties about Palestinian insurrection, required a majority of Jewish workers to maintain Jewish political dominance in Palestine—a requirement which would shape the importance of Jewish immigration within the Zionist plan for Palestine. As such, contemporary racial capitalism in Israel took shape through a racially and territorially stratified settler colonial order.

Settler colonial logics suggested that Israeli authorities should employ Jewish workers, and officials turned to Mizrahim as a potential source of inexpensive labor. Given the reluctance

of Ashkenazi immigrants to work for the low wages paid to Palestinians, Zionist planners were forced to seek out other sources of Jewish labor. They decided on employing Mizrahi Jewish immigrants. In proposing an “Oriental-Jewish” solution to the Arab labor problem, Shmuel Yavne’eli of the Zionist Party of the Workers wrote of the Mizrahim, “[t]his is the simple, natural worker capable of doing any kind of work...And Mr. Marx is of course absent from his pocket and from his mind... the Yemenite of today still exists at the same backward level as the Fellahins [Palestinian farmers]... [T]hey can take the place of the Arabs” (quoted in Shohat, 1999, p. 19). Zionist authorities thought of Mizrahi Jews as exploitable, complacent laborers. Planners believed that unlike their Ashkenazi counterparts, Mizrahim were not prone to making redistributive demands on the state and could therefore comprise an effective, exploitable alternative to Palestinian labor, which was deemed to be too politically threatening.

Employing elaborate interventions to coordinate Mizrahi immigration, settlement, and farm training, Israeli officials attempted to shape Mizrahim into a racialized underclass of agricultural laborers. Immigrant officials directed tens of thousands of immigrants arriving from urban areas in North Africa and the Middle East to agricultural communities. In the interest of upholding the Zionist project of occupying Palestinian land, the Jewish Agency implemented training programs for these new arrivals to develop a class of agricultural laborers who would work for low wages. For Zionist planners, Mizrahim combined the economic benefits of a cheap Palestinian labor force with the political advantages of Jewish ethnicity. The Mizrahim’s embodied differences from Ashkenazi immigrants—differences in bodily presentation, clothing, language, behavior, and religious practice—informed their racialization and exploitation by Ashkenazi Israelis in service of their settler colonial project in Palestine. The imperative of

relocating and training racialized low-waged Jewish workers while displacing skilled Palestinian farmers from their land highlights the foundational role of Zionist colonial logics within Israeli racial stratification.

The use of racial capitalism as a theory in the Israeli context is complicated by the fact that between 1948 and the 1977, Israel embraced many socialist principles: most Israelis were employed by the state, the labor unions maintained a strong role in governance, and Israeli institutions played a major role in economic and settlement planning. Overall, however, Israel could best be characterized as a mixed economy, where the dominant party embraced socialist principles but in a way that allowed for private companies alongside state-owned firms. Mapai, the political party that remained in power until 1977, had close ties to Histadrut, Israel's dominant trade union. However, Mapai assumed a moderate approach to economic planning, rather than a policy of highly centralized, direct control (Medding, 1990, p. 47). This moderate approach can be traced back to the history of Zionist funding. The Zionists who established the Jewish National Fund, the organization responsible for the bulk of land purchases in pre-1948 Palestine, largely favored a capitalist economy. However, they understood that the people who were most likely to move to Palestine for the initial colonization—“the young, the unattached, the idealists” (Kleiman, 1997, p. 149)—would depend on public funding. As a result, Zionist governance in Palestine embraced a mixed economy which straddled the line between socialism and capitalism. Within this economy, racialization, territorialization, and class stratification unfolded as related processes.

Throughout this work, I examine the shifting “interiors” and “exteriors” of Israel's biopolitical and necropolitical settler colonial society—between those who are included in and

excluded from citizenship and personhood. Transnational frameworks of development and modernization justified and facilitated Israeli authorities' efforts to create a racialized working class within a settler colonial state. Examining the relationship between uneven citizenship and settler colonialism, I draw on Ann Stoler's argument that "the 'interior frontiers' of liberal democracy and empire were woven from the same well-armed and exclusionary cloth" as the "external" frontiers of settler colonization (2016, p. 52). For Stoler, this cloth is produced through a system of biopolitics—Foucault's term for the management of life as a form of governance (Foucault and Rabinow, 1977). Samer Alatout also draws on biopower to analyze the governance of settler colonial orders (Alatout, 2006). In attending to the importance of land to Israel's settler colonial order, Alatout emphasizes that through *bioterritorial* governance, both the management of territory (and its defense from outside attacks) as well as the management of "internal" populations (with the understanding that they might pose a potential threat) are essential to settler colonial governance (Alatout, 2006, p. 608). Following Alatout, bioterritoriality becomes the practice by which the settler colonial state manages both populations and territories to strategic effect. Within the context of these works, I understand bioterritoriality to be the regime that undergirded the project of Mizrahi settlement and social engineering through the management of Mizrahi labor patterns, culture, collective, and family life.

Moreover, Israeli governance is also constituted through necropolitical regimes of deadly repression that incorporate nationality, ethnicity, and religion within a project of difference-making. Within my discussion of the Jewish Agency and Hebrew University's relationship to Palestinians, I use Mbembe's notion of necropolitics, which he defines as "contemporary forms

of subjugation of life to the power of death” (2003, p. 36). Mbembe’s work advances the idea that sovereignty is determined not only through shaping the lives of subjects, but also through identifying which people are killable and exercising the sovereign right to kill. Alexander Weheliye’s work on the centrality of racialization to social management also informs my analysis. Drawing on the work of Black feminist thinkers Hortense Spillers and Sylvia Wynter, Weheliye responds to Foucault’s theorizations of biopower by emphasizing the foundational nature of racialization to all other forms of social management. Weheliye describes race as the “set of sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans” (Weheliye, 2014, p. 2-3). In Weheliye’s analysis, differences of nationality and religion may also be construed within racializing assemblages as visual signifiers of alterity. This is particularly relevant to discussions of whether race, ethnicity, or religion are the most salient analytics within the Israeli and Palestinian context. Within the context of this thesis, I understand racialization to be a practice for managing populations through the production of embodied differences that include national, ethnic, and religious identity markers, among many others. Taken together, these approaches frame my analysis of Israeli systems of bioterritorial management. Evolving throughout the first two decades of statehood, Israel’s immigrant settlement apparatus, backed by sociological research, deployed academic forms of racialization and differentiation to refract immigrants into different categories and degrees of humanity.

Throughout the course of Israeli settlement through the 1950s and 1960s, the biopolitical management of Mizrahim and Palestinians was predicated on the planners’ conceptualizations of each of these groups’ admissibility into the category of the human. Sociologists debated the acceptability of various immigrant groups as full humans, represented by the image of the

productive, modern, heteronormative subject. Working with planners, sociologists sought to devise strategies for the assimilation of Mizrahi immigrants into this archetype. Inevitably, sociologists and planners found that Mizrahim could never completely enter the category of the “Western” type, residing forever in a liminal space—what Weheliye would refer to as not-quite-human. The resulting strategies for biopolitical management sought to modernize and Westernize the immigrants while withholding opportunities for agency and self-determination (in the form of political representation or economic power). In addition to operating through the repression of Mizrahi agency, the fabric of Mizrahi management is woven through with the violent repression of Palestinian claims to and presence on the land. Indeed, the project of “social engineering” that academics and planners developed for regulating Mizrahi immigrants foregrounds the cultivation of national allegiance, and at times combat skills, to ‘defend’ appropriated Palestinian land.

The Israeli projects of managing Mizrahi and Palestinian populations reflect the authorities’ understandings of their racial and ethnic qualities, which draw on deeper historical trajectories of Orientalist thought. Rather than remaining static, however, Israeli modes of social management developed in response to Mizrahi and Palestinian contestations of their racial positioning as well as to the changing Euro-American norms of assimilation and multiculturalism. It is important to note that the categories of Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, and Palestinian homogenize a plurality of cultures, striving to neatly categorize the diversity of mid-century Palestine into three groups. The categories of “Ashkenazi” and “Mizrahi” were imposed by Israeli planners and sociologists as racializing umbrella terms that encompassed immigrants from Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Oceania, and the United States as “Ashkenazi”, and immigrants from North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia as “Mizrahi”—Hebrew for “Oriental”.

Grouping together people with disparate languages, nationalities, cultures, and religious practices, Israeli authorities strived to create a racialized class hierarchy. In the 1990s, Israelis with North African and Middle Eastern heritage reclaimed “Mizrahi” as a political category; this move sought to highlight and challenge their racialization within the country’s history (Massad, 1996). Within the context of these legacies, “Mizrahi” and “Ashkenazi” retain their purpose as categories that exemplify the classificatory mechanics of settler racial capitalism. The categories of Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, and Palestinian exist to this day, and exclude smaller Jewish communities—of Greek Romaniot, for example—who are neither “Mizrahi” nor “Ashkenazi”, as well as Arab communities (such as Druze and Bedouin), who are not recognized as Palestinians by the Israeli state. Despite the insufficiency of these categorizations to capture the complete context of ethnic identity within Israel-Palestine, I rely on the three categories of “Mizrahi”, “Ashkenazi”, and “Palestinian” as part of a project in the history of racial thought, precisely because these were the principal classifications deployed by Israeli planners to produce racial typologies for settlement.

To sketch out the broad contours of Mizrahi and Palestinian racialization, I draw on Aziza Khazzoom’s theorization of the “great chain of Orientalism” (2005). Khazzoom’s theory draws on Edward Said’s notion of “Orientalism” (1978), which analyzes how European and American representations of the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia as exotic and inferior legitimate and naturalize political and economic modes of imperialism. For Khazzoom, the chain of Orientalism began with medieval French and German anti-Jewish sentiment and continued when French and German Jews applied the same Orientalist lens to their “less civilized” Middle Eastern and Eastern European counterparts. Upon arrival to Palestine, Middle Eastern and

Eastern European Jews projected this racializing vision onto non-Jewish Middle Easterners and Mizrahim, respectively. By framing Orientalism as a phenomenon that reproduces itself down racialized gradients of “civilization”, Khazzoom’s textual analysis draws attention to Orientalism’s dynamism as well as its surprising continuities: across centuries, Orientalist discourse maintained a consistent fixation with barbarism, small-scale merchants, as well as crooked and dirty streets.

Complementing Khazzoom’s multi-century meta-narrative of Orientalism across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, Ella Shohat’s 1998 article focuses specifically on the effects of Orientalism on Mizrahim in Israel. Her work highlights the resonances in Ashkenazi administrators’ Orientalist rhetoric about Palestinians and Mizrahim. Following Shohat’s argument that Ashkenazi Zionist Orientalism has marginalized both Palestinians and Mizrahim, I argue that the image of the Palestinian threat shapes the formation of Ashkenazi and Mizrahi identity alike, undergirding the program of social engineering within Israel’s social sciences programs. As such, it is impossible to understand the “internal” dynamics of racial formation among Jewish Israeli citizens without addressing the “external” aspects of racialized violence: the ongoing dispossession and presence of Palestinians within both the physical and sociological landscapes of Palestine. Because the violent displacement of Palestinians has always been a foundational element of Israeli statehood, this dynamic fundamentally shapes Israeli racialization that produces the stratified categories of inclusion, exclusion, and the spaces in between.

The racial stratifications that make up the fabric of Israel-Palestine take shape through biopolitical processes of assessment, categorization, and regulation exemplified within mid-century sociological research. Mbembe writes that social control requires “the distribution of

human species into groups, the subdivision of the population into subgroups, and the establishment of a biological caesura between the ones and the others” (Mbembe, 2003, pg. 16)—a process that, for him and Foucault, constitutes racism. Moreover, for Mbembe, human classification parallels the classification of spaces into enclaves, borders, and frontiers; both approaches constitute colonial re-articulations of space. (This colonial production of space can be interpreting as contributing to the “territorial” aspect of bioterritorial management).

Responding to Foucault and Mbembe, Weheliye emphasizes that race does not exist as a pre-existing, “absolute biological substance” (p. 5), rather, racializing assemblages are imposed by those in power, representing “the visual modalities in which dehumanization is practiced and lived” (p. 5). In this sense, racialization can encompass differences of nationality or religion within what comes to be understood as embodied differentiation.

This kind of classification is produced and maintained through an entire institutional and theoretical architecture associated with Western imperial projects in the Middle East, as described by Edward Said. In elaborating his understanding of Orientalism—the framework through which Western authorities justify and enact colonial relationships to Middle Eastern people and places—Said writes:

To institute new areas of specialization; to establish new disciplines; to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index, and record everything in sight (and out of sight); to make out of every observable details a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type; and, above all, to transmute living reality into the stuff of texts, to possess (or think one possesses) actuality mainly because nothing in the Orient seems to resist one’s powers....these are the features of Orientalist projection fully realized. (Said, 1978, p. 86)

Said’s work emphasizes the interpretive work of the Western expert, and his role in rationalizing the Orient for the purpose of Western governance. Most importantly for this project, Said

emphasizes that these forms of assessment do not simply produce bodies of knowledge. Instead, “knowledge of the Orient is directly translated into activity, and the results give rise to new currents of thought and action in the Orient” (Said, 1978, p. 238). As such, Orientalist expertise establishes the basis of biopolitical management within Israeli sociological and settlement planning. It is this relationship between Orientalist knowledge and action—the HUJI Sociology Department and its relationship to the Settlement Agency—that forms the basis of my inquiry.

Methodology

My account of Mizrahi settlement in Palestine draws primarily on published documents from Jewish Agency officials, and secondarily on archival documents from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I found many of my primary source documents in the library stacks at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (both the Mount Scopus and the Ramat Gat campus) and at the Tel Aviv University. In examining the relationship between modernization theory and settlement practice, I have focused on reports from the Hebrew University’s Department of Sociology. These materials helped me to understand the kinds of logics that guided sociological analysis and land settlement planning in Israel.

In my approach to the archival material, I identified the themes and frameworks that were important to the sociologists, administrators, and land planners, taking them up as my own categories of analysis. This often led to surprising outcomes: for example, I expected that academics and administrators would write more extensively about the ongoing land conflicts with Palestinians. However, public documents rarely exceeded a brief allusion to the “security situation”, which was framed as constraining the parameters for decision-making (i.e. around

where to settle immigrants) or emphasizing the importance of a particular aspect of settlement (i.e. the social cohesion of Mizrahi communities).

Because I do not speak Hebrew or Arabic, I limited my material to English- and Russian-language sources. As a result, most of the documents that I read were intended for international eyes and, as such, offered a sanitized version of settlement. Engaging with Hebrew-language documents would have allowed me greater access to how planners, administrators, and academics conceptualized and wrote about Mizrahi-Palestinian relations for a different audience. Drawing on these, I may have been able to break through the coded language of the “security situation” to understand more closely how Zionist land appropriation and Palestinian displacement shaped the racialization of Mizrahim through the theories and practices of settlement. I might also have been able to examine more of the tensions and debates between Jewish Agency officials, Hebrew University faculty members, and Israeli government officials regarding the institution-building and knowledge production surrounding Mizrahi settlement. These kinds of accounts could have helped me to nuance my narratives regarding the means by which settlement practices became established and narrated to English-speaking audiences. Moreover, the project’s sampling bias is responsible for the lack of explicit discussion of Israeli-Palestinian or Mizrahi-Palestinians relations within my source materials. Despite the limitations that these language barriers placed on my work and the sanitized narratives that they presented, the archival documents that I encountered still depicted the mechanics of Mizrahi racialization within the settlement process in vivid detail. As such, Mizrahi racialization forms the core of my analysis.

No methodological discussion of archival work in Israel is complete without a discussion

of the politics of access to the Israel State Archives, which document the history of Palestine since the time of the Ottoman Empire (Matar, 2016). The closure of the building in 2012, the transition to a digitized archival format, and the passing of a law that granted the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Censor permission to extend document classification for up to seventy years have allowed the IDF to have complete vetting power over public access to their materials through the classification and re-classification of documents (Ravid, 2010). In 2017, Israel's Deputy Attorney General insisted that the organizations that deposit documents into the archive, rather than the archive administrators themselves, should have control over who gains access to the materials, a move that further restricts public access. Understanding the significance of archival censorship within the context of colonial knowledge production evokes a question raised by Ann Stoler in *Duress*: "how might we trace new genealogies of imperial governance that are not constrained and policed by the colonial archives themselves—or by the dominant readings of them?" (Stoler, 2016, p. 14). Indeed, while the Israeli case may render a large swath of archival documents inaccessible, scholars can work with what remains, reading "against the grain" to understand how the colonial is written into the materials that are not deemed to be threatening to settler national security. Additionally, academics can read "along the grain", seeking out potential sites of personal resonance or affinity to more intimately understand the anxieties and contradictions that exist within "the pulse of the archive" (Stoler, 2010, p. 49). This kind of approach, where scholars can draw on both their personal affinity and alienation from the archival material to parse the workings of power, frames archives as sites composed of conflicted and contested modes of domination, and therefore as sites with subversive potential.

Given the parameters and limitations of my research, my project is not focused on analyzing the body of sociological scholarship on Palestinians, though such projects offer important contributions to critical Israeli sociology (Zureik, 1977). My purpose is different: building on Ella Shohat's (1988) premise that Mizrahi and Palestinian racializations are both the products of Ashkenazi Orientalism, I seek to read Palestinian dispossession into scholarship on Mizrahi modernization and argue that Palestinians were never fully absent from the field. Indeed, the fabric of sociological works on Mizrahi modernization is interwoven with the project of Palestinian land dispossession, and as a result, of differential racialization. In working through the English-language documents of the Israeli sociological and settlement archives, where the violence of settler conquest is bracketed off as the "security situation", the entanglement of these racializing projects must be emphasized through attention to the ongoing dynamics of conquest that motivated Israel's practices for racialized Mizrahi settlement.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, I discuss the settlement policies of the Jewish Agency. I examine the ways that the project of land appropriation underpinned the Jewish Agency's planning and settlement practices, while both informal and institutional racism shaped a process of differential settlement that created Ashkenazi and Mizrahi ethno-classes within a racial settler capitalist order. I also discuss the Jewish Agency's agricultural training and instruction program, which introduced settlement instructors into communities to help transform predominantly-Mizrahi immigrants into the role of producer, citizen, and gendered subject. The early dysfunctions of this program led to its eventual bureaucratization and the formation of the Joint Council, where Hebrew

University sociologists collaborated with Jewish Agency planners to implement a program of “social engineering” within immigrant communities.

In Chapter 2, I trace the genealogy of this “social engineering” program. I examine the ways that university administrators and sociologists leveraged anxieties about racial degeneration and geopolitical threats to bolster their arguments for a nationalist sociological discipline leading up to the establishment of Israel. Building on the works of modernization theorists in the United States, administrators came to believe that sociological research could help to inform the social management of immigrants, and therefore accelerate the Jewish state’s progression along a teleological axis of modernity. I argue that together with the attempted management of Palestinians through sociological research embedded in the military apparatus, Israeli immigrant sociology of the 1950s and 1960s constitutes a biopolitical intervention. This intervention, which sought to manage the social, economic, and political dynamics within immigrant communities, helped to forge racialized classes within a settler colonial state.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the formation of the Joint Council for Social Affairs. Through the combined efforts of the Sociology Department and the Settlement Department, the Joint Council produced a body of knowledge for instructing immigrants in agricultural productivity and proper citizenship. By assessing immigrants’ socio-cultural malleability, categorizing them through elaborate typologies, and devising practices for their modernization and productivization, settlement authorities and sociologists sought to turn Mizrahi immigrants into Israeli citizens. In the case of the Mizrahim, Israeli citizenship implied productive agricultural labor, nationalist allegiance, a hetero-nuclear kinship structure, and the protection of the peripheral lands of the settler state from Palestinian reclamation within a broader network of Israeli bioterritorial

governance. In response to Mizrahi resistance, the Joint Council came to embrace a multicultural approach; with time, members of the council came to understand cultural difference as both a potential source of conflict and a resource for nation-building. This understanding framed an Israeli school of development practice with a global reach in the form of reports, conferences, and programs for training development practitioners around the world.

Chapter 1: The Jewish Agency's Land Planning

Arthur Ruppin was the most prominent Jewish eugenicist of the twentieth century. In his 1925 research, he argued that Jewish tendencies towards greed and avarice were not inherent to the Ashkenazim, but rather the result of Jewish miscegenation with Semitic tribes in ancient Palestine. Building a theory of white supremacist racial purity through studies of Jewish skulls, fingerprints, and nasal structures, Ruppin both influenced and was influenced by the precursors of Nazi eugenic theories. Ruppin also earned the title of “the father of Jewish settlement in Palestine” (Bloom, 2007) through his activities in promoting Jewish settlement—significantly, as the co-founder of the Jewish Agency. This organization, in collaboration with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), would go on to orchestrate the Jewish settlement of Palestine by planning and settling a militarily defensible nation and managing the communities and individuals that comprised it. The Jewish Agency would continue to enshrine racialization and territorial stratification by way of settlement and development throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.

In its first forty years, the Jewish Agency changed from a politically diverse organization that sought to facilitate Jewish immigration into Palestine to a Zionist organization that was formally in charge of coordinating immigration into Israel. In 1908, Arthur Ruppin established the Palestine Office—the organizational precursor to the Jewish Agency, which sought to facilitate Jewish immigration to Palestine (Bloom, 2007, p. 331).³ The Palestine Office worked with the Jewish National Fund to purchase land for Jewish settlers in Palestine while representing settlers' interests to international dignitaries. Under political pressure from Zionist

³ Today, the Jewish Agency is best known for bringing hundreds of thousands of Jewish visitors to Israel through Masa and Birthright programs.

leaders, the Jewish Agency gradually adopted a Zionist framework. By 1948, with the resignation of Werner Senator, the Jewish Agency became effectively identical to the World Zionist Organization.⁴ With the UN Partition Plan of 1947, the Jewish Agency worked with the Jewish National Council to create the basis for the provisional government following the establishment of Israel. When Israel claimed statehood, the Jewish Agency for Israel continued to support immigration into Palestine by creating its Settlement Department. Over the next four years, the Jewish Agency would coordinate the immigration of 700,000 Jews into Israel—among them 100,000 Holocaust survivors. Israeli authorities identified those coming from Middle Eastern and North African countries such as Yemen, Morocco, Iraq, and Iran as Mizrahim. Meanwhile, Rumanian, Hungarian, and other European Jews were identified as Ashkenazim. In 1952, when the Israeli government officially assumed responsibility for matters of security, education, and employment, the Jewish Agency became the parastatal organization responsible for coordinating the immigration and settlement of all of these communities.

Within this chapter, I discuss the Jewish Agency as an architect of settler colonialism in Palestine. I examine the agency's role in planning rural settlements and its development of agricultural extension and instruction programs to manage those settlements. The Jewish Agency's programs of settler colonial land planning maintained the displacement of Palestinians from their land and created difficult living conditions for Mizrahim, many of whom were forced to settle in peripheral regions. In response to the challenges of this process, the Jewish Agency

⁴ Senator's position as both a member of the Jewish Agency and vice-president of the Hebrew University and Ruppin's position as both the founder of the Jewish Agency and the co-founder of the Hebrew University point to the degree of overlap in personnel not only between the two organizations, but within Zionist projects in Palestine more broadly.

undertook a program of social management through the employment of settlement instructors who would help to create productive Mizrahi immigrant laborers, citizens, and gendered subjects. Both the colonial logics of land planning and the biopolitical logics of immigrant “social engineering” helped to establish racialized and spatialized classes of inclusion and exclusion in Palestine through a framework of bioterritorial management. In response to the social unrest that arose from this program’s continued exploitation of Mizrahi immigrant communities, the Jewish Agency requested the professional sociological intervention of the Hebrew University in 1958.

Planning for Security: Militarization and Geography

Since before Israeli statehood, the matter of national security loomed in the imaginaries of the Jewish Agency’s planners, shaping the landscape of Israel from the scale of the nation to the scale of the individual building. Whether framed as defensive or offensive, strategies for land expropriation informed planners both as they selected regions for development and as they designed settlement layouts and structures. Throughout the late 1940s, 50s and 60s, as the Israeli military progressively displaced Palestinians from the land, physical planning practices shifted to reflect a broader range of conditions. Today, the landscape of Palestine remains marked not only through the circumstances of Israeli military occupation, but also through the influences of topography, water availability, economic efficiency, and settler preference. Nevertheless, the role of the settler colonial project in shaping the geography of Israeli development is more than simply a faint marking or a “trace” within the pattern of society. In *Duress*, Ann Stoler emphasizes that the concept of the “trace” may “[risk] rendering colonial remnants as pale

filigrees, benign overlays with barely detectable presence rather than deep pressure points of generative possibilities or violent and violating absences” (2016, p. 5). As such, it is important to consider the ongoing physical, infrastructural, legal, economic, and logistical violence that has historically maintained Israel’s geographic status quo.

The Zionist project of militarized land appropriation shaped the geography of settlement in Palestine long before 1948. Throughout the Yishuv period, the Jewish Agency used the construction of collective, agricultural villages (*kibbutzim*) to legitimate Zionist nation-building practices. Indeed, the first Zionist-constructed villages in Palestine served as “defensive outposts on the borders” (Weitz and Rokach, 1968), where settlers clashed with Palestinians seeking to reclaim their territories. Almost overnight between 1936 and 1947, the Jewish Agency constructed 118 settlements within the British Mandate for Palestine. Consisting of a tower, a wall, and an inhabited area, each of these structures were built to resist infiltration and claim Palestinian territory (Fields, 2010, p. 69). A 1964 publication by the Jewish Agency conveys the frantic nature of these settler colonial building projects: “[i]n a single day in October, 1946, eleven new settlements were established in the Negev wastes—the outcome of months of secret planning by the Jewish Agency, the Haganah, and the pioneer groups” (Jewish Agency, 1964, p. 51). Paradoxically, the necessity of the “secret” planning contradicts the presumption of *terra nullius*, or empty space, implied in the passage. The settler colonial language of pioneers conquering desolate wastelands depicts Palestine as open for conquest and echoes Lockean notions of unused, “wasted” space as legitimate terrain for colonization (Harris, 2004). At the same time, the Jewish Agency’s language of secrecy belies the understanding that the areas were, in fact, inhabited, and therefore had to be settled in a furtive fashion. Moreover, it was clear that

the settlements enacted a primarily geopolitical purpose rather than an economic one: “[m]ore in the nature of military strategic outposts than agricultural villages, the settlers had to wait over a year before their settlements were connected to a water pipeline, enabling them to begin serious cultivation” (Jewish Agency, 1964, p. 51). As such, what would eventually become a network of agricultural settlement in Israel’s peripheral regions started off quite explicitly as a technology settler-colonial land appropriation.

Three types of agricultural rural settlements comprised the early mosaic of Israeli rural colonization: the *kibbutz*, the *moshav*, and the *Nahal*. The *kibbutzim* were small, close-knit, collective farming villages characterized by collective parenting structures and the shared ownership of property. *Moshavim*, in turn, were characterized by nuclear families, the cultivation of private plots of land, and private profit. *Nahal* settlements were military outposts located in regions that were most susceptible to Palestinian attempts to reclaim land. Though *Nahal* settlements were primarily created to ensure Zionist claims over Palestinian territory, they also had secondary agricultural functions, and were often converted into *kibbutzim* when they no longer served a primarily military purpose (Jewish Agency, 1964). Within this defensive network, *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* existed as mutually-supportive components of the Rochel-Lev plan proposed by the Haganah in 1943, wherein “the intrusion, or the primary frontier, was supposed to be performed by the *kibbutzim*, whereas the strengthening of existing settlement areas was to be carried out by *moshavim*” (Kellerman, 1993, p. 216). While the “front-line” *kibbutzim* were settled by militant “pioneers”, the *moshavim* served to connect these to other Jewish population centers (Weitz and Rokach, 1968).

As military-agricultural outposts, these settlements helped the Zionist military forces to violently expel hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their agricultural lands during the Nakba. Aryeh Eli-Av, an aide to the Minister of Finance, emphasized the military significance of these villages at an international conference:

In 1948 when Israel fought its war of independence, the agricultural villages all over the country, proved that all the blood, toil and sweat that poured into building their foundations and structure had not been in vain. In the prime and supreme hour of trial they proved their worth as producers of badly needed food and what was then by far and away their most important role, as hundreds of strongholds and bastions in defence against the invading armies. It is no exaggeration to say that the state could not have survived even a short period without those agricultural pivots of strength. (Eli-Av, 1954, p.52)

By positioning Palestinians returning to their former homes as “invading armies”, Eli-Av naturalized Jewish people as indigenous to the territory of Palestine, rendering non-Jewish residents of Palestine as foreigners in their own land. Working to further normalize Israeli presence within the region, these peripheral agricultural settlements enabled the Zionist colonial project of Palestinian land dispossession by operating as military bases, occupying lands that Israeli authorities understood to be most vulnerable to attack and reclamation by Palestinians.

After the Nakba, Israel expanded Jewish settlements, taking over those that were formerly inhabited by Palestinians. The Nakba had left Palestinian farmlands uncultivated and created a massive crop shortage, so residents of *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* began farming these lands, gradually augmenting Israel’s food supply. In accommodating Jewish immigrants, producing food for the nation, and supporting a militarized Israeli presence on Palestinian land, the network of *Nahal* settlements, *kibbutzim*, and *moshavim* worked to substantiate the fabric of the early Jewish state. Moreover, when many Palestinians were forced to abandon the region’s cities, leaving behind smaller urban Palestinian communities, urban planners also played a

fundamental role in acquiring and defending Jewish territory. Hoping to prevent Palestinians from returning to or settling near their former neighborhoods, authorities often prioritized developing and settling neighborhoods in or immediately next to Palestinian communities (Yiftachel, 2006; Yiftachel and Yacobi, 2003).

Israeli authorities selected regions for settlement based on a calculus that considered the region's strategic context alongside its resources. As a result, regions far from the main centers of Jewish settlement—such as the northern Negev and the Galilee— remained geopolitically significant for Zionist planning after the Nakba. Peripheral settlements substantiated Israel's land claims at a time when Israeli settlement in Palestine risked contestation within the United Nations. Additionally, they served to “securitize” borders and sparsely-inhabited territories against Palestinians seeking to return to their lands. The peripheral settlement impulse was explained by Jewish National Fund chairman Yossef Weitz in 1948, when he argued: “[t]he Hebrew state will have to embark on a wide settlement strategy in its first three years... [a] big part of it in the Negev... In the Negev we'll be able to implement immediately our development laws, according to which we shall expropriate land according to a well-designed plan...” (Weitz quoted in Yiftachel, 2006, p. 193). Settlement and land seizure went hand in hand for Israeli land planners. This practice was formalized through the Jewish Agency's policy of “peripheral settlement”, which required planners to prioritize border and strategic defense regions for Jewish settlement. From the outset of Israeli statehood, the practice of peripheral settlement enacted a Zionist geopolitical strategy of commandeering and defending land through inhabitation, defense, and cultivation.

Within the northern Negev Desert, the Israeli development of the Lachish region serves as an example of these defensive settlement logics at play. The Lachish held special significance to Israeli planners. During the military activity of 1948, the region had been one of the last occupied by Egypt to fall under Israeli control. As a result, Israeli authorities identified two aspects of the region's importance: first, they perceived the region as a potential corridor for Palestinian passage between Gaza and Jordan, and second, through their own experiences with the Egyptian army's occupation of the land, IDF leaders had learned that, when settled, the area was highly defensible. Together, these factors evoked the possibility of a Palestinian reclamation and defense of the region. In 1948, the region's geographic and topographic features—and the military vulnerabilities that they produced—had justified Israel's violent eviction of the area's Palestinian residents, in breach of its UN-mediated agreement with Egypt. Afterwards, within the Israeli calculus of state-making, these same qualities rendered the Lachish region a vital site for development.

Seeking to affirm Israeli territorial control in this region, Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion and the Settlement Department Head Levi Eshkol designated the broader Lachish Region to be a priority settlement area in 1954. This move authorized the rapid implementation of a comprehensive settlement plan, which would serve as a test case for the development of future regions. The threat of Palestinian presence on the land informed a settlement policy that has subsequently been termed de-Arabization or Judaization (Nijim and Muammar, 1984; Falah, 1984,1989). By enabling the appropriation, cultivation, and armed defense of land, this policy continues to shape the experiences of Palestinians who are unable to return to their homes and

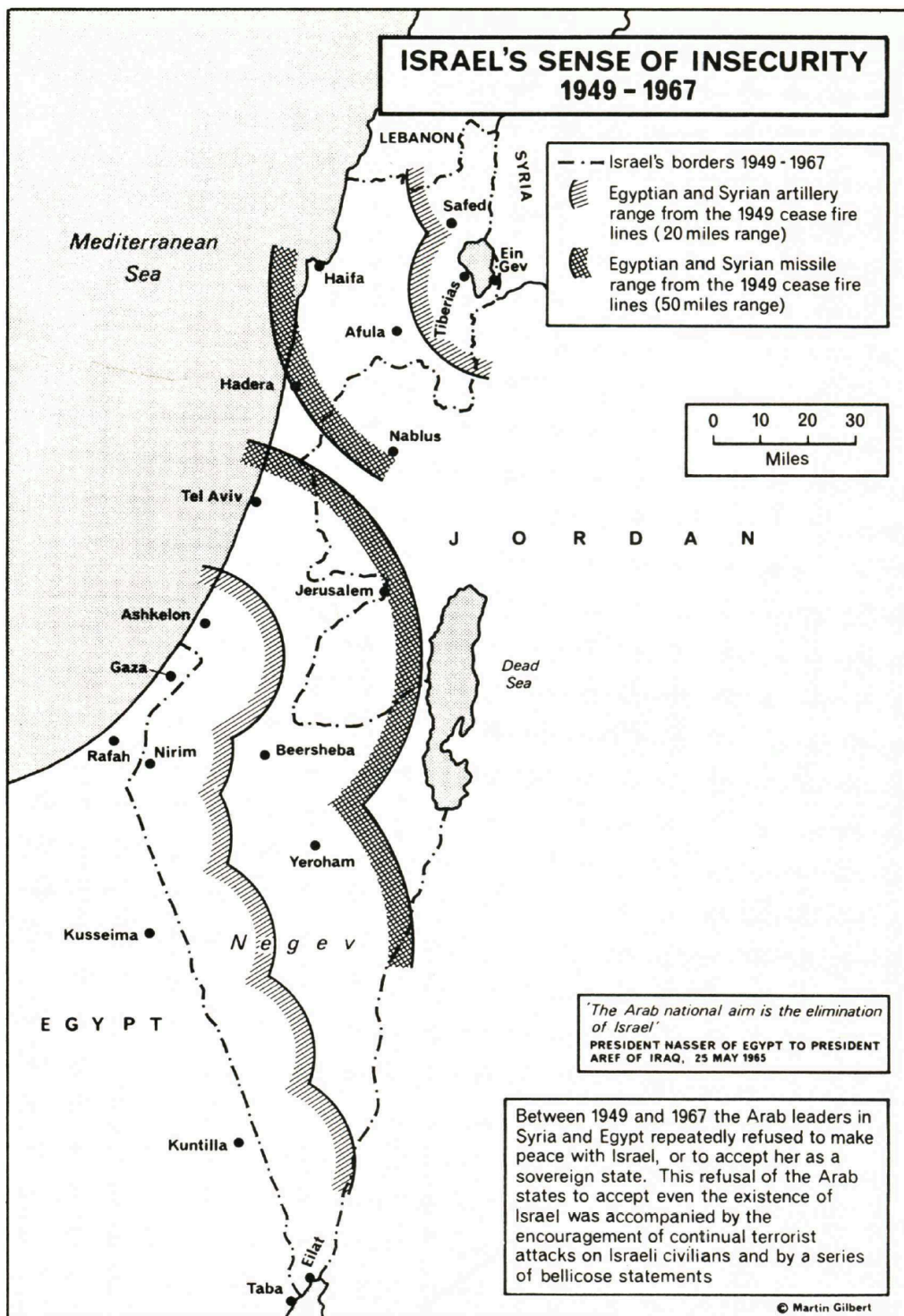


Figure 3 This map offers one spatial representation of Israelis' geopolitical anxieties. Understandings of some regions as more precarious than others shaped Israeli settlement practices. (Gilbert, 1975).

their fields. Additionally, it impacts the Mizrahi families who were often forced to settle in peripheral villages, far away from urban resources, in the name of territorial security.

As a settler-colonial practice, the settlement of the periphery, conducted in close collaboration with the IDF, enabled Israeli authorities to violently enforce their land claims. After the establishment of the state, the militaristic logic of the peripheral settlement policy also influenced the procedural elements of settlement: the Jewish Agency's process of selecting areas for development relied on consultation with land planners, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Army before a development plan would be finalized. After the initial approval, the Settlement Department would solicit input from departments governing water and health care. From there, it would plan "the individual farm, the entire village and the whole agricultural area, in their relation to the overall national plan" (Weitz, 1960, p. 3). As such, military interests played a primary role in determining the locations of new settlements throughout the nation. For land settlement planners, geostrategic concerns, rather than environmental or economic conditions, prevailed in determining which regions would be developed first.

Military functions were essential to the establishment of the rural settlements. Israeli planners often transformed *Nahal* settlements into *kibbutzim* to "establish the frontier-line of Jewish colonization in the country" (Davis, 1973, p. 91). Indeed, though they were not officially military outposts, the *kibbutzim* still carried military significance—the majority of these settlements were established during times of "security threat", and many were constructed to defend existing settlements (Kellerman, 1993, p. 27). Moreover, Settlement Department employees like Yehuda Lowe understood the role of the *kibbutz* as an optimal structure for military purposes. Reflecting on the defensive advantages of the *kibbutz* layout, Lowe wrote:

the *kibbutzim* are undeniably the most suitable form of settlement from the viewpoint of defense. They make it possible to concentrate all dwelling houses on a comparatively small area, for which the strategically most suitable site can be chosen... The burden of watching can far more easily be divided among the members of *kibbutzim* than among individual farmers, who have to go on with their daily tasks after a night's watch. (Lowe, 1956)

In the eyes of their planners, *kibbutzim* were effective military structures not simply because of their physical centralization, but also because the social structures of collectivized farming lent themselves to a more effective surveillance system. Changing security conditions also shaped the changing form of agricultural communities. After the establishment of the Israeli state, the centralization of the *kibbutz* layout reflected their dual function as agricultural node and military outpost: “[s]ecurity requirements, social considerations and the technology and type of farming practiced—all led to closely-knit housing... with fields and orchards in separate, distant plots...” (Weitz et al., 1966, p. 5). Palestinian thefts of irrigation pipe, farm animals, and other supplies from the most isolated settlements caused the Jewish Agency to install lights and security fences in the *kibbutzim* in 1951 (Willner, 1969, p. 153), and then to allocate special Emergency Funds for settlements embroiled in military activities (Jewish Agency, 1964, p. 11). Additionally, Jewish Agency authorities envisioned that the spatial plan of the settlement had an influence on its residents’ patriotism. They imagined that the rectangular shape of the farm, which placed agricultural regions close to settlers’ homes, would foster an attachment to the land (Jewish Agency, 1964). Jewish Agency authorities also understood that for immigrants, the *kibbutz* “played a vital role in training the young generation in Eretz Israel in the tasks of defence” (Jewish Agency, 1964, p.6). In other words, experiences within the space of the *kibbutz* would produce not only productive citizens but also loyal soldiers ready to defend their farm, homes and national territories.



Figure 4 The layout of Nahalal, a moshav in the Galilee region, reflects its defensive purposes, with public buildings and stores in the middle, farmhouses around that, and agricultural fields forming a perimeter. (Weintraub et al., 1969).

Over time, as agricultural efficiency grew in importance relative to the needs of armed defense, the Jewish Agency adopted different settlement plans. Settlement layout shifted to address the increasing importance of economic productivity: “[a]s internal security conditions improved and large homogeneous types of land were acquired, a [less-securitized] village set-up evolved. To achieve maximum proximity of the farmer to his fields, the family habitat, the farm-yard and all or most of the farmland were concentrated in one plot adjacent to the farm-yard” (Weitz et al., 1966, p. 5). In addition to shifting towards a less defensible, more dispersed model, Israeli planners also began constructing villages based on a “composite rural structure” (Weitz, 1960, p. 4). Within this structure, agricultural villages would cluster around the central node of the development town. While planners would settle villages with what they perceived to be a homogeneous group of Jews—all arriving from the same country—these immigrants would be able to connect with Jews from other (predominantly Middle Eastern and North African) countries when they came to town to run errands or conduct business.⁵ In the eyes of the planners, these villages would allow immigrants to retain the comfort of a homogeneous community within their village while developing opportunities for cross-cultural exchange within the urban center. Throughout the Yishuv as well as the early state period, both the location and the plan of each agricultural settlement reflected the changing economic, political, and military circumstances of the time, involving a shifting focus from military defense to economic and socio-cultural viability.

⁵ Because the development towns were constructed in the 1950s, they did not have a significant Palestinian population.

From statehood until 1957, settlement authorities categorized most of the immigrants to Israel as Mizrahim, sending the majority of these immigrants to *moshavim* or development towns in the country's periphery. Between 1954 and 1956, of the 85,000 immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia, 70 to 90 percent were settled within these peripheral settlements (Picard, 2013, p.34; see Figure 3). Why did Israeli planners select the *moshav* over other models (such as the *kibbutz* or *kvutza*) for settling Mizrahi immigrants? To address this question, I first examine the structure of the *moshav*. Israeli *moshavim* were defined as agricultural communities of 60 to 90 nuclear family units, all farming equal plots of land, which were leased to them by the State of Israel for 49-year periods. Given most immigrants' lack of experience with agriculture, "completely independent and individual farming was not considered practicable for their settlement" (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 1). This planning style would build on an existing toolkit of "colonisatory models, organizational know-how, and experienced personnel" as well as "several types of the collective and cooperative agricultural village" developed by previous waves of mostly-Ashkenazi settlement in the Yishuv (Eisenstadt and Weintraub, 1965, p. 5). Within this *moshav* system, immigrant farmers were subject to oversight from the Settlement Department. Jewish Agency authorities offered agricultural training, proposed farm plans, allocated water, and lent money to finance the farms. What resulted was, according to Raanan Weitz, "a very comfortable framework for the implementation of planned settlement which is effected by central institutions" (Weitz, 1962a, p. 61). Indeed, central management through the Jewish Agency would prove essential for coordinating the new class of agricultural immigrants emerging in Israel.

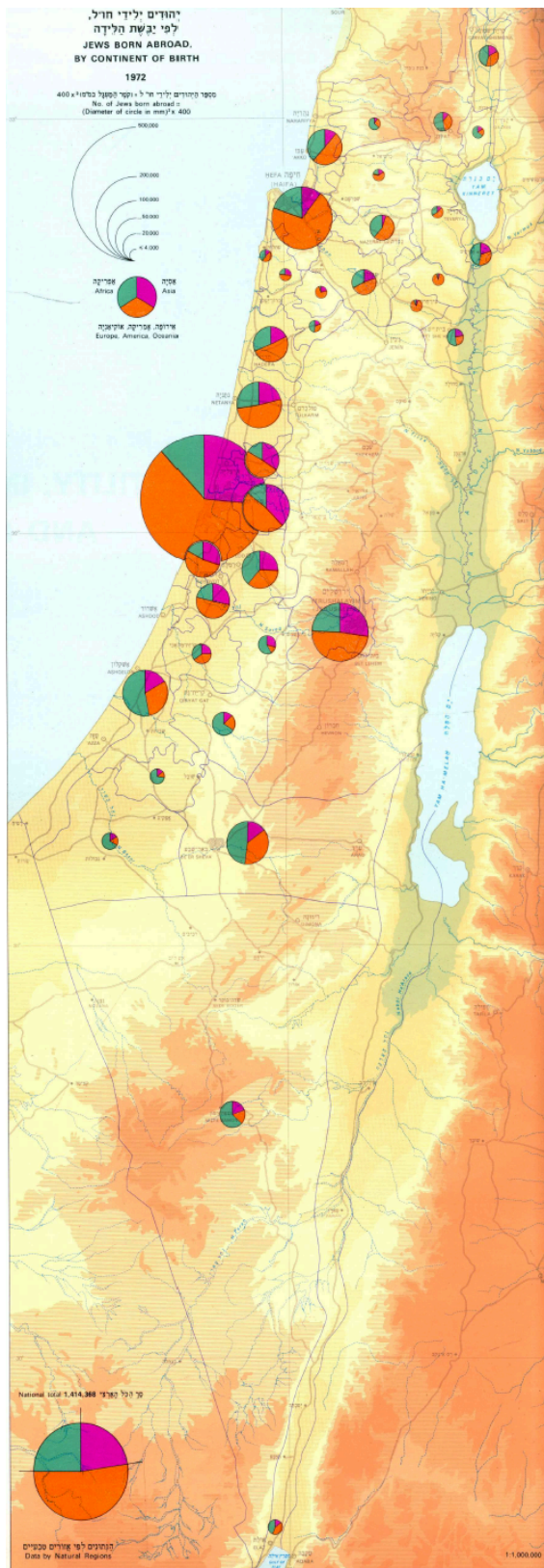


Figure 3: Map of the distribution of immigrants throughout Israel by continent of origin in 1972. (Israel Ministry of Labour, 1985).

Unlike the Jewish Agency authorities, the Mizrahim did not see the settlement framework as very comfortable; when they advocated for their needs, Jewish Agency and law enforcement authorities responded at times with concessions, and at times with violent repression. Throughout the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, *moshav* residents protested the villages' strict laws, low wages, exploitative work hours, lack of economic transparency, and authoritarian instructors. In 1950, seventeen Iraqi families carried out a three-day hunger strike in front of the Moshav Movement building. The Jewish Agency had expelled these families from their *moshav* because of their non-Zionist politics. As a result of the protest, the settlement authorities allowed the families to return to their homes and begin negotiations with a local council (Bashkin, 2016, p. 616). In 1956, after four Iraqi residents of the *moshav* Noga beat an abusive instructor, the Jewish Agency threatened to remove the residents from the *moshav*. In response, Noga's residents published an open letter in a popular Israeli newspaper. They described how the instructors would "threaten, curse, and use every kind of leverage to retain their control", treating them "like forced laborers rather than free citizens of the State of Israel" (quoted in Sharon, 2017, p.744). After two hunger strikes, the residents reached a compromise with the Jewish Agency that allowed them to stay in the community in exchange for them signing an apology letter.

Moshav residents protested exploitative work and wage conditions, particularly the laws which stipulated that they could sell their produce only through Tnuva, the Israeli cooperative marketing company. After settlers protested Tnuva's lack of transparency and fair compensation, the company's representatives agreed to begin weighing produce on-site at the moshavim (rather than off-site, behind closed doors) and established a minimal fixed price for the produce (Sharon, 2017, p. 742). However, these changes did not entirely ameliorate the conditions of scarcity in

the *moshavim*, and not all protests ended peacefully. In 1957, striking residents of the southern *moshav* Mivtahim described their living conditions, their decision to strike, and their experiences of police brutality:

They tell us to weed three kilometers. We start working at six in the morning and work until two but cannot complete these kilometers, so they only credit us with three hours of work. We have no vegetable garden, and no chicken coop, nothing, we only work for the Agency, only work in the Government Works Program. What kind of a *moshav* is this? There's no meat in the kitchens, no milk, the children can't have an entire egg every day. When it was decided to strike, the police showed up. They chased us one by one, broke into the house each one entered, viciously beat them up and put them in the paddy wagon. This was when the tumult broke out. The policemen beat up whoever they could lay their hands on. (quoted in Chetrit, 2009, p. 61)

Mizrahi protests assumed many forms throughout the *moshavim*, and the use of law enforcement officers to suppress rebellions was not uncommon. In one case, when authorities ignored immigrants' demands for better employment and agricultural instruction in the *moshav* Patish, the residents blockaded a road leading to a neighboring (Ashkenazi-inhabited) *kibbutz*—an act that was also met with a violent police response (Porat, 1996, quoted in Chetrit, 2009, p. 61).⁶ Throughout the 1950s, relations between *moshav* residents and the Jewish Agency continued to deteriorate.

After a decade and a half of Mizrahi resistance to the conditions of forced settlement, sociologists at the Hebrew University sounded more ambivalent about whether the *moshav* was the best settlement structure for Mizrahi immigrants. They acknowledged that in the early settlement years, there was no time for “a systematically differential approach” to settlement that would actually address immigrants' varying needs. Instead, they emphasized, time constraints

⁶ Police brutality against Mizrahim was common; indeed, police violence against a Moroccan man sparked the 1959 Wadi Salib rebellion in Haifa and would later serve to galvanize the emergence of the Mizrahi Black Panther Party in 1971.

prevented them from “sufficiently examining the different predispositions of the prospective settlers, to provide a basis for adapting the absorptive tool, or at least to place those settlers in the most suitable existing alternatives of the settlement pattern (such as the various farm-types)” (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 5). In this analysis, the Settlement Department’s failure to assess the social structures of the Mizrahim led to “improper or unsuccessful performance” and sometimes to the “outright abandonment of the *moshav*” (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 5). Indeed, by 1965, sociologists clearly perceived that an understanding of immigrant culture and society was an essential pre-requisite for ensuring agricultural immigrants’ fulfillment of “settler functions” (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 5).

Making Immigrants into Farmers

The Jewish Agency carried out its settlement project through a range of biopolitical means that included agricultural education, immigration instructors, and eventually, fitness tests. By 1946, the Jewish Agency was not just creating new settlements, but also orchestrating a range of agricultural education programs, from farm clubs for school children to agricultural extension training for adults. Together with a series of vocational agricultural institutions offering short-term courses, pamphlets and talks produced by the Ministry of Agriculture, and a two-year education program at the Hebrew University School of Agriculture, these programs offered comprehensive agricultural education to settlers who would help “make the desert bloom”. By 1950, with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants, mostly from Iraq, the Jewish Agency was establishing a new settlement every three days. However, the new government and its associated absorption organizations struggled to keep up with the rate of

immigration. According to Jewish Agency authorities, the country lacked the resources to accommodate all of the new immigrants, in particular immigrants who were older, sick, unskilled, and/or brought many children. As a result, in 1952, the Jewish Agency began limiting eligibility for immigration to exclude the “aged and infirm unless their upkeep in Israel could be assured” (Willner, 1969, p. 118). Escalating the biopolitical management of Mizrahim by linking Zionist ideology with eugenic practice, the Israeli government instituted a series of fitness tests for prospective immigrants to ensure the physical stamina of their future citizens (Shvarts et al., 2005; Mor, 2007).

By 1954, the Settlement Department employed a staff of 1000 throughout its regional offices (Jewish Agency, 1964); a number of these employees oversaw immigration instructors, extension workers who worked in the *moshavim* to facilitate Mizrahi agricultural absorption. One of the Settlement Department’s “general instructors” would bring a small group of settlers to a site, where they would live in tents while building their future homes. This general instructor was usually a volunteer from a nearby village who ideally (but not always) shared a language with the settlers. After organizing the construction of the initial housing, the instructors would facilitate the villagers in setting up dry farming fields, and eventually in digging ditches to lay irrigation pipes. The department lent the new settlers start-up funds with which they could purchase farming implements. These would eventually be converted into fifteen- to twenty-year loans. After a few years, the Land Department would introduce fruit trees and livestock. Eventually, a “Stabilization Committee” would evaluate whether the village was prepared to leave the jurisdiction of the Jewish Agency and enter the domain of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The overall goal of this lengthy process was to convert open spaces and appropriated Palestinian agricultural lands into Israeli farmlands.

In facilitating the establishment of a village, the general instructor assumed the ultimate governing authority in the community. The instructor was charged with developing a local, representative government, and with it, a “democratic atmosphere in the village, especially through the election of a village committee” (Weitz, 1960, p. 42). Until the committee was fully in charge, this instructor was authorized to make major decisions about village finance, marketing, education, culture, and all other matters that emerged in the new communities. As decision-makers with broadly defined responsibilities who allocated money and resources, these general instructors held a tremendous amount of power within the new communities. Indeed, Eisenstadt wrote that “in the first stages of absorption the behavioral pattern of an instructor— e.g. whether he was a democratic or an authoritarian type— was among the decisive factors which could make or break a *moshav*” (Eisenstadt, 1956, p. 272). As such, general instructors became key actors in shaping the development of each agricultural settlement.

So great were the responsibilities of these general instructors that the Settlement Department would often introduce a separate agricultural instructor to offer pragmatic instruction on farming techniques. Despite the popular belief among settlement administrators that the responsibilities of agricultural instructors were “technical” rather than “social”, the agricultural instructors executed a socializing role as well. In addition to training settlers in learning about climatic conditions and how to use farming equipment, agricultural instructors also trained new farmers in marketing strategies, and imparted the “necessity for timeliness and coordination” in maintaining the schedule and output of a market-oriented agricultural system (Weitz, 1960, p.

42). As such, agricultural instructors likewise supported the transition of immigrants into farmers within a market economy.

The instructors were soon joined by “instructresses”, or home economics instructors, who worked to Westernize Mizrahi gender relations and gendered activities. The home economics instructors’ goals were to “promote a stable, healthy family life” and to help women “strive for a higher standard of living” (Weitz, 1960, p. 42). In practice, this meant training women in home economics tasks that included attention to family budgeting, child care, sewing, food preservation, and mother/child care. Intended to provide support to families and mothers, these instructresses also influenced gender relations and kinship structures within families. Settlement authorities were particularly concerned about the phenomenon of the *hamula*—an Arabic term for extended family that Israeli authorities used to describe Mizrahi family systems. In response to the long-standing preoccupation of Israeli authorities and sociologists with Mizrahi family structures, instructresses were charged with encouraging Mizrahi women to seek “greater independence”—an entanglement of Western feminist values with colonial regulation that ultimately worked to reallocate productive labor from the domestic to the market sphere.

Despite the Settlement Department’s official reports on the success of the settlement instructor program, few Israelis strove to become instructors, and the ones who did were often ill-prepared. During the early 1950s, the program was so understaffed that the American anthropologist Dorothy Willner, who conducted ethnographic research on the settlement instructors, concluded that “almost any adult who was an adherent of or active sympathizer with the political parties to which the *moshav* movements were affiliated, and who seemed sufficiently educated and literate in Hebrew to carry out the necessary paperwork, might find a

job as a social instructor” (Willner, 1969, p. 159). As a result of this severe understaffing, the settlement instructor program was plagued by unprepared instructors who would abandon their posts or refuse to live in the villages altogether. In other cases, the relative dysfunction of the program meant that instructors would often stay in villages for up to eight years, rather than the expected two or three (Willner, p. 224).

Moreover, the broader “ethos of informality” among Israeli leadership meant that the settlement program was coordinated in an ad-hoc fashion; Willner writes that the Jewish Agency’s project was carried out in the “prevailing tradition of devotion and improvisation” (Willner, 1969, p. 144). As such, instructors would join communities with no training, which exacerbated the lack of accountability that defined instructor-villager relationships. This culture originated with high-ranking administrators within the Settlement Department and other governing bodies. Indeed, for the first half-decade of Israeli statehood, Willner contended that public agencies administered state-building through a process of “beleaguered improvisation” that emerged as a result of the frantic and haphazard nature of the settlement project (Willner, 1969, p. 115). This improvisational approach meant that informal social ties—particularly ones predicated on shared identity—carried significant weight within the early settlement of Israel.

Within the Settlement Department, the ethos of informality allowed for a seamless transition from casually collaborative to authoritarian administrative practices. The same Jewish Agency administrators that treated incoming Ashkenazim as pioneering collaborators went on to treat Mizrahim as racialized subjects. With the transition from majority-Ashkenazi to majority-Mizrahi immigration in the 1950s and early 1960s, “authority replaced consensus” as an operating logic of settlement (Willner, 1969, p. 115). Their new-found authority allowed

settlement instructors to appropriate funds and resources allocated to the *moshavim*—in fact, corruption was the *moshav* settlers’ most common complaint throughout the 1950s. The ethos of informality also facilitated the phenomenon of *protektzia*, where social networks dramatically influenced one’s access to power and resources. In particular, the relationship between the settlement instructor and his village, as well as between him and state administrators, played a significant role in the allocation of resources to communities. This resulted in significant inequalities in access to resources (Willner, p.134 n26), evoking pervasive public protest (Willner, p. 143). In fact, when entire *moshavim* engaged in sustained demonstrations, they were sometimes successful in promoting the removal of an instructor—though, on account of the shortage of instructors, the instructor would often be re-assigned to a different community (Willner, p. 161).

In 1956, as tensions between settlers and settlement instructors mounted, Jewish Agency administrators began to embrace professionalism as an institutional value as part of a broader “rationalization” of the program (Willner, 1969). Nine years after the establishment of the instruction program, the department finally produced the first formal outline of responsibilities to direct its staff of 606 instructors. Instructors’ duties included supervising village cooperative organizations and governance systems, agricultural production, municipal services, and resource acquisition (Willner, p. 144). In spite of the increasing professionalization of their roles, instructors’ responsibilities remained broad enough to enable authoritarian rule in the villages. Instructors were tasked with the oversight of all political and economic processes within the village—a project made all the more ambiguous by the Jewish Agency’s injunction to “[guide] settlers towards civic and agricultural autonomy” (Willner, p. 145). Continuing with the trend of

rationalization, the Jewish Agency and the main *moshav* federation financed the first courses for training social instructors the following year. These courses involved more specific directives for instructors. Ten years into the agricultural instruction program, the Jewish Agency finally developed job descriptions for the instructors.

The instructors' job descriptions served to formalize and therefore amplify their authority. According to the descriptions, the instructors oversaw the economic and political establishment of the *moshavim*. In addition to implementing the economic and agricultural directives of the Settlement Department, the general instructor had to help set up and maintain committees for governance, ensure proper operations of the municipal budget, develop local leadership, supporting book-keeping and insurance, and attend to any other management tasks that may arise. The instructor's responsibilities also extended to managing the "social development of the village"; according to his job description, the general instructor had to "concern himself with receiving suitable families for vacant farms and with getting unsuitable families out of the village" (Willner, p 248). The authority to remove and replace families at will, in addition to his oversight over the entire political and economic structure of the village, lent the general instructor immense power within the communities. Within this system, agricultural instructors focused more on developing villagers' skills in market farm production: the planning of land use and planting chronology, irrigation, supplying, appropriate harvest and marketing for sale through the village cooperative, which in turn would sell produce on a national level. The strict delineation of responsibilities did not level the playing field between instructors and villagers—indeed, the 1957 guidelines marked a shift to a more authoritarian relationship of oversight.

The rationalization of the settler project sought to address both instructors' and settlers' resistance to living in the *moshavim*. Despite the additional training, by 1962 it became clear that the settlement instructors remained resistant to living in village communities (Weitz, 1962b, p. 34). After 1962, the implementation of the composite rural structure of land development allowed settlement instructors to live in an urban center and maintain connections with villages without having to fully experience daily life there. Meanwhile, instructor education initiatives were accompanied by other aspects of rationalization. The settler was introduced to the agricultural system through the use of an "administrative farm, in which responsibility is shouldered by the settlement institution and where, to begin with, the peasants work in the field as day-labourers" (Weitz, 1962b, p. 27). According to the Settlement Department, this process allowed settlers to develop a level of familiarity with the organization of agricultural work, "[learn] methods of classification, packing, marketing of produce", and adapt to the idea of being a farmer (Weitz 1962b, p. 27). By 1966, this system became even more elaborate: a new immigrant settling in the *moshav* was allotted a small family plot of land while working as a hired laborer on a public company owned plot, transitioning gradually into working larger, independently-farmed swaths of land. This training phase would theoretically go on for two or three years with the whole village operating as a training center. The Settlement Department would work with farmers to devise a "farm plan" for agriculture, and the Supervised Credit System allowed farmers to purchase "means of production" on credit. As such, the Settlement Department was developing a range of processes to rationalize and systematize the training of Mizrahi immigrants. By training both instructors and settlers, the Settlement Department sought to produce a network of Mizrahi agriculturalists.

In spite of the growing professionalization and rationalization of the settlement instructor system, Jewish Agency representatives continued to infantilize Mizrahim to justify exploitative relations. The head of the agency wrote that because the early immigrants had many children, no agricultural training, and an “elementary education”, they were “entirely helpless and dependent entirely on the Jewish Agency” (Jewish Agency, 1964, p. 20). As such, they needed “social and elementary organization instruction” along with agricultural guidance (Jewish Agency, 1964, p. 20). Even more explicitly, an assistant to the Minister of Finance described at an international conference:

The building of each new village is like child-bearing, with months of expectancy, pains, miscarriages and sometimes stillborns. When the village is born it may be a cripple to be nursed artificially for many years. It may be under-nourished, lacking finance and advisory services. Each and every village undergoes its teething troubles. Some have them more severely and some overcome them more easily, but none escape them altogether. (Eli-Av, 1954, p. 62)

Through this framework of development, the mother country and its administrative representatives are responsible for the upbringing of the village offspring, illustrated through a metaphor that naturalizes the process of nation-building through a gendered narrative of reproduction on a grand scale. Whereas the “able-bodied”, healthy settlement follows a normal pattern of development from childhood to adulthood—presumably, one defined by rapid productivization, compliance to authority figures, and eventual (economic) independence—the disabled settlements require exceptional measures to reach full maturity. Within this biopolitical regime, the body politic of the *moshav* becomes the object of analysis, diagnosis, and intervention. In addition to infantilizing Mizrahim when describing the process of supporting village development, settlement authorities’ infantilization of the villages also justified repressive measures against popular resistance within the *moshavim*. Jewish Agency workers

viewed this resistance as a form of insubordination. Settlement Department employees would often say, “it is necessary to have a strong hand” when discussing their work with the settlers, and, according to Willner’s ethnographies, stories of settlement authorities’ responses to immigrant resistance would often end with the phrase “and then they were good children” (Willner, 1969, p. 161). By framing both supportive and repressive measures through the language of infantilization, settlement authorities represented Mizrahim as children who could not fully understand or advocate for their own needs. This treatment justified the Jewish Agency’s exertion of power as it worked to build a class of agricultural producers.

The Jewish Agency’s settlement efforts between the 1930s and the 1960s demonstrated a continuing concern with managing the logistics of Mizrahi settlement in Palestine. By coordinating the dynamics of land planning, forced settlement and agricultural training, the Jewish Agency helped to substantiate Zionist, and later Israeli, control of Palestinian land. In spite of the ostensible aim of the settlement project to shape Israeli settlers who could participate in democratic governance as citizens, settlement authorities frequently suppressed social mobilizations through punitive policies. When these outright forms of social control failed to achieve their desired outcomes and Mizrahi resistance began to take shape, the Land Settlement Department turned to academic sociologists for support.

Chapter 2: Developing a School of Social Engineering at the Hebrew University

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) is located at the peak of Mt. Scopus in East Jerusalem, where it overlooks the Temple Mount, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and several Palestinian communities and refugee camps. As both a physical campus and a space for knowledge production, the university has been entangled with both Jewish histories on the land and with the ongoing violence against Palestinians through the occupation. For example, the university neighbors the ruins of the Palestinian village Lifta, whose inhabitants fled the area during the 1948 war to refugee camps and nearby neighborhoods. In 1967, following Israel's conquest of the West Bank, the university attempted to expand student housing around the HUJI campus. This left five Liftawi families embroiled in legal battles over their rights to remain in their homes through the end of the century (Habash, 1999; Brubacher, 2000). Nearby, the Palestinian village of Issawiyah, whose expansion has been confined by checkpoints and threatened by the proposed construction of the Mount Scopus Slopes National Park (Mount Scopus Slopes National Park, 2015), experiences seasonal overflows of the Hebrew University's sewage system (Hasson, 2016). All the while, Palestinian students residing in Issawiyah and other nearby communities must navigate sporadic checkpoint closures as they try to attend their classes on the HUJI campus.

These are not new developments: in fact, since 1948, when the university campus halted its academic operations to begin serving as a military base for organized attacks against Palestinian communities, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has been a key site of Zionist settler colonial coordination. The physical displacement of Palestinians from the territories that surround the Hebrew University's campus on Mount Scopus parallels the marginalization that

Palestinians have historically experienced, both as authors and subjects of research, within the disciplinary landscape of HUJI's academic departments. As such, one can read the historic trajectory of the Hebrew University as one that has been established and is maintained through the mutually-constitutive physical and ideological displacement of Palestinians.

In this chapter, I describe the establishment and early development of the HUJI Sociology Department at a time when most key political figures questioned the usefulness of social science for Zionist nation-building. Arguing for the establishment of the department, its proponents conceptualized the Jewish nationalist project as grappling with twin hazards: the “internal” threat of Mizrahi barbarism and the “external” threats of Palestinian and international resistance to Israeli statehood. HUJI administrators and faculty such as Arthur Ruppin and Heinrich Loewe worried about the modernity of the Jewish community in Palestine. Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants brought their modern culture with them from Europe, but this cultured civilization was threatened by the barbarism of the local Palestinian and Mizrahi populations. With the evolutionary process of civilization at stake, HUJI administrators contended, the pace of modernization was an object of concern: the nation's cohesion depended on the assimilation of the immigrants. In their visions for the department, social science would help to accelerate the pace of modernization—namely, to assimilate Mizrahi immigrants into an idealized Western European society in order to secure the territory and create a Jewish nation in Palestine. As such, the sociology program's founding documents chronicle the emergence of a departmental consensus around the possibilities of using sociology—and, specifically, modernization theory—for socially engineering a cohesive, melting pot nation.

This bifurcated framing of “internal” and “external” threats paralleled HUJI’s development of biopolitical and necropolitical modes of population management, both within the as an academic landscape, where scholars produced knowledge about Palestinian and Mizrahi communities to facilitate racialized management, and within the physical campus, which operated as a space for military coordination. HUJI approached the “internal problem” of Mizrahi barbarism through the development of a sociological theory for the cultivation of modern citizens. At the same time, it addressed the “external” threat of Palestinian resistance to settler occupation by physically supporting Zionist military activities within its campus, and later by relegating sociological studies of Palestinians to the Oriental Studies department, which maintained a close relationship to the Israeli military apparatus. As such, the architects of HUJI’s sociological program sought to produce a biopolitical framework for future Israeli citizens, while the necropolitical effects of campus militarization and disciplinary fragmentation sought to remove the Palestinian presence from the national sociological imaginary through direct violence and institutional erasure. In the following chapter, I will return to HUJI’s sociological modernization theories to discuss the application and re-articulation of these logics through the Joint Council collaboration between the HUJI social sciences program and the Jewish Agency.

Modernization for Nation-Building: Establishing the Hebrew University’s Social Science Department

While many of the university’s founders were active in peace organizations, changes in HUJI’s administration led the university to align with Zionism before 1948. Establishing the Hebrew University at a time when many European institutions imposed structural barriers to

educational opportunities for Jewish students, HUJI's founders envisioned it as a university for all Jewish people. In the period between its foundation in 1925 and its expansion under Israeli statehood in 1948, HUJI's areas of scholarship shifted from exploring a range of possible Jewish-Arab relations towards embracing a Zionist nation-building consensus, which would come to dominate the programmatic structure and content of the university. The British publication in 1939 of the MacDonald White Paper, which rejected partition plans in favor of a single state with limited Jewish immigration, caused consternation for Zionists seeking to create a Jewish state (Alatout, 2009; Jewish Agency, 1964). In 1945, the British government increased its enforcement of the white paper policies. In the midst of armed conflict between Palestinian forces, the Hebrew Resistance Movement, and the British authorities, political pressure from Zionist leaders like David Ben-Gurion steered HUJI towards a closer alignment with the Zionist enterprise. By 1948, the university's academic atmosphere had shifted away from one that included Jewish-Arab peace organizations towards a vision for a dominant Jewish nation in Palestine.

Before 1948, HUJI sociologists and administrators were not just concerned with the "external," geopolitical threats to the future of the Zionist project. They also leveraged popular anxieties around civilization, barbarism, and the possible failures of modernization to argue for the establishment of a social sciences department that would address "internal" threats to Jewish statehood. In the eyes of HUJI authorities such as Arthur Ruppin and Heinrich Loewe, a sociology department would support the national interests by informing a program of training for civil servants, who would help to modernize Mizrahi immigrants. Throughout this transition, sociologists and administrators adopted modernization theory as the basis of a biopolitical

system of management that would later be carried out through a series of policies, educational institutions, and extension programs. Only social sciences, they argued, could inform the kind of policy-making necessary to ensure the “internal” cohesion necessary for the creation and maintenance of what they described as a colonial society. For sociologists and policy-makers alike, social cohesion meant Mizrahi assimilation to Euro-centric Israeli norms.

Although independent sociological research had been taking place in Palestine throughout the Yishuv period, HUJI administrators only proposed a social sciences program in 1939. Prior to this, most of the humanities and social sciences scholarship taking place at the Hebrew University was concerned with Jewish culture and tradition on a broad temporal and geographic scale rather than focusing on the practicalities of developing a Jewish presence in Palestine. Two of the university’s most prominent scholars, Martin Buber and Arthur Ruppin, together with its president and vice-president, were major figures in local peace movements that sought to collaborate with Palestinian communities rather than build an exclusively Jewish state. As a result, a number of prominent Zionists critiqued the university as an elitist institution detached from the “pragmatic” necessities of nation-building, which involved negotiations with British authorities and Palestinian organizations, and later, armed conflict with both groups (Ram, 2018, p. 30). Other critics challenged the culture of the university. The university faculty consisted mostly of German, Polish, and American Jewish scholars who did not share a commitment to local Jewish politics; they refused to redeem the land through manual agricultural labor and many entertained ideas of a bi-national state in Palestine (Ram, 2018, p. 30).

In the wake of extensive political pressure, by 1939, HUJI administrators expressed a closer allegiance to Zionism. In addressing these critiques of elitism in their proposal for a social

sciences department, they argued that the program would support nation-building by informing policy-making and training civil servants. HUJI administrators argued that rather than being a superfluous or apolitical discipline, sociology could potentially inform settlement policies, education programs, and mechanisms for immigrant assimilation. For HUJI administrators, the program of Zionist nation-building would require the modernization of Mizrahi Jews, which in turn necessitated the engineering of a “social consensus” between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim through sociological intervention. Four years later, prime minister-to-be David Ben Gurion emphasized the importance of “Hebrew science” for the “establishment and construction of the Jewish state” (quoted in Ram, 2018, p. 31). Following the pressure of Ben Gurion and other Zionist leaders, the university’s orientation shifted towards a series of nation-building practices that presumed the appropriation of Arab territories.

In establishing the HUJI social sciences department, administrators and professors alike framed the project in terms that reflected contemporary Euro-Americans’ concerns with civilization and ethnic modernization. HUJI founders juxtaposed the promises of a modernizing Israeli sociology against the racial threat of civilizational degeneration and disorder. For them, the pathway to modernization ran through a precarious landscape defined by racial anxieties around the loss of a European national culture. This, in turn, evoked temporal anxieties regarding the speed with which the requisite modernization project could take place. HUJI administrators and faculty seeking to create a social science department in the university leveraged these anxieties to justify their proposed project of social research as one that addressed matters of urgent national importance.

Invoking the dangers of barbaric social degeneration, HUJI administrators emphasized the utility of social scientific management for nation-building as they appealed to the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to fund a sociology department in the late 1930s. The JNF (referred to as the KKL, or Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael in the documents) was not only the owner of the land that the Hebrew University was built on, but also the financier of the university's Chair in Agricultural Economics (Senator, 1939). Collaborating with other HUJI administrators, Werner Senator appealed to the JNF to fund an additional faculty position for the sociology chair (Senator, 1939). The university also received funding from the Jewish Agency and an international network of donors called Friends of the Hebrew University (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1950, p. 50; The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1969, p. 364). As such, the report produced by HUJI administrators likely appealed to both the JNF's interests in protecting their land assets and the interests of a global network of wealthy Jewish funders invested in supporting a Jewish university in Palestine. Synthesized from a series of conversations among members of the Hebrew University's Executive Council, Senate, and Administration, the official proposal for the establishment of the sociology department emphasized that sociology was "the only rational instrument which can prevent the anarchic destruction of modern civilization" ([Project on the introduction of social sciences], 1939). According to the document, the Jewish community in Palestine was perpetually on the brink of cultural and racial degeneration due to its social context. While Zionist leaders fought back barbarism by negotiating land purchases and immigration quotas, social scientists could help build the nation through a scientific, rationalizing approach to social policy, governance, and economic forms. They emphasized, "the social stability of the modern mass societies, which is the condition of any higher civilization,

can be secured only if political and economic activity is based on the scientific analysis of society” ([Project on the introduction of social sciences], 1939). Addressing the relevance of sociology to the development of agriculture, industry, commerce, labor, education, and land planning, the administrators argued that only these rational sociological tools could impose an ordered, civilized framework on a society that was always on the brink of disorderly barbarism. This tension between civilization and barbarism—what Edward Said has termed the “Western projection” of Orientalism—justified a “will to govern over the Orient” (Said, 1978, p. 95) through sociological and managerial interventions for Israeli academics. HUJI academics thereby instrumentalized colonial anxieties about civilizational degeneration within their arguments for a Western, scientific approach to nation-building.

The university’s leadership also emphasized that sociological intervention was particularly important due to the recent nature of the Jewish colonial project. When HUJI administrators envisioned a modern Jewish state, they imagined a society that shared a Western social, cultural, political, and economic consensus; this would be “a true community of thinking and feeling about fundamentals” ([Project on the introduction of social sciences], 1939). For them, the crisis of civilization was particularly compounded by the recent nature of British rule in Palestine. Advocating for the creation of the department, they wrote that while Western nations “enjoy all the advantages of an old-established tradition in administrative technique, economic routine and social habits”, Palestine “only recently has emerged from oriental administration into a European administration system” ([Project on the introduction of social sciences], 1939). As a result, while Western “social consent has spontaneously developed from the common experience of many centuries”, in the case of the recently-Westernizing Palestine,

“national cohesion has to be produced by conscious policy” ([Project on the introduction of social sciences], 1939). Echoing the thinking of Zionist leaders such as Ben-Gurion, HUII’s administrators evaluated Israeli society against the standards of Western nations. Attributing the uniqueness of the colonial situation in Palestine to the short timescale of colonization, HUII administrators argued for the necessity of sociological guidance for a process of accelerated modernization. In short, sociology was rendered as a fix for the racial threats to the cohesion of a melting-pot nation.

This kind of framing, which depicts places as inhabiting different points along a path of modernization, suggests a foreshortened space-time imaginary of Palestine that opens with the advent of British colonial rule under the Mandate. Palestine under prior Ottoman governance, then, exists within an enclosed space from which it must “emerge” in order to enter the sphere of the modern, Western nation. At its core, this framing represents what Doreen Massey terms a *temporalization of space*: a “geographical imagination which rearranges spatial differences into temporal sequence” (Massey, 1999, p. 313). Anthropologist Bernard Cohn has emphasized that such modernizing schema “make the present of one civilization...the past of another” (Cohn, 1980, p. 212). By framing regional differences as simply a matter of time, this framework “represses the real significance of spatiality. It obliterates, or at least reduces, the real import and the full measure of the differences which are at issue” (Massey 1999, p. 313). This temporalization of mutually exclusive spaces negates regional specificities, many of them shaped by the geopolitics of empire. By denying that the “modernization” and “development” of some regions occurs through the subjugation and exploitation of others, the use of a single axis of modernization to interpret all spaces negates histories of conquest and justifies relationships of

unequal power between societies. Moreover, these delineations of space along a time axis “locate the dominators and the dominated in one analytical scheme which is temporal” (Cohn, 1980, p. 212). Temporal partitions of space suggest that inequalities between different regions will inevitably be overcome through modernization. In the case of Israel, the categorization of Western Jews as belonging to the modern side of the modernization axis justifies administrative interventions into the primitive communities of their Middle Eastern Jewish neighbors.

Professor Heinrich Loewe, who drafted a subsequent proposal for a HUJI social sciences program, similarly represented the program as a race against an ever-impending barbarism.⁷ Loewe argued that sociology could address the risk of intellectual degradation faced by Western-educated immigrants dwelling in a Middle Eastern space. To fully represent the extent of this threat, Loewe invites his reader to assume the gaze of an external, neutral, Western observer.⁸ Framing his analysis from the vantage point of an outsider, Loewe argued that it would become immediately evident to any Western visitor that Yishuv residents, living “far away from the big centres of Western learning, surrounded by primitive civilizations”, were at risk of “using up” the resources of their intellectual heritage, which they had brought with them to Palestine (Loewe, 1944, p. 4). For Loewe, modernization was not only a spatially variegated phenomenon, but also one that moved across landscapes, and was jeopardized through this mobility. Loewe’s anxiety about the loss of intellectualism presumed a sort of environmental determinism; within this imaginary, culture emerges from the social environment of a particular space and does not naturally regenerate in another. This threat of intellectual attrition demanded ongoing

⁷ Indeed, his proposal repeated word-for-word the aforementioned quote about the anarchic destruction of civilization.

⁸ For more on Euro-American nations as Western referents in Israeli nation-building, see Raz-Krakotzkin, 1998.

institutional intervention. In Loewe's logic, the creation of a social sciences department would help to replenish the European cultural resources of the Jewish nation that would otherwise atrophy.

For Loewe, the institutionalization of Anglo-European sociology would sustain the Yishuv's intellectual caliber. He argued that this vital intellectual force would "have to arise from a system of general education in which the political and economic questions of modern civilization hold a focal position" (Loewe, 1944, p. 4). Loewe proposed to modernize Jewish residents of the Yishuv by promoting cultural assimilation. He wrote, "different customs and standards of life have to be adjusted, and vast differences in skill and business mentality [have] to be overcome" (Loewe, 1944, p. 1). Sociological studies would make all of this possible, since with the help of sociology, "social processes can be purposely influenced and planfully changed" (Loewe, 1944, p. 1). Through the training of administrators and social workers who would be embedded in a broader system of sociologically-based "political and economic education", Loewe argued that the Jewish nation could develop both the intellectual culture and the socio-political consensus that it needed to thrive. Thus, from the outset, HUJI's administrators and faculty envisioned a social science department that could inform an applied program of social engineering. In turn, this would support the modernization necessary for the political and economic cohesion of the nation-state.

HUJI administrators and faculty alike sought to create a Westernized Jewish state in Palestine through the use of social sciences. However, their nation-building project was confounded by the local conditions. For them, the short duration of the British Protectorate's civilizing regime following the long-term barbarism of the Ottoman Empire threatened the

existence of a Westernized Jewish state and evoked anxieties about civilizational collapse. In their visions, the Yishuv was a temporally precarious state that required sociological intervention. The existential threat posed by the region's primitive cultures was compounded by the ever-present international and Palestinian resistance to Jewish statehood. Administrators understood that they needed to modernize Palestine quickly in order to justify the project to European nations and defend it regionally. Within the logic of modernization, these temporal precariousities necessitated sociological intervention. Sociologists and administrators alike believed that sociology would help Israel to follow in the footsteps of heterogeneous Western societies, albeit at an accelerated pace. Drawing on the Lamarckian and Darwinian forms of evolutionary thought that undergirded the modernization theory of the era (Gilman, 2003, p. 91), Loewe and his colleagues depicted cultural modernization as an evolutionary process that could be hastened at will. Returning to Massey's *temporalization of space*, which frames different regions as existing "just ahead or behind in the same story" (Massey, 1999, p. 313), this framing justified a prescriptive approach to modernization, which justified particular forms of government and institutional intervention in the name of advancing progress. In this case, the interventions took on a sociological quality.

By 1948, HUJI administrators and faculty became less explicit in calling for a complete dissolution of Middle Eastern culture in an effort to legitimate Western Jewish governance of the region. Nevertheless, even when embracing a framework of cultural syncretism, the founding documents of the HUJI sociology program frame the modernization of Israeli society through a paradigm of Western scientific management. The resulting Jewish state might draw on the Middle Eastern cultures of its Mizrahi citizens, but only symbolically. Nadia Stein, a journalist

with the Women's Zionist Organization and one of the first researchers supported by the department, wrote in her project proposal:

[t]he Jewish immigrants are bringing with them rich scientific experience and traditions; they are anxious, so far as it lies in their power, to make their contribution to the reconstruction of the East. The East, on the other hand, after generations of stagnation, needs scientific planning and industrial development... Towards this synthesis of Western activism and Eastern spirituality a broadly conceived research programme embracing the vital economic and social issues of the region may perhaps make a not unworthy contribution". (Stein, 1949, p. 1-2)

The importance of this syncretism to the HUJI sociology department's rhetoric is evidenced by the fact that the above passage from Nadia Stein's research proposal was used word-for-word by Alfred Bonn , a HUJI professor, in his official description of the sociology department (Bonn , 1950). This passage's curious conflation of stagnation with spirituality gestures to another quality of the modernization axis—one that equates religiosity with traditionalism. In spite of the ultimate importance of the Westernizing project in justifying the existence of a Jewish state in the eyes of the international community, the Zionist claim to historic Palestine nevertheless depended on an assertion of indigeneity and religious difference from a Christian norm. As a result, Israeli authorities had to draw on evidence of a rich Jewish tradition in the Middle East; the result was an Orientalizing discourse that depicted Mizrahi immigrants as Ashkenazi Jews' spiritual link to their past in Palestine. The Israeli project of modernizing the Mizrahim differed from other modernizing projects of the time because, for Zionists, the preservation of Jewish traditions substantiated their geopolitical claim to land. At the same time, Israeli sociologists could not allow the "traditional" cultures of the Middle East to influence the development of the state in any substantive way that might subvert the project's appeal to European and American supporters. The result was a policy that absorbed Jewish traditionalism into a framework of

modern, techno-managerial, Western Jewish statehood as a means of claiming and territorializing Jewish indigeneity.

Sociological Studies of Immigrants: Israeli Modernization Theory

In the Sociology Department's early years, HUJI faculty adopted modernization theory as their primary analytical lens. By rationalizing the social sciences as an essential tool for Israeli state-building, administrators were successful in establishing the department of sociology at the university in 1948. After the establishment of the Sociology department, the department further consolidated its theoretical approach, becoming an epicenter for the elaboration of modernization theory in Israel. The resulting theories of modernity—as a moving entity that could be cultivated through the judicious application of sociological analysis and informed policy—would support the biopolitical management of Mizrahi immigrants. The first chair to serve as the head of the newly established Department of Sociology was the Jewish scholar and existential philosopher Martin Buber.⁹ After a three-year tenure as the department chair, Buber was succeeded by his student and appointee, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, who would become the dominant voice in Israeli sociology for decades to come.

Charged with the task of developing a sociological school uniquely suited to the early needs of a settler-colonial state, Eisenstadt engaged the works of American modernization theorists as potential frameworks for domestic development. After completing his doctoral studies under

⁹ Martin Buber had been skeptical of liberal modernity—for him, “civilization” and its dehumanizing “I-it” paradigm opposed the “I-thou” paradigm of “culture” (Ram, 2018, p. 22). While, Buber’s sociological framework, associated with a German, Weberian paradigm, lost popularity in the aftermath of World War II, it also formed the basis for the U.S.-based modernization theory adopted by Israeli sociologists.

Buber at the Hebrew University, Eisenstadt traveled to the London School of Economics, where he met the American sociologist Edward Shils, who introduced him to the work of Talcott Parsons (Ram, 2018, p. 34). While scholars such as Walt Rostow, Samuel Huntington, and David Lerner would take up Parson's work in order to emphasize the role of economics, politics, and culture within the paradigm of modernization, respectively, Eisenstadt maintained a focus on the original interdisciplinary paradigm posited by Talcott Parsons (Spohn, 2011, p. 284). In addition to this kind of comprehensive framing, Eisenstadt would emphasize "the fragile, conflictual and open character of modernization" (quoted in Spohn, 2011, p. 284) throughout his work. Eisenstadt's attention to the integrated roles of economics, politics, and culture within the process of modernization, as well as his emphasis on the precarity of the modernization project, resonated with his understanding that Israel was a vulnerable state which had to be constructed from scratch. For Eisenstadt, modernization theory would help to develop the immigrant absorption arm of the settler-colonial project, which managed Mizrahi populations through agricultural settlement.

In Israel/Palestine as in the United States, the challenge of modernizing a "backwards" immigrant population necessitated social management, coordinated through modernization theory and structural functionalism. As a result, Eisenstadt began to envision an Israeli version of Parsons' model even before he assumed the position of the department chair. By 1952, with Eisenstadt at the head of the department, ongoing research projects in the department reflected the focus on modernization and immigrant assimilation. Sociological studies on phenomena—such as juvenile delinquency among immigrant youth and the influence of community elites on cultural assimilation—sought to identify the factors for optimizing the seamless integration of

immigrant communities into a modern, Jewish community. This paradigm of “immigrant absorption,” which embraced modernization theory and sociological research as foundational factors in nation-building, suggested that the social scientist could shape the optimal conditions for assimilating new Israelis. In 1963, Eisenstadt and Parsons co-taught a Harvard seminar, a collaboration that resulted in the publication “Evolutionary Universals in Society” (Parsons, 1964). In a move that continued to normalize Western capitalism as an end-point for social development, this article identified social stratification and bureaucracy as outcomes of cultural evolution rather than political economic regimes of domination and exploitation. The increasing integration of sociological knowledge within the Israeli settlement apparatus, elaborated in the next chapter, served to embed modernization theories within the landscape of Israeli settlement in Palestine while normalizing a racial ordering of the economy as a universal endpoint of development.

The Mount Scopus Campus as Settler-Colonial Outpost

While the academics of HUJI informed an Israeli school of immigration social science, the physical campus became a staging ground for Zionist colonization. Beginning in 1948, HUJI’s Mount Scopus campus transformed into a Zionist military outpost. As the academic and administrative operations continued at the Ramat Gam campus to the west, the Mount Scopus campus operated as a base for coordinating Zionist efforts to conquer East Jerusalem in the events that would lead up to the Nakba—the displacement of Palestinians from their lands. Demonstrating the interdependency of these processes within university publications and financial solicitations, university administrators presented attacks against campus faculty and

staff as justifications for the university's Zionist mission. As such, both the academic and the physical landscapes of the campus converged within the Zionist project of displacing Palestinians and claiming their land. While the HUJI sociology department helped to devise improved systems for nation-building, its campus facilities materially supported the violent seizure of Palestinian land.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Partition Plan, which proposed the creation of a Jewish state in place of the British Mandate in Palestine. Armed conflict between Zionists and Palestinians escalated in anticipation of the creation of the state. By 1948, the Hebrew University and neighboring Hadassah Hospital served as military outposts on Mount Scopus, which became a militarized Jewish enclave within East Jerusalem (Cohen, 2003). Attempting to unseat this enclave, Palestinians in the villages Wadi al-Joz and Shaykh Jarah blockaded the road connecting Mount Scopus to West Jerusalem, which resulted in an ongoing, low-level military conflict. In response to the blockade, the Hagenah paramilitary regiment stationed on Mount Scopus carried out a raid on the village of Wadi al-Joz. When Palestinians shot at the Hagenah from the windows of several houses, the Hagenah detonated bombs at three houses, injuring twenty-five and killing at least twenty Palestinians, among them two children. Abdul Kader Husseini, the leader of the Arab forces in Jerusalem, threatened to capture and destroy the hospital and the university given their role in facilitating attacks against civilians and children (Levin, 2002, p. 219). On April 9th, across the city from Mount Scopus, a Zionist paramilitary group killed 110 Palestinians in their homes in what came to be known as

the Deir Yassin massacre (Tal, 2004; Cohen, 2003).¹⁰ Four days later, in retaliation, Palestinian fighters in Shaykh Jarah ambushed a Hadassah medical convoy heading towards Mount Scopus, killing seventy-eight Jews. Over the following months, Zionist military forces drove 700,000 Palestinians into domestic and foreign refugee camps in what came to be known as the Nakba. While the Zionist forces depopulated dozens of Palestinian villages in the Western part of Jerusalem, many of the communities in the Mount Scopus region of East Jerusalem remained intact (Cohen, 2003).

Throughout the first twenty years of Israeli statehood, HUJI's military and academic activities developed simultaneously. Despite Mount Scopus' classification as a demilitarized zone, about a hundred Israeli soldiers disguised as policemen remained stationed on and around the campus. Between 1948 and 1967, all university operations took place at HUJI's West Jerusalem campus, Givat Ram. A 1948 volume authored by HUJI's administrators discussing the university's academic programs opens with a passage titled, "Victims in the Struggle for Freedom". The passage commemorates the seventeen university-affiliated victims of the Hadassah medical convoy and goes on to describe HUJI's mission as indivisible from the project of Jewish nation-building. They emphasize that the nation-building project set HUJI apart from other universities: "[HUJI's] programme and aims are co-ordinated with those of the national movement which gave it birth" (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem: Its History and Development, 1948, p. xi-xii). The effects of the violent displacement of Palestinians from East

¹⁰ The Deir Yassin massacre also resulted in the deaths of four Zionist paramilitary members and seven Palestinian combatants.

Jerusalem, which would enable the university's growth and operations, took on a parallel life as a form of discursive justification for the university's mission within the Zionist project.

On the Absence of Palestinians from Israeli Sociology

While the Sociology Department established the subject of Mizrahi absorption as a legitimate area of study through sustained engagement, HUJI's academic practices prevented sociological engagements with Palestinians from taking shape as a discipline or gaining an international readership, instead embedding them within a necropolitical apparatus. Israel's pre-state and early-state periods witnessed a range of sociological research conducted on Palestinian communities (Ram, 2018). Reflecting broader international trends within sociology, these studies addressed many of the themes that would come to dominate HUJI's analysis of Mizrahi immigrants: attention to social structures, economic conditions, and "intergroup relations" (Cohen, 1974). The field of Palestinian sociology had not always been dedicated to the Zionist project.¹¹ For the most part, though, sociological research on communities in Palestine was dominated by Jewish and foreign scholars, typifying Orientalist dynamics, wherein researchers produced abstracted knowledge about the Orient (Said, 1978). Of the thirty-six English-language social studies of Palestinians published before 1952, the majority were authored by scholars who were living outside of Palestine at the time of authorship (Cohen, 1974).¹² After 1948, when HUJI's Department of Sociology began to develop a coherent school of thought that analyzed

¹¹ For example, beginning in 1922, Tawfiq Canaan, a physician, scholar, and president of the Palestine Oriental Society conducted a number of ethnographies of a Palestinian community (Canaan, 1931, 1934; Lapp and Albright, 1964).

¹² These scholars were variously sympathetic to the cause of Arab-Jewish coexistence.

Mizrahi immigration to Israel, sociological engagements with Palestinian communities remained fragmented among different campuses and countries.

Choosing to pathologize Palestinian communities rather than condemn the conditions of their displacement, Israeli sociologists avoided engaging explicitly with the effects of Palestinian land dispossession and violence on Palestinian or Jewish communities. As Khalil Nakhleh identified in his 1977 review of sociological works on Palestinians, when Israeli sociologists engaged with Palestinian communities, their research questions and outcomes were circumscribed by their socio-political assumptions. Discussing changes in Palestinian kinship networks, economic systems, and relationships to Israelis, the sociological studies conducted before 1967 refused to consider the socio-economic effects of Israeli settler colonialism on Palestinians. As a result, scholars produced sociological research that either dismissed the effects of the occupation altogether or attributed them to the internal dysfunction of Palestinian communities.

Sociological research on Palestinians and Jewish immigrants to Palestine was also divided departmentally, reflecting the distinct geopolitical purposes of these sociological knowledges. Sociological works addressing the challenges of Jewish immigration and “absorption” were eagerly taken up by Israeli sociology departments, which sought to produce internationally-relevant theories while addressing local problems of social management in growing collaboration with settlement agencies. While the Department of Sociology collaborated with the Jewish Agency’s Settlement Department, the Oriental Studies department maintained a closer connection to Israeli military forces (Ram, 2018). Findings about Mizrahi and Ashkenazi immigrants were utilized by government agencies for the purpose of social management,

whereas sociological accounts of Palestinian communities helped to develop a repressive apparatus that worked to displace Palestinians from their homelands while eroding their political and social power. This disciplinary divide reflected a two-pronged biopolitical/necropolitical policy, where one department supported the productive management of life for Jewish citizens, while the other informed a repressive and deadly regulatory regime designed for Palestinian non-citizens. In spite of a shared analytical framework, the disciplinary split between sociological studies of Mizrahim and Palestinians reflects the kind of differential racialization that came to typify both academic and nation-building activities in Israel.

The disciplinary division of sociological research between the Oriental Studies and Sociology departments represents the institutionalization of two separate, but linked biopolitical projects—one concerned with the management and absorption of an “internal” racialized population, the other with the violent necropolitical repression of an “external” racialized population. At a time when administrators understood Ashkenazi domination in Palestine to be jeopardized by the Arab-ness of both the Mizrahim and the Palestinians, this biopolitical and necropolitical disciplinary divide addressed this threat. In the case of the Mizrahim, the Sociology department sought to bring the immigrants into the sphere of modern, Euro-American culture, thereby dissolving their difference by drawing them into an assimilated society. In contrast, the Oriental Studies department’s research on Palestinians amplified both social difference and social distance, thereby informing military practices geared towards the violent expropriation of land.

Chapter 3: The Joint Council for Social Affairs and the Settlement-Sociology Collaboration

The beginning of the formal collaboration between the Jewish Agency's Settlement Department and the Hebrew University's Sociology Department marked a new, sociologically-informed stage in Israeli settlement practices. In 1958, representatives from the Settlement Department and the HUJI Sociology Department established the Joint Council for Social Affairs, which served as a forum for troubleshooting the social challenges that arose in immigrant *moshavim*. Reflecting on the importance of social science to the settlement project, Settlement Department director Ra'anana Weitz emphasized that "the social factor is the key to every development plan in agriculture, and... this factor cannot be deciphered without full and close collaboration between the sociologists, the policy makers and the implementors" (Weitz, 1962a, p. 61). However, managing the "social factor" became increasingly difficult for settlement authorities in light of growing popular resistance and conflict in the *moshavim* throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In response, members of the Joint Council sought to devise a system of analysis and practice to facilitate the modernization of Mizrahi agricultural settlements while avoiding a "breakdown of modernization" (Deshen, 1964, p. 1). Within the context of the Joint Council's work, the term "modernization" represented a constellation of economic, social, cultural, and political changes. In effect, the terms of modernization sought to produce the Mizrahim as a racialized agricultural underclass within a bioterritorial matrix that managed populations and territories for the project of Israeli settler-colonialism.

In this chapter, I describe how the collaboration between the Jewish Agency's Land Settlement Department and the Hebrew University's Sociology Department addressed the challenges of Mizrahi settlement. Rural sociologists and settlement instructors implemented the

theoretical findings of the Joint Council sociologists, seeking to transform immigrants into productive farmers, loyal citizens, hetero-nuclear family units, and protectors of the borderlands. I open the chapter with an overview of the formation of the Joint Council for Social Affairs in order to describe the context of the collaboration between the Settlement and Sociology Departments. I then review early sociological debates over the assimilability of the immigrants before discussing the role of categorization as an analytical tool within the field. I next describe the goals of settlement planning: the productivization, democratization, atomization, and (occasional) militarization of Mizrahi immigrant communities. Reflecting on the trajectory of the Joint Council's analysis, I describe the changing frameworks for understanding immigrant culture and settlement. I then discuss the council's eventual acceptance of traditionalism, social cohesion, and local leadership as potentially conducive to immigrant absorption within a regime of racial liberalism and bioterritorial management. Finally, I reflect on the international circulation of Joint Council knowledges and practices through published reports, development forums, and professionalization programs to contextualize the work of the Joint Council within the geopolitical landscape of mid-century development initiatives.

Forming the Joint Council for Social Affairs

Throughout the immigration process, the Settlement Department developed a range of approaches to regulating Mizrahi settlement. Upon arrival to Israel, under the Department's leadership, Mizrahi immigrants experienced forced settlement, exploitative manual labor, and poverty in the *moshavim*. When Mizrahim resisted through work stoppages, migration to the cities, or black-market agricultural commerce, the Settlement Department turned to police to

offer an immediate, repressive response. However, when social unrest within the *moshavim* persisted, the department invited the Hebrew University's sociologists to analyze the dynamics and propose solutions for how best to modernize Mizrahim. As a result, planners took up the practice of sociological intervention as they attempted to solve the "complicated social and communal problems" that characterized many of the immigrant *moshavim* (Weitz, 1962a, p. 59).

In 1958, the Settlement Department requested that members of the Department of Sociology support the settlement project by studying the *moshav* community life. Prior to this, the Settlement Department's existing team of rural sociologists and planners consisted primarily of *kibbutz* residents. Attempting to address the impacts of rapid, forced modernization on agricultural communities, these *kibbutz* sociologists drew on their experiences with collective agriculture as they worked with the *moshav* residents. Building on the resulting analyses, the rural sociologists would advocate on behalf of the communities to their employers at the Settlement Department. The impacts of their advocacy depended largely on the sociologists' social networks within the department's bureaucracy; a well-connected regional sociologist could generate more institutional support for his community, while a poorly-networked one would not (Shokeid, 2015, p. 94). When this informal problem-solving failed to address Mizrahi social conflicts, the Settlement Department called on the Sociology Department for support to produce a more comprehensive structure for managing Mizrahi communities.

Once the Settlement Department initiated its collaboration with the Sociology Department, the Joint Council for Social Affairs began overseeing the work of rural sociologists from the Hebrew University and the implementation of their suggested changes. With the heads of the sociology and settlement departments serving alternating one-year terms as chair, the Joint

Council had two components. Ra'anana Weitz, the head of the Settlement Department, oversaw the “guidance and directive” branch, whose sociologists would suggest practical changes to settlement policy. Shmuel Eisenstadt, head of the Sociology Department, was in charge of the “theoretical and research” arm, which focused on producing studies of immigrant behavior in agricultural communities. After the inauguration of the Joint Council, sociology students from the Hebrew University joined the ranks of the rural sociologists within the “guidance and directive” arm of the scheme. Their tenure with the Settlement Department constituted a form of fieldwork that informed applied interventions (Markowitz, et al., 2015). Whether they came from *kibbutzim* or the Hebrew University, rural sociologists working with the Joint Council drew on their theoretical and empirical experiences to orchestrate professional development, influence physical and economic planning, and help resolve conflicts between instructors and settlers (Weitz, 1962b). Rural sociologists would offer advice to the head of the Settlement Department, who would make final decisions regarding conflicts that threatened community cohesion.

The “guidance” branch of the Jewish Council addressed localized challenges to successful immigrant settlement, the “theoretical” branch focused on broader elements of settler adaptation. In particular, the theoretical branch worked to “identify some of the basic human characteristics, aspirations and qualities bearing upon democratic structure and the social structure of various groups” (Weintraub, quoted in Weitz, 1963, p. 231). Rather than informing the day-to-day policy-making and decision-making of the Settlement Department, the theoretical research project would “find rules for the direction of the practical policy in order to avert difficulties in the future” (Weitz, 1962a, p. 71). At the same time, the knowledge produced through the Hebrew University’s participation in the Settlement Department’s programs would

come to inform the department's sociological frameworks and shape the training of the next generation of rural sociologists at the Hebrew University. Academics within the department also influenced the development of rural sociology more broadly, submitting reports to foreign agricultural institutions such as the United States Department of Agriculture and exchanging ideas at development forums with government officials and scientists from countries including Senegal, the Philippines, Nigeria, India, and Finland (Weitz, 1963). As such, sociological theories produced through the Joint Council project shaped the development of rural sociology as a discipline of bioterritorial management both within and beyond Israel-Palestine.

Sociologists relied on both empirical and theoretical analyses to understand the ways that the cultural backgrounds of various Mizrahi immigrant groups influenced their economic, social, and technical adaptation to *moshav* life (Weitz, 1962b). The leaders of the Joint Council shared a belief in the importance of these conversations, which bridged theoretical and applied social sciences. The council would develop settlement policies and coordinate sociological research on immigrant settlement—projects that would inform each other through a culture of “direct and constant contact” between the sociologists and the Settlement Department’s policymakers (Weitz, 1962a, p. 74). In practice, the syncretism of experiential and theoretical sociological knowledge shaped the trajectory of the Joint Council’s interventions in *moshavim* and eventually, the establishment of the Settlement Study Center, which further institutionalized the work of the Joint Council in 1963.¹³ This center continued the work of the Joint Council, sending its employees throughout Israel and abroad as researchers and consultants. Drawing on this

¹³ Today, this research and consulting organization draws on its decades of experience in agricultural sociology to advise projects in sustainable agricultural development both within and beyond Israel.

research, the center produced dozens of publications that all sought to advance agricultural and rural development through sociological analysis and regional planning guidance.

Developing sociological theories alongside social engineering practices, settlement planners and sociologists created systems to convert Mizrahim, willingly or unwillingly, into productive, agricultural citizens. This approach was described by Dov Weintraub, a Hebrew University sociologist, who explained:

in our situation there is no actual force by police, but there is an indirect force created by confronting people with a situation over which they have no control. This is, for instance, true of introducing people to a different type of agriculture, an introduction not initiated or approved of by the people themselves. I think that this is the type of situation which is found in the developing countries, rather than the introduction of concentration camps, or other actual forcible techniques. (quoted in Weitz, 1963, p. 217)

Settlement planners and sociologists did not resort to physical violence in maintaining the agricultural order of the Mizrahi *moshavim*—they left that to the police. Nevertheless, they did exert a form of structural violence, shaping the conditions of possibility for immigrant actions by creating coercive circumstances throughout the immigration and settlement process. Moreover, Weintraub’s comparison of Mizrahi agricultural settlements to rural communities in developing countries makes clear that HUJI sociologists saw the residents of the *moshavim* as similar to Third World peoples. In keeping with the modernization philosophies of the era, Weintraub’s words suggested that in the eyes of settlement planners and sociologists, Mizrahim must be treated as children and disciplined for their own good. Jewish Agency authorities infantilized Mizrahi immigrants, believing that they should be developed by force until they could learn to comply with the expectations of Israeli society.

Assessing Immigrant Malleability

For years before the creation of the Joint Council, the Hebrew University Department of Sociology relied on modernization theory to evaluate “immigrant absorption”—a project that assessed the immigrants’ potential for cultural, social, political, and economic assimilation into a Euro-American Israeli culture. These writings drew heavily on the American modernization jargon of the day. Within this terminology, a “particularistic, ascriptive, and diffuse” structure was one which did not share the “universal” Western culture, embrace a meritocratic social structure, or centralize its governance, respectively (Latham, 2011, p. 46). In equating modernity with the productive economies of the West, modernization theorists like Eisenstadt valorized the constituent components of Western state formation in their analysis. Drawing on these concepts, Eisenstadt and his colleagues sought to theorize whether Mizrahi communities could assimilate into the economic, political, and social fabric of Israel.

The question of whether the modernization of Middle Eastern immigrants was even possible drew significant attention from Israeli sociologists throughout the 1950s. The HUJI sociology department produced a framework to assess the degree to which immigrants were open to change. The first major study, conducted by Shmuel Eisenstadt between 1949 and 1952, examined one thousand families to determine the major factors influencing immigrant assimilability through assessments of their participation in broader social systems and the “social stability”—presumably, the lack of social unrest—in their societies. Through this project, Eisenstadt found that successful absorption was related not only to immigrants’ cultures of origin and the changes that they would have to undergo, but also of immigrant “predisposition to change” (Eisenstadt, 1950). For Eisenstadt, malleability was not simply a static cultural attribute,

but a psychological characteristic—and therefore, subject to transformation. While his first project sought to assess immigrants' capacity for change, Eisenstadt's second study theorized the qualities of immigrant communities that could contribute to successful modernization. Eisenstadt found that modernization was indeed possible, and that successful communities were ones that allowed for the development of a "new elite" within the community, which would guide this process of cultural, social, and political-economic transformation.

Under the auspices of the Joint Council, Eisenstadt continued to pursue the question of assimilation for "traditional" and "modern" groups. At the same time, Ra'anana Weitz's publications on behalf of the Settlement Department began to echo Eisenstadt's findings with the Sociology Department. Though Eisenstadt came to believe that Mizrahi communities were capable of modernization, he remained skeptical that they could do so completely. Continuing to probe the matter of Mizrahi assimilation, Eisenstadt reiterated his original research question even more explicitly, asking "whether the more traditional groups, with their somewhat larger emphasis on family and other particularistic relations, can at all behave successfully in a modern economic setting" (Eisenstadt, 1961, p. 76). His research results offered a bleak prognosis for the modernization of Mizrahi communities: immigrants coming from European and American society would experience an advantage in assimilating into Israeli society, while "Oriental" immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa remained at a disadvantage (Eisenstadt, 1961, p. 49). Weitz echoed this opinion, writing that "the mode of life of the Western community, its organization and its use of technological innovations is entirely foreign to these settlers who at times evince a sort of internal opposition to the Western mode of life" (Weitz, 1962a, p. 49). In

short, Mizrahi modernization was possible, but it would be challenging for the Mizrahim and require significant interventions from the Jewish Agency.

The sociologists' and planners' assessment that "Eastern" immigrants would struggle to assimilate into Israeli society is no surprise given the consensus among Israeli authorities that Israel should maintain a "Western" character. From the beginning, Eisenstadt and Weitz based their theoretical frameworks of modernity on what they envisioned to be the pre-requisite factors for constructing a modern, Western nation-state. Immigration planners and sociologists deployed frameworks based in modernization theory to evaluate both immigrant modernity and the ideal standard of modernity within Israeli society. Modernization theory presumed Western cultural, economic, and social organization as a universal, desirable norm. Adopting the Western nation-state as their standard for modernity, Israeli planners and sociologists could evaluate the traditionalism of Eastern cultural, economic, and social formations, make recommendations, and carry out interventions. Within this scheme, "traditional" immigrants were at a disadvantage for modernization. This was not simply because the immigration planners ignored the tautology of assessing immigrant modernity and social modernity through the same arbitrary frameworks, nor was it because they denied the structural barriers to integration imposed by a deeply uneven immigration system. Rather, in the eyes of Israeli settlement planners and sociologists, immigrant cultural predispositions posed the biggest threat to the Zionist project. Moreover, these assessments worked to justify the ongoing paternalism and social interventions that characterized the relationship of the Settlement Department to Mizrahi communities throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

Categorizing Immigrants for Sociological Analysis

Echoing Weberian trajectories of European social thought, Israeli sociologists categorized immigrant societies as a preliminary step in their research. Indeed, after conducting her research on the Mizrahi settlement program of the 1950s and 1960s, anthropologist Dorothy Willner remarked:

As far as I could judge, the plethora of observable facts regarding social background and cultural difference simply could not be handled by members of the new society except through recourse to...modes of categorization. It was as if categories of cognition could not at that time expand to process in other terms the load of data available to perception. (Willner, 1969 p. 200)

Sociological texts of the era suggest as much. Drawing on the Weberian principle of the “ideal type”, modernization theorists and practitioners practiced a deductive rather than an inductive mode of reasoning, sorting immigrant communities into pre-determined categories (Harrison, 1988, p. 10). Gurinder Bhambra writes that the reliance on Weberian “ideal types” while studying different groups led modernization theorists to reify certain cultural elements while abstracting these elements from their global, socio-historical contexts (Bhambra, 2007, p. 58, p. 72). In short, these assessments allowed modernization theorists to attribute peoples’ behaviors to their race, ethnicity, and nationality while avoiding the effects of structural injustice or colonial geopolitics. Israeli sociological categorizations of Mizrahim within a devalued “traditional” category situated them in relation to a normative, European baseline defined through the modern “ideal type”. For the Joint Council, this analysis would serve as the premise for policy and institutional intervention in the management of Mizrahi communities.

Israeli sociologists and planners relied on categories to classify entire nations, communities, and families along axes such as traditionalism and modernity, openness to change,

and family structure. For example, Eisenstadt's 1959 report on immigrant absorption, written shortly after the establishment of the Joint Council, posited several "types" that characterized the immigrant pool. In this paper, he framed childless Holocaust survivors who lack the physical skill to participate in agriculture as the "Holocaust" type, otherwise known as the "Unbalanced Western Family". Eisenstadt also identified the "Balanced Eastern Type", which could have several dependent children but also included able-bodied adults. Eisenstadt's "Unbalanced Eastern Type" consisted of families with many children and few or no able-bodied adults. This kind of thinking cross-referenced the labor inputs and outputs with communities' ethnic variables to inform an ordering of immigrant agricultural productivity that included recommendations for social management based on the categorization scheme. Sociological categorization remained prevalent throughout the first two decades of settlement in Israel, immediately assuming a significant role within the settlement theories and practices of the Joint Council.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, sociologists also relied on a plethora of spectrums, continuums, and axes for their analyses. Some of these frameworks depicted "traditional" on one end of an axis and "modern" on the other, others "east" and "west", and still others "familistic" and "non-familistic". All of them offered opportunities to quantify immigrant modernization and produce metrics for categorizing immigrant groups for future assessment (Weintraub et al., 1961; Eisenstadt, 1961). For example, Weintraub's article identifies three types of *moshavim*, sorted by their ethnic and social qualities:

- 1) the European type, which corresponds to the anticipated ideal type...
- 2) the managed-village type, i.e. the heteronomous, undemocratic, achievement-oriented and universalistic *moshav* [suspected to occur mostly within managed "traditional" populations]
- 3) the independent traditional type, i.e. autonomous, undemocratic, ascribed and particularistic (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 56)

Breaking away from their previous understanding that traditional societies were always at a disadvantage for modernization, the authors of this report theorized that the first two types would be successful in fulfilling the “various organizational roles” assigned to them, while the latter would struggle. As the sociologists’ understandings of immigrant absorption shifted to differentiate between “managed” and “independent” traditional communities, they adopted a more nuanced understanding. Through this new framework, traditionalism was not a deal-breaker— independence and an unwillingness to change was. Nevertheless, traditional communities would still have to modernize. In a later article, Eisenstadt referred to immigrant “predispositions”, which were rooted in their cultures of origin. These “predispositions” constituted “one of the most important factors affecting adaptation to the new Israeli *moshav*”: immigrants from different cultural groups had to bridge varying “distances” between the traditional social roles and the roles required by the *moshav* (Eisenstadt, 1971, p. 35). Within these schemas, cultural variation, which was coded along a developmental axis, had to be overcome by traversing time and space. Modernization theorists viewed Mizrahim as advancing from past to present, from their backward countries of origin to the modern nation of Israel.

These kinds of assessments held serious implications for living conditions within the *moshavim*. For example, former rural sociologist and HUJI sociology professor Moshe Shokeid recalls that because the Settlement Department authorities labeled a group of Cochin settlers from India as “idle”, the department supplied the community with fewer resources for agricultural production, creating conditions of scarcity within the community (Shokeid in Markowitz et al., 2015, p. 94). Sociologists attributed the lack of productivity in communities to the cultural predispositions of the Cochin, rather than the circumstances of immigration or the

structural constraints on resources imposed by the Jewish Agency's settlement apparatus. By influencing the allocation of resources, planners' and sociologists' evaluations of ethnic qualities had material effects within the *moshavim*, creating and exacerbating conditions of deprivation and exploitation. Categorizing immigrants through dozens of metrics allowed settlement planners to assume a semblance of scientific control and management over a system that was otherwise characterized by disorganization, labor exploitation, and growing social upheavals within the Mizrahi community (Willner, 1969). Through this typology of immigrants, settlement authorities could invoke immigrants' deficient cultures, thereby normalizing their uneven resource allocation. At the same time, racializing categorizations of traditionalism and modernity presented a framework that justified sociologists' and planners' ongoing interventions in immigrant assimilation through modernization.

Socially Engineering Productive Farmers, Citizens, and Soldiers

Throughout the Joint Council collaboration, immigrants were categorized and assessed for their predisposition to change in order to facilitate "productivization" and political compliance with the ideals of Israeli society. In his earliest study, Eisenstadt wrote that Mizrahim would need to undergo extensive cultural and social changes to assimilate into Israeli agricultural society. In his vision, proper participation in the economy and in local systems of governance were mutually constitutive; as a result, the immigrants would have to become both productive workers and democratic citizens. These changes necessitated far-reaching transformations, not only in cultural relationships to time and labor, skillsets in mathematics and organizational theory, but also in social systems and kinship structures. Through their settlement research and

practices, the Joint Council participants developed a philosophy and methodology for planning and executing these constituent parts of the modernization process.

Reflecting on his work with the Jewish Agency's settlement project, sociologist Shlomo Deshen described the task at hand: through social engineering, sociologists and planners could transform Mizrahim into productive farmers and democratic citizens—a project that, for him, required a shift in “values.”¹⁴ Deshen wrote, “[t]he three crucial social spheres which have to be changed to effect a successful adaptation to *moshav* life are those of the economy, values, and polity” (Deshen, 1964, p. 4). This vision of a comprehensive transformation suggests the vastness of the cultural divide that Israel's planners perceived between themselves and the Mizrahim, and their assurance in the effectiveness of modernization theory to enact a complete transformation in the settlers. This perspective was as wrong as it was audacious: indeed, many Mizrahim came from urban centers, so their difficulties in adjusting to *moshav* life revolved around adjusting to physical labor, learning a foreign language, and navigating severe limitations in food, healthcare, and education. Nevertheless, the Jewish Agency representatives believed that theirs was a project of modernizing development. In carrying out this project, they drew on the skills of the Sociology Department to devise strategies for socially engineering productive Mizrahi societies which would remain loyal to the Israeli state.

¹⁴ Deshen's use of Eisenstadt's modernization theory as a theoretical foundation and citation of Weintraub as a key reviewer demonstrates the kind of ideological proximity that existed between the “theoretical” and “directive” branches of the Joint Council.

Productivizing the Moshavim

The Joint Council's top priority was ensuring that Mizrahim remained settled in the *moshavim*. Furthermore, Jewish Agency officials worked to ensure that Mizrahim would begin to produce agricultural goods for the Israeli market. Describing the requisite transformations in immigrants' skills and labor practices, Eisenstadt wrote:

First, they had to adjust to more mechanical types of work and the use of new types of mechanical appliances. Second, their work was organized around a time perspective which differed largely from that to which they were accustomed. It was much more future-oriented, extended over a longer period of time, and necessitated a certain facility with relatively complex monetary calculations and arrangements. (Eisenstadt, 1956, p. 271)

In addition to these changes in labor skills, temporal and organizational ontologies, Eisenstadt argued that immigrants would have to change their social systems to support a modern labor market. For Eisenstadt, the rate of immigrant productivization was closely linked to the "primitivity" of the immigrants—in other words, it depended not only on their "cultural and educational standards, on their vocational or professional educational background, on their familiarity with modern technological devices," but also on their "work habits and thought patterns" and their "motivations for work" (Eisenstadt, 1961, p. 67). By extension, "backwards" communities would slow down the process of modernization. Eisenstadt argued that Mizrahi immigrants needed to develop "economic specialization" and "differentiation", a more flexible "occupational structure", and a social hierarchy based on accumulated wealth and the development of a professional elite rather than one established by family status or tradition.

For settlement sociologists, Mizrahi psychology became an imagined battleground for their productivizing efforts. Settlers' cultural and psychological traits, Eisenstadt emphasized, could be "changed and influenced to a marked degree" (Eisenstadt, 1961, p. 67). Eisenstadt's

collaborator, Dov Weintraub, elaborated this point: an individual with a “time perception” based on “cultural patterns and phenomena of nature” could be shifted towards a “mechanistic perception”, with its reliance on seconds and hours as demarcations of time—an important skill for participation in the national agricultural economy (Weintraub et al., 1961 p. 30). For the participants in the Joint Council project, these psychological elements could be manipulated through social engineering. As such, by operating through sociological frameworks of social engineering, planners could guide immigrants towards greater productivity.

The Jewish Agency sociologists agreed that a psychological transformation within the Mizrahim was in order. Within the economic systems of the immigrants, Jewish Agency sociologist Shlomo Deshen explained, “an occupational change has to be made in the direction of highly advanced farming coupled with physical labor” (Deshen, 1964, p. 4)—in other words, a transformation in skills and labor systems, facilitated through agricultural education programs and instructors. Drawing on Weberian analysis, Deshen argued that Mizrahi labor economies would be supported by developing the “[v]alues of the ‘protestant ethos’”, which, for Deshen, were necessary “to comprehend and accept the complex market and financial systems operating in modern farming” so that the farmer could “defer immediate satisfactions and develop long-term planning” (Deshen, 1964, p. 4). In other words, rather than engaging in a lower-intensity form of localized farming that would allow villagers to maintain a subsistence food system (as was common among many of their Palestinian neighbors and in their home countries of origin), Mizrahi absorption into Israeli citizenship required participation within the national agricultural economy. To do so, Mizrahi immigrants had to adopt the values of productive entrepreneurialism

that were central to the building of modern Israel—accumulation, competition, and delayed gratification.

Socially Engineering Mizrahim for Citizenship

Academic and regional sociologists alike were aware that to become a productive capitalist, the Mizrahi farmer would also have to become a citizen of his community, and Israel more broadly. Deshen wrote, “the immigrant has to learn to play the role of a member in a community built on a democratic basis. Without the latter, no secretariat can function, and consequently the whole financial and municipal side of the *moshav* organization collapses” (Deshen, 1964, p. 4). Deshen’s views are representative of the broader thinking of Israeli leadership regarding the role of the Mizrahim in Israel: they were workers first and citizens second. In the eyes of most sociologists and planners, Mizrahi democratic participation was a pre-requisite for a market-oriented national agricultural economy.

Even as they advocated for developing the citizenship of Mizrahi agriculturalists, they did not imagine that Mizrahi political participation could reshape the broader systems of Israeli governance. Few Mizrahim served within higher levels of Israeli government until the mid-1970s, and sociologists seeking to cultivate citizenship among the *moshavim* focused more on ensuring their continued occupancy of the periphery rather than increasing representation within centers of power. Thus, Mizrahi productivity required citizenship, but the reach of Mizrahi influence as citizens was curtailed by limiting their involvement to local village councils. Within the totalizing paternalism of the settlement project, the production of the modern, national

agricultural economy overshadowed any alternative visions for life in Palestine, instead requiring the implementation of modern agricultural skills, capitalist values, and allegiance to Israel.

Changing Mizrahi Kinship Structures

For Jewish Agency planners and sociologists, productivization and democratization required Mizrahi kinship structures to transform as well. Israeli sociologists and planners worried that the Mizrahi *hamula*—the extended, patrilineal family structure—would slow down the rate of modernization. Sociologists perceived the *hamula* structure not only as a threat to the modern ideal of the Israeli family, but also as a potential site of anti-state subversion: Mizrahi allegiances to the elders within their extended family networks challenged the Ashkenazi leadership of the country, threatening to wrest political power away from the Israeli elites. As such, sociologists believed that modernization meant that the Mizrahi family structure would have to be dissolved into nuclear units whose allegiance would fall with Israeli authorities rather than leaders of family networks. Eisenstadt advocated for a modernization process in which Mizrahi communities would “became mechanized and divided into small mechanical units” (Eisenstadt, 1956, p. 272). This approach sought to break up the Mizrahi kinship structure into atomized nuclear families, which would be more manipulable by the mechanisms of representative governance and market economics. Thus, “instead of the extended family, the small family in the economic sphere and the individual adult (man or woman alike) in the political sphere [become] the main units of social activity” (Eisenstadt, 1956, p. 272). The idea that atomizing kinship structures can support immigrants’ productivity had roots in Weber’s notion of the “protestant work ethic”, which valorizes individualism and the competitive relationships over modes of

social organization that fostered localized loyalties.¹⁵ Throughout the process of immigrant absorption, sociologists and planners agreed that Mizrahi *hamulas* would impede the transformation of Mizrahi immigrants into productive Israeli citizens.

Productivization and democratization required that immigrants abandon traditional allegiances to extended family in favor of a social structure made up of atomized units. Speaking at a German development conference in 1962, Ra'anana Weitz, the head of the Settlement Department, emphasized: “[w]e must bear in mind that the methods of economic development current in the world...are the outcome of the trend of Western society which is composed of individual families competing against one another...this is not the case when we deal with the traditional “hamula” society” (Weitz, 1962b, p. 16-17). As such, even in the context of a strong state presence, the productivization of agriculture demanded by Israeli settlement planners required intervention not only on the scale of the community, but also on the scale of the family system, so that the Mizrahi family structures could mimic other nuclear family systems within global capitalism.

This emphasis on family atomization continued through the 1960s. Eisenstadt reasserted in 1964 that the “modern Jewish pattern”—one characterized by “a nuclear family, featuring relatively late marriage, monogamy, and planned parenthood” maintained “a closer and more direct relationship to the overall social structure” (Eisenstadt, 1964, p. 28). The alternative “traditional Jewish family”, which made up “an extended unit, comprising three to four patrilineal and patrilocal generations, and characterized by high fertility rate resulting from early

¹⁵ The framework of the protestant work ethic also resonates with some traditional Jewish beliefs, which promote hard work through a religious framework (Maridal, 2013, p. 138).

(and often polygamous) marriage, and an absolute absence of birth control” threatened the overall social structure by facilitating political loyalties among kinship rather than democratic lines. Eisenstadt reasoned that large networks of allegiance would have to be broken down in favor of smaller, competitive, nuclear units that would operate more effectively within a productivity-oriented economy. Within the project of modernization, instructors from the Settlement Department attempted to effect transformations in the kinship structures and social relations of Mizrahi societies.

Militarizing the Mizrahim

Given the locations of some of the moshavim in areas of active military conflict, the socialization of Mizrahim in agricultural communities sometimes required that they be trained for defensive purposes, a process in which sociologists also took part. Though no published research exists on the topic, this paper presumes that, given the resistance of Mizrahi communities to forced settlement within the periphery of Israel, Mizrahim may have been particularly averse to living in areas which would require them to participate in armed confrontation with Palestinians. The ongoing violence of dispossessing Palestinians of their land—commonly glossed in English-language international publications of the time as the “security situation”—also shaped sociologists’ approaches to immigrant settlement. As described in previous chapters, confrontation between Palestinians and settlers continued after the establishment of Israel, mostly through Palestinian raids on settlements and goods that were being transported to remote areas (Eisenstadt and Weintraub, 1965, p. 14).

Though little is written by HUJI sociologists in English of the importance of preparing immigrants to protect border territories, Weintraub did explore the matter in a 1961 report. He and his co-authors addressed the ways that the “security situation” would shape the sociological dynamics within immigrant settlements, and what kinds of interventions would support Mizrahi residents of the *moshavim* to perform military duties alongside agricultural labor. Weintraub and his collaborators highlighted that the danger to “person and property” within particularly conflicted regions threatened to interfere with the “actor’s readiness to carry out his role” as a defensive agent (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 46). Given the dangers of defense activities, many Mizrahim were unwilling to take part in military actions on the border. The sociologists also theorized that placement in conflict regions would require special skills: the *moshav* resident would have to cultivate his physical fitness, allocate the necessary time to military activities, know about defensive strategies, be familiar with weapons, and be able to organize other villagers for defensive purposes (Weintraub et al., 1961). Weintraub and his co-authors emphasized that to ensure that border villages were prepared for armed defense, district commanders as well as army extension education programs would have to train residents of peripheral *moshavim* in the necessary skills.

For Weintraub, the rewards systems that could increase agricultural productivity in the *moshavim* could also work to incentivize Mizrahi military engagement. Weintraub and his co-authors emphasized planners could encourage *moshav* residents to participate in military activity by cultivating “a nationalistic-pioneering value, [serving as] a symbolic-relational reward”. In addition to valorizing the Zionist project of “pioneering” land appropriation, planners and sociologists could also draw on “general human-images such as the ‘male image’” to create

positive stereotypes of militarized border defense (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 39). In other words, by cultivating immigrants' masculine identification with militaristic national defense, Weintraub believed that one could motivate Mizrahim to assume the identities and responsibilities of agricultural protectors of the border. In the absence of this motivation, the "other aspects of the role" would have to suffice in motivating immigrants to remain in militarized border zones. The authors did not clarify which aspects of the role they had in mind, but presumably, these involved the inherent rewards of forced agricultural labor and pastoral life on the *moshav*. Thus, in addition to promoting the atomization of family networks and the incorporation of Mizrahi women into the workforce, Israeli sociologists also advocated for the cultivation of militaristic masculinity among Mizrahi settlers. In short, sociologists' interventions did not just seek to transform immigrants into productive agriculturalists, participants in local governance, and hetero-nuclear family units. They also worked to prepare immigrants living in borderlands for military activity against Palestinians by attempting to socialize them as masculine defenders of Israeli territory.

Changing Models of Sociological Intervention

Research on immigrant absorption and modernization would remain on the sociological agenda through the beginning of the 1970s; however, conceptual models for describing the cultural adaptation of Mizrahim shifted during this time. Between 1948 and 1967, the "melting pot" model gave way to one of pluralism—and not only in Israel, but within conversations about development globally. This new, pluralist approach was best summarized by Ra'anana Weitz in his report on the Second Rehovoth Conference. This conference, hosted by the Deputy Prime

Minister of Israel in 1963, convened professionals from around the world to discuss comprehensive agricultural planning in developing countries and showcase Israeli agricultural development through a regional agricultural tour (Weitz, 1963). In his comments at the conference, Weitz emphasized that for national leaders seeking to encourage development, “the main concern was with the problem of how to destroy traditionalism without destroying tradition” (Weitz, 1963, p. 169). In Israel, settlement planners and sociologists came to identify tradition, social cohesion, local leaders, and a slower, more adaptive process of social change as resources that could be utilized for the project of Mizrahi assimilation rather than barriers to modernization. Indeed, by learning to work with, rather than against, these elements, settlement planners authorized changes in ways that sought to minimize the social upheavals that characterized the early settlement period. Pluralism and representation supplanted authoritarianism and cultural erasure as modes of governance in a move that produced a regime of racial liberalism. Under racial liberalism, liberal notions of political representation confine the analysis and resolution of racial conflict to the exclusion of underlying economic and material structures (Melamed, 2011, p. xvi, xvii). Within the scope of the Jewish Agency project, settlement planners came to advocate for Mizrahi self-representation at a local scale without calling into question the broader political or economic contexts of the *moshavim*.

As early as 1962, sociologists began challenging the assumption that tradition was an inherent impediment to modernization. This transformation reflects a shift from what Gilman terms revolutionary modernization, which rejects all (non-Western) cultural traditions, to technocosmopolitan modernization, which “argued that modernity must be built on the foundations of tradition” (Gilman, 1971, p. 9). In Israel, the dominant model of absorption came

to embrace cultural syncretism, insofar as cultures could be integrated within the Israeli regime. Eisenstadt discussed the creation of “interlinking spheres” between traditional and modern sectors, which could “[emphasize] their mutual relations without negating either of them” (Eisenstadt, 1956, p. 276). At the Second Rehovoth Conference, Dov Weintraub elaborated this point. He argued:

the incompatibility between traditionalism and modernization is often much less difficult and extreme than has been supposed. It is true that a traditional frame of mind will reject change on a conscious level, especially normative change, and certainly will not promote experimentation and progress as values in themselves. But adjustment between traditional patterns and processes of innovation can develop in several respects. To begin with, broad areas of actual change need not always be viewed as antagonistic to the traditional way of life, and consequently, may not always be resisted. Secondly, traditional values can create a motivation directly if unintentionally conducive to development, and thirdly, traditional values, over a period of time, may give rise to processes which indirectly initiate change. (quoted in Weitz, 1963, p. 189)

Using the example of Yemeni immigrants, whose attachment to tradition ostensibly made them more willing to settle in peripheral regions, Weintraub continued:

within the so-called “traditional frame of mind”, there exist elements of an achievement, orientation or entrepreneurship, which are too often wrongly regarded as exclusively modern attributes. The focal point here is that under the restraining circumstances of the wholly traditional society, these elements have little scope and remain chiefly potential. But they can, if properly utilized, become motivated and developed. (quoted in Weitz, 1963, p. 190)

In other words, Weintraub saw the makings of entrepreneurialism within the minds of traditional immigrants, arguing that these qualities could be cultivated through sociological intervention.

For him, the dynamics driving modern economies—development, competition, and innovation—were contained within the static conditions of pre-modern Mizrahi society, waiting to be activated through modernization. This framing suggests that market economies existing outside of modern Euro-American capitalism are immature or not fully actualized. At the same time, it further re-asserts the determinism of modernization theory as a project which views capitalist

modernity as the end-point of a teleological societal progression. Seeking to help construct a modern society, Weintraub advocated for a more contingent approach to culture, encouraging sociologists and settlement authorities to view elements of “traditional” culture as potential resources within the process of immigrant settlement in Israel.

While continuing to valorize modernity, sociologists came to embrace the utility of “traditional” culture for the purposes of modernization throughout the 1960s. A 1965 report to the United States Department of Agriculture co-authored by Eisenstadt and Weintraub, sorted immigrants to Israel within a “convenient overall matrix” featuring the “traditional”, “transitional”, and “modern” categories for evaluating immigrant adaptability (see Figure 4). Breaking with overwhelmingly negative depictions of tradition that had characterized their research in the 1950s, Eisenstadt and Weintraub hypothesized that immigrants at either end of the “traditional”/ “modern” spectrum would struggle with the project of adjustment. The sociologists hypothesized that “traditional” immigrants would face difficulties adjusting to bureaucracy, marketing, and Western science, while “modern” immigrants would be challenged by the isolation and collectivization of rural life in Israel. In contrast to their previous findings, Eisenstadt and Weintraub predicted that immigrants from countries deemed “transitional”—those halfway between the “traditional” imaginary of the rural collective and the “modern” urban techno-landscape—would have the easiest adjustment experience. This matrix, which temporalized immigrants to Israel and their international communities of origin, offered a new twist on old categorizations of Mizrahi communities that were intended to facilitate modernization. While ethnic categorizations of immigrants remained important within the Settlement Department’s social engineering of *moshavim*, sociologists and planners came to

Table 1: Distribution of Structural Types in Main Areas of Origin

Area of Origin	"Traditional" Communities	"Transitional" Communities	"Modern" Communities
Central & Eastern Europe			
Poland	-	Villages and part of urban communities	Majority of Urban Communities
Hungary	-	"	"
Roumania	-	"	"
Czechoslovakia	-	"	"
America			
U.S.A.	-	Small minority	Large majority
Argentina	-	"	"
The Balkans			
Yougoslavia	-	Villages and part of Urban communities	Majority of Urban Communities
Bulgaria	-	"	"
Greece	-	"	"
North Africa			
Morocco	Atlas Mountains and other areas	Communities in provincial cities (Fez, Marakesh, Rabat, etc.); part of Casablanca Community	Chiefly part of Casablanca community
Algeria	Small minority	Communities in provincial cities; part of Oran and Algiers Communities	Large segment of Algiers Community; part of Oran Community
Tunisia	The island of Djerba; small minority in other Communities	Communities in provincial cities; part of Tunis Community	Part of Tunis Community

Table 1* (contd)

Libya and Tripolitania	The "Cave Dwellers";*) small minority in other Communities	Communities in provincial cities; majority of Tripoli and Benghazi Communities	Small minority in large cities
Middle and Far East			
Turkey	Small minority	Majority of Izmir and Anatolia Communities, part of Istanbul Community	Part of provincial Communities; majority of Istanbul; Ankara Community
Syria and Lebanon	"	Most of Syrian, part of Lebanon Communities	Chiefly Beirut Community
Egypt	"	Communities in provincial cities; part of communities of Cairo, Alexandria, etc.	Majority of Cairo, Alexandria and other Urban Communities
Yemen	Entire Community	-	-
Kurdistan (**)	"	-	-
Persia	Small minority	Villages, provincial cities (e.g. Shiraz, Isfahan), part of Teheran Community	Chiefly part of Teheran Community
Iraq	"	Villages, provincial cities (e.g. Basra, Mosul), part of Baghdad Community	Part of provincial cities and of Baghdad
Cochin	Large Majority	Small minority	-

Figure 5: A matrix assessing the traditionalism and modernity of immigrants to Israel. (Eisenstadt and Weintraub, 1965).

view immigrants' traditionalism as a potential resource within the modernization process. These changing analytical frameworks were not simply disseminated through the education of rural sociologists at the Hebrew University, but also through official reports, international research projects, and eventually through the development of planning curriculum at the Settlement Study Center. While the USDA's use of this research is unclear, it should be noted that this report was published at a time when agricultural modernization through social science constituted a significant part of the USDA's work (Jewett, 2013; Kedia and Van Willigen, 2005).

Eisenstadt and his colleagues also came to believe that social cohesion would facilitate immigrant assimilation. At first, however, the sociologists were skeptical. On the one hand, Eisenstadt cited studies attributing immigrants' "willingness and ability to learn new roles" to the "cohesiveness, solidarity and stability" of the family unit. On the other, Eisenstadt mused whether "the emotional security and belongingness anchored in the family group may also hinder its re-socialization in the new situation". For him, this security "both restrict[ed] the family's orientation to change and increase[d] its power of resistance to the social pressures of the absorbing society" ([Second report on research activities], 1958, p. 27). In other words, Eisenstadt worried that close family bonds would support the resilience of the immigrants, which could inhibit the process of modernization. Eisenstadt's ambivalence led him to become interested in the "flexibility and permissiveness" of second-generation settlers who, in his understanding, were subject to the "cross pressures" between the "pre-dispositions" of their ethnic origins and the new roles demanded of them by life in Israel ([Second report on research activities], 1958, p. 27). This attention to Israeli-born Mizrahim suggested that Israeli settlement authorities were invested in the possibilities of modernization on a multi-generational timescale.

By 1961, Eisenstadt espoused a more sympathetic approach to Mizrahi community ties. He wrote that “the best adaptation is made not when the traditional groups are completely disorganized and their traditional values disrupted, but when they are to some extent transformed and incorporated as accepted, legitimate subgroups (or subcultures) in the new settings” (Eisenstadt, 1961, p. 76). The following year, Eisenstadt identified “internal cohesion and flexibility of the family structure” as a factor of *successful* modernization. This reversal marked a shift in the philosophies of Mizrahi absorption—from an authoritarian regime which sought to modernize by force to a system of racial liberalism which sought to deploy elements of Mizrahi society within the process of their assimilation.

Shifting from an authoritarian to a representative philosophy of governance, Eisenstadt came to believe that neither traditionalism nor social cohesion posed an inherent threat to modernization, assuming that both phenomena were accompanied by a flexible relationship to assimilationist social management projects. At the same time, his research began to emphasize the importance that community elites held for the project of immigrant absorption. Eisenstadt’s 1962 study identified an additional factor which would facilitate immigrant absorption: local elites who were open to economic, political, and social modernization, and who, at the same time, could coexist peacefully with traditional elites. Once again echoing Eisenstadt’s sentiment, Ra’anan Weitz emphasized the importance of “an internal leadership, a leadership springing from the settlers themselves, that should be acceptable to the settlers and act in accordance with their outlook and spirit as well as with the traditional values of the community in question” (Weitz, 1962b, p. 17). In enlisting local leaders within the project of governance, Weitz and other planners advocated for a shift in management strategies—one which would cultivate qualities of

self-governance within communities to ensure political and economic compliance rather than resorting to brute force.

Planners eventually came to promote Mizrahi governance within the *moshavim*. Weitz described the importance of Mizrahi self-governance within the hierarchy of Israeli society: “the fruits of development can be reaped only through the full collaboration of the local population” (Weitz, 1962b, p. 4). Moreover, for Weitz, the *hamula* became an opportunity for local governance. He wrote, “the local residents must take affairs into their own hands... Such collaboration on the part of the local population can be obtained only by means of the local internal leadership of the various ‘hamulas’” (Weitz, 1962b, p. 4). Eisenstadt’s study, together with Weitz’s interpretation, implied that settlement agents could cultivate relationships with community leaders to advance modernization projects, which had to be taken up by the villagers themselves. As such, rather than exerting their will by withholding resources or barring settlers from work, settlement instructors could develop close ties to the “local elites” within immigrant communities to properly exert their influence.

Sociologists also developed theories about the best ways to influence communities to change through the use of social rewards. In his research, Weintraub described the “image of the ‘ideal’ settler” in more Pavlovian terms that stressed the mechanics of social engineering through a system of rewards, or “positive motivation based on various relational and non-relational symbolic images” (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 49). In other words, he believed that settlement authorities could produce role models or positive stereotypes to motivate immigrant modernization. Weintraub described that “compliance to the normative pattern of the *moshav*” could be achieved through the valorization of particular identities and behaviors. He described

this system as “value motivation”, which consisted of “the almost complete congruence between the sets of images (especially role images) and the rewards expected by the actor, and the normative demands which stem from the situation” (Weintraub et al., 1961, p. 49). The idea of “rewarding concepts” was then picked up by Ra’anana Weitz, who wrote that “without a deep knowledge of social incentives, the efforts at development are likely to end in utter failure” (Weitz, 1962b, p. 16). For both sociologists and settlement planners involved in the Joint Council, agricultural development required the management of social dynamics through “social incentives”. By incentivizing certain identities—of hardworking farmers, for example—and disincentivizing rebellion or resistance to labor exploitation, settlement authorities sought to train immigrants to become productive, compliant citizens of Israel’s agricultural periphery. As a result, throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, Israeli settlement sociologists advocated for a model that was simultaneously more reliant on local Mizrahi leadership, and more heavily invested in a practice of managing this leadership through rewards-based motivation.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, sociologists came to advocate for adaptive approaches to the processes of immigrant settlement. In 1962, Weitz determined that “plans for instruction and systems of instruction” should be varied for “settlers of different standards of vocational knowledge” (Weitz, 1962b, p. 36). Sociologists also challenged the pacing of the modernization project. In 1964, Deshen wrote, “[e]xpectations for modernization in its various ramifications are often out of context with the actual social base available for such drastic change” (Deshen, 1964, p. 30). Eisenstadt agreed:

paradoxically, it seems that the existence, in the first stages of modernization, of a unified strong political framework and the maintenance of frameworks of law and order and administrative services, and only gradual transition of traditional groups into a modern setting and the development of a great variety of transitional leaderships may be of greater

importance for the development of viable and stable modern politics than excessive politicization and ‘democratization.’ (Eisenstadt, 1963, p. 16)

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Israeli sociologists and settlement planners came to understand that a more gradual, flexible process of immigrant settlement—one that maintained cohesive communities, accepted assimilable aspects of traditional culture, and championed agreeable local leaders—would lead to lower rates of social unrest among the Mizrahi villages. This pluralistic approach to Mizrahi immigrant settlement allowed for the smoother production of an ethnically stratified settler order on Palestinian lands.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the academic sociologists of the Joint Council for Social Affairs assessed immigrant predispositions to change, identified which aspects of modernization immigrants would have to undergo, and designed systems to incentivize immigrant transformation. These frameworks informed Settlement Department planners, sociologists, and instructors as they worked closely with the communities to facilitate a range of transformations encompassed by the term “modernization”. The main goal of the Joint Council was to ensure that Mizrahim remained in the agricultural communities, occupying the contested peripheral regions of Palestine. To this end, sociologists and planners sought to encourage immigrant productivity, develop their participation in local governance, encourage extended *hamulas* to dissolve into nuclear family units, and support Mizrahi valorization of masculinity within a military context. For Israeli planners and modernization scholars, these changes were inter-related and mutually constitutive. However, the means of achieving these ends changed: in response to extensive resistance and community dysfunction, the Joint Council eventually developed an approach which relied on Mizrahi leadership within the *moshavim* to guide communities in social transformation. In transitioning from an authoritarian policy to one of

racial liberalism, planners and sociologists developed more adaptive approaches to managing Mizrahi communities within Israel's bioterritorial settler landscape.

Conclusion

The evolving relationship between Hebrew University sociologists and Jewish Agency land planners reflects the influence of sociological theories on the racialized settlement of Mizrahim in Israel. In 1958, the Hebrew University's Department of Sociology and the Jewish Agency's Land Settlement Department began a formal collaboration through the Joint Council for Social Affairs. Combining the practical experiences of rural sociologists and settlement instructors with the theoretical insights of academic sociologists, the Joint Council became a space for developing a set of knowledges and practices for Mizrahi settlement. Embedded in the work of immigrant instructors, in the policies for resource allocation and conflict resolution, in the English-language sociological works that circulated through global modernization discourses, and eventually in the formal advisory work of the Settlement Study Center, these knowledges came to constitute a field of Israeli agricultural sociology.

This field of sociological practice developed in relationship to the coercive settlement of Mizrahi immigrants in the *moshavim*. Working with the communities, planners and sociologists attempted to justify and secure Israel's claim to Palestinian land while shaping a racialized agricultural working class. Throughout the course of Mizrahi settlement, settlement planners worked to implement a range of managerial practices: from the rigid coercion of the Ship to Village Plan to the modernization of the immigration instructors and sociologists, the Jewish Agency sought to ensure that Mizrahim would replace Palestinians as regional agricultural producers. As the shape and scope of the Israeli nation-building project changed between 1948 and 1965, so did the Jewish Agency's settlement practices. For Israeli authorities, what began as

a campaign of military conquest transformed into a project of land occupation through settlement.

Mizrahi agricultural settlements in Israel's peripheral, strategically-significant territories substantiated Israeli settler colonial claims to territory. Given the geopolitical importance of this project to Israeli authorities, Mizrahi resistance to forced settlement and exploitative agricultural labor came to constitute a second geopolitical threat to Israeli statehood. Israeli authorities shifted their attention from the risk of Palestinian land reclamation to the risk of Mizrahi community breakdown—their term for conflicts within Mizrahi communities and uprisings alike. Adding an “internal” enemy to the existing “external” enemy, authorities increasingly worried about maintaining order among Middle Eastern and North African Jews. Responding to Mizrahi and Palestinian social protests by allowing Mizrahim greater representation within Israeli governance, authorities moved away from advocating for an assimilating “melting pot” society, and instead embraced one based on pluralism and limited representation. This shift from assimilation to racial liberalism meant that throughout their work in the communities, Jewish Agency planners became increasingly invested in Mizrahi *moshav* leaders amenable to Israeli governance.

Through the collaboration, the two institutions converged on a policy and practice of coordinating Mizrahi agricultural settlement in the peripheral regions of Israel. However, the roots of this collaboration took shape within the respective contexts of each department. Each, in its own way, followed a similar intellectual trajectory, moving from a multiethnic vision of life in Palestine towards a rigid framework which advanced a Zionist vision of a Western European Jewish society in the Middle East. Through their collaboration and their shared engagement with

modernization theory, the departments came to accept a new kind of pluralism—one which, despite its reliance on Mizrahi leadership at the local level, excluded Palestinians from citizenship and aimed to fix Mizrahim within the position of an agricultural underclass through a process of bioterritorial management.

As a project concerned with the history of ideas, this research could be expanded by incorporating critical histories of rural sociology, agricultural extension work, and social engineering. By historicizing practices of social management within agricultural settings, this kind of research could offer a valuable contribution to critical development studies, particularly in examining the continuities between Enlightenment-era colonial thought, scientific analyses of human behavior, and technological interventions of the green revolution. This study of Israeli modernization theory, its application and evolution within the *moshavim*, also raises important questions about the ideas that influence the production of representative democracies, as well as the exclusionary mechanisms that can be embedded within these forms of governance. In that sense, this project connects to other research on the limitations of the liberal politics of citizenship and representation, in Israel-Palestine and more broadly.

This project's exploration of the role of modernization theory in shaping Israeli settlement of Mizrahim also suggests a number of points of departure for future work. One possible project would examine the way in which modernization theory and Mizrahi settlement practice influenced the development of the Settlement Sociology Center. Building off of this work, one could examine the extent to which the center's employees used these frameworks in their research and consulting work in India, Guatemala, the Philippines, and/or West Africa. To date, nothing has been written of the Settlement Study Center and its role as a development

agency. Nevertheless, this kind of research could connect not only to contemporary scholarship on the links between modernization theory and counter-insurgent development, but also to the geopolitics of racial capitalism and settler colonialism more broadly. Research on global flows of development logics and practices can also work to provincialize Euro-American intellectual legacies. Such a project would attend to the influence of both “developing” nations and marginalized communities on the production and implementation of development theory and practice. Moreover, by attending to marginalized communities’ rearticulations of modernization theory and reclamations of development processes, scholars can explore new opportunities for subversion within the logics and practices of racial settler capitalism.

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