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SPEAKING OF WALLS:
ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY DISCOURSE AND THE WEST BANK BARRIER

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COLLEGE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the memory of Byron Dale Rodden, who loved and motivated his daughters enough in seventeen years to last a lifetime.

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ABSTRACT

The official government justification for the construction of the West Bank barrier is that it was a security measure necessitated by an increase in Palestinian terrorism during the Second Intifada. There are many challenges to this narrative, however. The slow pace of construction on the barrier over five years before its eventual abandonment in 2007 calls into question the sense of urgency one would expect from a project intended to address an immediate and intense physical security threat. Most notably, the long, winding route of the barrier and its path over strategically problematic terrain further complicate the state's security routines and raise questions about how exactly such a route serves Israel's security needs. This study uses discourse analysis to answer the following question: *Given the high monetary and reputational costs and the added complication to physical security routines, why did Israel choose to erect the West Bank barrier?* This study analyzes 63 texts, comprised of 7 interviews, 8 government reports, 41 news articles and op-eds, and 7 political speeches from the Second Intifada years (2000-2005), focusing analysis on the discursive construction of Palestinian violence and the decision to construct the West Bank barrier. The results of this study suggest that, while the physical security threat posed by the violence of the Second Intifada necessitated a physical security response, the violence of the Second Intifada, and Israel's initial response to it, threatened three of the state's identities: the security-seeking state identity, the Jewish national identity, and the democratic identity. This ontological security crisis made the West Bank barrier, a policy option that had been rejected from the time of Yitzhak Rabin, palatable.

INTRODUCTION

The official government justification for the construction of the West Bank barrier is that it was a security measure necessitated by an increase in Palestinian terrorism during the Second Intifada. In response to questions and criticisms suggesting the barrier might have other purposes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs insists, “The route of the fence has been determined on the basis of security needs and topographical considerations.”¹ There are many challenges to this narrative, however. As Lupovici notes, the barrier’s slow construction process of five years before its eventual abandonment in 2007 calls into question the sense of urgency one would expect from a project intended to address an immediate and intense physical security threat.² Most notably, the long, winding route of the barrier and its path over strategically problematic terrain further complicate the state’s security routines and raise questions about how exactly such a route serves Israel’s security needs.³ Why, then, would the state choose such a policy option? This study analyzes 63 texts, comprised of 7 interviews, 8 government reports, 41 news articles and op-eds, and 7 political speeches from the Second Intifada years (2000-2005), focusing analysis on the discursive construction of Palestinian violence and the decision to construct the West Bank barrier. The results of this study suggest that, while the physical security threat posed by the violence of the Second Intifada necessitated a security response, the discourse around the threat and the policy options reveal that ontological insecurity played a central role in the decision to construct the barrier. That is, the violence of the Second Intifada, and Israel’s initial

¹ “Saving Lives,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003: 9.

² Amir Lupovici, “Ontological Dissonance, Clashing Identities, and Israel’s Unilateral Steps Towards the Palestinians,” *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 4 (2011): 820.

³ Ibid.

response to it, threatened three of the state's identities: the security-seeking state identity, the Jewish national identity, and the democratic identity. This ontological security crisis made palatable a policy option that had been rejected from the time of Yitzhak Rabin. This study finds that the discursive construction of the barrier as a solution to the threats against the state's identities, especially the Jewish national identity, largely explains not only the state's choice of this policy option, but also the barrier's route.

An important premise of realist explanations for state behavior is that the security states seek is physical. In line with this, the realist explanation for Israel's decision to construct the West Bank barrier is that such a decision amounted to security-seeking behavior in a situation in which its adversary's intentions were unknowable. This explanation, however, is not supported by the evidence. The IDF itself concluded that there were four possible security solutions to the escalating violence of the Second Intifada: continuing "current policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians..., declaring war on the PA, agreeing to resume the peace talks at the point they stopped in Taba, and unilateral separation"—with continuation of current policy being the preferred security option and unilateral separation being the least desirable.⁴ In the end, the Israeli government chose the option that was least preferable among favored physical security solutions but best addressed threats to its identities.

Almost sixty thousand Palestinians cross the barrier daily without documentation, and 44 percent of terror attacks carried out in recent years were

⁴ "Walls and Borders," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), August 20, 2001..

committed by Palestinians who had crossed the barrier without permits.⁵ Additionally, large sections of the barrier called “fingers” reach deep into the West Bank to include Jewish settlements on the west side of the barrier, crossing terrain that is not defensible due to its topography and proximity to densely populated Palestinian cities.

While the barrier’s route has undoubtedly improved security outcomes for Jewish settlements in the West Bank, often encircling entire Palestinian towns to protect nearby settlements, this has come at the cost of significant security risk, monetary cost, and reputational risk to the state of Israel.⁶ Additionally, the barrier’s deviation from the Green line has placed it between Palestinian villages and their adjacent farmlands, necessitating the installation and management of several agricultural gates along the barrier, increasing the security risk to IDF soldiers manning the gates, Palestinians attempting to pass through them, and nearby Israeli towns while also increasing the monetary cost of the barrier. The strategic disadvantages of the barrier’s route, its slow construction, and its many gaps are problematic to the physical security explanation. Ontological insecurity caused by the violence of the Second Intifada provides a useful alternative explanation, and there is much evidence in the discourse of ontological insecurity around the Second Intifada as well as the potential solutions to it.

Background

The Second Intifada, also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, began in September 2000 when then opposition leader Ariel Sharon (Likud), accompanied by armed Israeli

⁵ Kamel Hawwash, “Israel’s ‘Apartheid Wall’ Inspires More Violence Than It Deters,” *Middle East Eye*, September 12, 2016, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/israels-apartheid-wall-inspires-more-violence-it-deters-2003696254>.

⁶ Jonathan Rynhold, “Israel’s Fence: Can Separation Make Better Neighbours?,” *Survival* 46, no. 1 (2004): 64.

soldiers and police, entered Haram al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa Mosque therein to assert Jewish claims to the Temple Mount. Given Sharon's role in the massacre of Sabra and Shatila in Lebanon in 1982 and the sacredness of the sites to Islam, his presence with armed guards amounted to desecration in the eyes of Muslims across the world.⁷ Furthermore, the incendiary political statement came on the heels of the failed peace talks at the Camp David Summit of 2000. The failure of Camp David left Palestinians and Israelis with mutual feelings of distrust, betrayal, and disillusionment.

Coupled with this failure, Sharon's trip to the Temple Mount convinced Palestinians that Israel had abandoned the peace process. Palestinians, Israeli Arabs, and left-leaning Israeli Jews took to the streets together to voice their disdain for this move. The protests soon gave way to violent attacks, including suicide bombings, shootings, rocket fire from Hamas-controlled Gaza, and other violence directed at the state of Israel. The Israeli response was viewed as harsh by the international community and escalated with each new attack. Civilians and combatants alike endured the violence of the Second Intifada until it finally ended in a truce in February 2005.

The Current Study

This study uses discourse analysis to answer the following question: *Given the high monetary and reputational costs and the added complication to physical security routines, why did Israel choose to erect the West Bank barrier?* Utilizing this method, the study examines two sets of data: (1) interviews with Knesset Members, political journalists, and academics in Israel and (2) political speeches, op-eds, and news articles

⁷ Joel Greenberg, "Sharon Touches a Nerve, and Jerusalem Explodes," *New York Times* (New York: NY), September 29, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/29/world/sharon-touches-a-nerve-and-jerusalem-explodes.html>.

discussing the proposed barrier and the violence emanating from the West Bank during the Second Intifada. Data analysis focuses on the discursive construction of violence during the Second Intifada and the legitimization of the barrier as a policy option. Because this study is focused on the discursive construction of the barrier as the preferred policy response to the Second Intifada, only texts produced from 2001 through 2005 are analyzed, with the exception of interviews collected in Israel in 2017. These interviews provided the preliminary categories for an emergent analysis, which then refined the categories according to evidence in the discourse.

Consistent with Lupovici's analysis, this study finds the salient national identities of Israel to this policy decision are the security-seeker identity, the Jewish identity, and the democratic identity. Contrary to his analysis, however, which posits the presence of an ontological security dissonance and constructs the barrier policy as an avoidance measure, I find that the security-seeking identity and the Jewish identity were perceived to be under threat but the democratic identity was not. Additionally, while I find evidence of ontological security threat within the discourse, evidence of ontological dissonance is minimal and fleeting, disappearing as the discourse reconstructs the barrier policy in terms of national identity. The decision to construct the West Bank barrier, then, was not an avoidance response to ontological security dissonance but a direct response to ontological insecurity around Israel's intertwined identities as a Jewish state and a security-seeker.

In Chapter One, I provide a review of the international relations literature on borders and border fortification and situate this study within the literature. I then further detail my research method, including the theoretical underpinnings and assumptions of

discourse analysis, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of this method, especially as it applies to national identity research. Chapter One finishes with a detailed breakdown of the stages of this analysis.

Chapter Two details the theories salient to this study. The first section elaborates ontological security at the individual level, unpacking the relationship between identities and interests. This section details the individual need for cognitive certainty and the importance of this certainty to agency, as well as the roles of relationships and routines to identity, and ends with an explanation of critical situations, the sources of ontological insecurity. Thereafter, I extrapolate the human need for ontological security to the state level and offer justification for the state as an ontological security seeker. Here, I conceptualize the state as a social actor and explain the relationship between individual identities and state identities. This section offers an explanation of ontological security and national identity and explains the connection between relationships and routines at the state level. In the final section, I detail one application of this theory to the case of the state of Israel and its decision to construct the West Bank barrier and problematize some of the argument's assumptions.

Chapter Three details the empirical evidence analyzed in this study. In accordance with the evidence in the discourse, I diverge slightly from Lupovici in my conceptualization of Israel's security-seeker identity, explicating the national narrative of security exceptionalism. I show the role of this narrative in Israel's perception of threat to the security-seeker identity and explain how the West Bank barrier was discursively constructed as a solution to threats posed to this identity. This discussion is followed by a detailed explanation of the Jewish national identity, as well as the

evidence of perceived threats to this identity in the discourse. Like the previous section, the end of this section provides evidence of the discursive construction of the West Bank barrier as a solution to perceived threats to the Jewish national identity. In the final section of this chapter, I diverge completely from Lupovici in my findings on the democratic identity of Israel. While this identity is present in the discourse, it is not perceived to be threatened. Rather, it is called upon in the discourse as justification for reasserting the Jewish national identity through exclusion from the democratic process. Here, I provide a different understanding of Israel's democratic identity, showing the prevailing understanding of democracy within the discourse as supporting Israel's identity as an ethnic democracy in the mode of a defending democracy. Rather than an individualistic understanding of Israel as a liberal democracy, I argue that the Israeli democracy more closely resembles an ethnic democracy, a communalistic democracy that holds paramount the interests of the ethnoreligious majority. This thesis concludes with some implications for ontological security theory, democratic theory, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, as well as avenues for potential future research.

CHAPTER ONE

The official government explanation of the West Bank barrier as a measure to ensure the state's physical security is very much in line with defensive realist views of states as rational security-seekers. However, several realities of the barrier itself and of Israel's security successes challenge this view. As Lupovici notes, the barrier's long, drawn out construction process, beginning in 2002 and halting abruptly in 2007 (long after the Intifada ended in early 2005), belies any sense of urgency in improving security along the Green Line.⁸ Additionally, the barrier's route over 'topographically inferior terrain' and its many gaps call into question its utility as a security measure.⁹ Indeed, nearly sixty thousand Palestinians cross the barrier daily without documentation, and 44 percent of terror attacks carried out in recent years were committed by Palestinians who had crossed the barrier without permits.¹⁰

Furthermore, several sections of the barrier reach deep into the West Bank to include Jewish settlements, crossing terrain that is strategically problematic due to its topography and proximity to densely populated Palestinian areas. While this route has certainly improved security outcomes for Jewish settlements in the West Bank, this has come at the cost of significant security risk to Israel proper.¹¹ Additionally, as Rynhold notes, "Deviation from the Green Line has also complicated the defence of those borders by necessitating the construction of 41 extra gates to allow Palestinians to reach farmland on the Israeli side of the barrier."¹² The strategic disadvantages of the barrier's

⁸ Amir Lupovici, 820.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Hawwash.

¹¹ Rynhold, 64.

¹² Ibid.

route, its slow construction, and its many gaps are problematic to the physical security explanation. Why, then, would the state of Israel incur great financial and reputational costs to construct such a barrier? The following section provides a review of the security literature on borders and fortified barriers, followed by a detailed description of the method and strategies employed in this study.

Borders and Barriers in the Literature

A large body of research within the security studies literature is concerned with exploring the role and function of state borders. A particularly contentious debate within this literature involves the relationship between borders and state sovereignty, and this debate has evolved over the last forty years. Comfortably situated within realist thinking is a material approach to the role of borders and an emphasis on territoriality, which dominate the early literature. Robert Jervis, for example, emphasizes the importance of strong borders to a state's security, going so far as to argue that weak borders are unstable and leave a state vulnerable to attack and absorption by a neighboring state.¹³ Additionally, realists argue that borders are essential to defending a state's territory, which is considered by some to be the most important source of military power and the most common cause of interstate wars.¹⁴ Drawing on examples from both world wars and steeped in the adversarial international climate of the Cold War, Walt focuses not on the strength of borders, but on the relative strength of states separated by them, taking for granted the significance of such borders in his analysis.¹⁵

¹³ Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (1978): 195.

¹⁴ James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 408.

¹⁵ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): 3-43.

While these related approaches to state borders are useful in understanding the decision making of state leaders whose calculations rely mostly on a material approach to power, they do not account for the growing complexities of international relations in an increasingly globalized world, especially where borders and border security are concerned. For example, theorists within the realist tradition neglect the growing importance of non-state actors, choosing to focus almost exclusively on states.¹⁶ In fact, Walt argues that the focus of security studies is interstate war.¹⁷ The realist approach to the importance of borders as a defense against other states occupies a large part of the security discourse and remains a significant voice in the globalization debate (elaborated below), which commands a large portion of the research produced near the end of the 20th century and continues to be an influential body of work in the security literature.

Globalists argue against the realist assumption that state borders are an essential facet of international relations in a dangerous, anarchic international system and, therefore, should be conceptualized as material defenses against other states. These scholars “emphasize the blurring of domestic and international boundaries in an interdependent world, which relies on the free flow of goods, money, people, and ideas or norms.”¹⁸ In an influential case study of the European Community in 1993, John G. Ruggie takes realists to task for failing to account for the changing nature of the system in which states operate, criticizing realist theorists for neglecting the growing salience

¹⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

¹⁷ Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (1991): 212-213.

¹⁸ Virginie Guiraudon and Gallya Lahav, “A Reappraisal of the State Sovereignty Debate: The Case of Migration Control,” *Comparative Political Studies* 33, no. 2 (2000): 164.

of macrostructures in the world system.¹⁹ He maintains the relevance of states while suggesting the shifting and multifaceted role of borders in an increasingly globalized system of international economic institutions, which contribute to “unbundling territoriality.”²⁰ Ruggie suggests an unbundling of the various types of state authority from territoriality not as a threat to state sovereignty but as a reimagining of the complexities of state authority.

Sassen contributes to this globalist view in her 1996 book, in which she argues that globalization has contributed to a denationalization of territory and that human rights norms imposed by supragovernmental institutions have eroded state control of borders, especially where immigration is concerned.²¹ Sassen’s understanding emphasizes human rights norms and posits a new form of economic citizenship as eroding state sovereignty and border control altogether. Drawing heavily from Ruggie’s work, Edward Cohen argues that “it is this very fungibility of sovereignty that helps us understand why the authority of a state need not absolutely track the territorial borders of a political community.”²² Cohen, like Ruggie, understands globalization as a rearrangement of state authority that deemphasizes border security without eroding the sovereignty of the states or the relevance of borders themselves. These globalist viewpoints are increasingly challenged by a growing cohort of security scholars who

¹⁹ John Gerard Ruggie, “Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations,” *International Organization* 47, no. 1 (1993): 140.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 160-165.

²¹ Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control?: Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

²² Edward S. Cohen, “Globalization and the Boundaries of the State: A Framework for Analyzing the Changing Practice of Sovereignty,” *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* 14, no. 1 (2001): 80.

point to globalization as a driver of increased border security and the reinvigoration of territoriality.

While this globalist perspective remains robust in the security literature, a related body of research emphasizes the significance of state borders and, with it, the centrality of territoriality as responses by states to globalization. Territoriality is a central concept in much of the literature on state borders and is defined by Sack as “the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.”²³ With an eye on international institutions and their relationship to the territoriality of states, Guiraudon and Lahav directly challenge globalists like Sassen. They examine international jurisprudence and norms vis-à-vis migration control and conclude that international institutions do not infringe on states’ rights to control migration and, instead, uphold their prerogative to restrict movement across their borders.²⁴ In an article published one year later, Zacher confronts Ruggie’s assessment of the significance of state borders; he unpacks the “territorial integrity norm” and demonstrates its significance in shaping a world order, not only in Western international institutions but across Africa and the Middle East as well.²⁵ Peter Andreas builds upon the work of these scholars and seeks to identify the new nature of state borders.²⁶ He identifies three types of borders (military, economic, and police borders) and examines their historical trajectories, concluding that the police border is on the rise as a result of

²³ Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 19.

²⁴ Guiraudon and Lahav, 167.

²⁵ Mark W. Zacher, “The Territorial Integrity Norm: International Boundaries and the Use of Force,” *International Organization* 55, no. 2 (2001): 215-250.

²⁶ Peter Andreas, “Redrawing the Line: Borders and Security in the Twenty-First Century,” *International Security* 28, no. 2 (2003): 78-111.

states' interests in securing their borders against "clandestine transnational actors."²⁷ This view of the police border is particularly relevant to the West Bank barrier, as it is ostensibly intended not to fortify one state against another but to protect a state's interests from clandestine transnational actors. For Andreas, and for those security scholars who continue to draw upon his work, globalization has not eroded the significance of borders but has shifted the focus of states' security concerns toward non-state actors, leading to an increase in border policing. This body of research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of borders in the current international system, and the current study adds to this work by making a case for an additional type of border policy, adding to Andreas's typology the *identity* border, which serves to determine ingroup and outgroup status and delineates the boundaries of such.

In addition to the debate over the significance of borders in an increasingly globalized world, another important focus of discussion within the literature deals with the changing function of borders. Drawing on Andreas's important work on borders as filters against clandestine transnational actors, scholars are divided over the specific security interests served by heavily policed borders. The general framework within which this debate takes place is well-articulated by Adamson, who understands borders as filters through which labor and capital flow at an unequal rate selected by the state into which they move.²⁸ Human migration, she notes, is unique in globalization in that the movement of people across borders is much more restricted than that of goods and

²⁷ Ibid., 85.

²⁸ Fiona B. Adamson, "Crossing Borders: International Migration and National Security," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 173-174.

services.²⁹ A growing body of literature focuses on the restriction of human migration across increasingly policed borders, but scholars disagree as to which security interests are paramount in states' restrictions on immigration. That is, what sort of clandestine transnational actors are borders meant to exclude?

Avdan and Gelpi, for example, build on the works by Adamson and Andreas mentioned above and argue that security against terrorism is the paramount concern of states in terms of border security, citing a growing trend in the erection of fortified borders in frontier states in the European Union.³⁰ Their empirical analysis of border fences shows a reduced average annual relative risk of a terrorist attack by 67 percent for states who erected fortified physical barriers against terror groups in neighboring states.³¹ A significant limitation of this work is that the effectiveness of barriers in limiting the incidence of terror attacks from groups within neighboring states is not a sufficient condition to argue that national security is the paramount concern of states who erect such barriers. One must also show that the barrier itself is responsible for security success, rather than more complex security practices, that political discourse regarding construction of a barrier reflects a focus on physical security, that leaders were motivated by physical security concerns, and that the primary benefit of the barrier is indeed physical security.

Freilich offers a qualitative analysis of national security decision-making in Israel in which he argues that the very structure of the Israeli government places

²⁹ Ibid., 173.

³⁰ Nazli Avdan and Christopher Gelpi, "Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors? Border Barriers and the Transnational Flow of Terrorist Violence," *International Studies Quarterly* 0 (2016): 11.

³¹ Ibid., 12.

national security and, with it, anti-terror concerns at the forefront of policy-making.³² He explains that the Israeli Defense Forces are particularly influential in policy-making due to their high level of organization compared to the rest of the Israeli government and that this helps to explain the IDF's success in securing ever-increasing national security budgets.³³ This analysis is particularly useful in understanding the role of internal politics in a states' approach to national security, but the utility of this analysis is limited. While the influence of the Defense Ministry in the Knesset does highlight the state's focus on physical security, it does not explore the complexities of policy decision-making.

Another body of work in the literature comes from a contingent of scholars who understand fortified borders from an economic perspective. In an empirical analysis of fortified boundaries, Hassner and Wittenberg explore security interests by comparing states that share a border and differentiating between barrier building states and their target states.³⁴ While they did find that Muslim states are most often the targets of fortified barriers, suggesting that terrorism is a concern for barrier-building states, their data also shows that a difference in GDP per capita has a predictive value in whether a state erects a fortified barrier.³⁵ They conclude that "rich countries tend to erect barriers against poor countries, and that Muslim countries are the principal targets but also the major builders of such barriers."³⁶ For Middle Eastern states specifically, this demonstrates the economic aspect of security decision-making of oil economies against

³² Charles D. Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 4 (2006): 635-663.

³³ *Ibid.*, 658-659.

³⁴ Ron E. Hassner and Jason Wittenberg, "Barriers to Entry: Who Builds Fortified Boundaries and Why?" *International Security* 40, no. 1 (2015): 157-190.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 170-176.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

clandestine transnational actors from non-oil economies. They argue that states choose to erect fortified barriers to increase costs for clandestine transnational actors.³⁷

Using a similar method, Carter and Poast analyzed data on boundary walls separating states from 1800 to 2014 and discovered a distinctly economic nature to the securitization of human migration.³⁸ They note that “cross-border economic inequality is consistently found to be a core predictor of wall presence and construction,” indicating an interest on the part of states to erect fortified boundaries against smuggling and unskilled labor.³⁹ Their data also shows an increase in border construction in the post-Cold War era, suggesting that “aggressive border management strategies are on the rise in the ‘age of globalization.’”⁴⁰ It is important to note, however, that a state’s concerns for national security and economic security may be served by the same policy and are not mutually exclusive.

Unlike the scholars above, Anderson and O’Dowd advocate a more nuanced and multicausal understanding of borders as shaping and being shaped by economic inequality, national and cultural identities, and territoriality.⁴¹ They argue that every border and border region is unique and that borders have a variety of uses and meanings with diverse characteristics and relations and unique combinations of functions.⁴² However, it is useful for our understanding of borders to think more generally about how states perceive security threats and seek to address them. A particularly interesting

³⁷ Ibid., 160.

³⁸ David B. Carter and Paul Poast, “Why Do States Build Walls? Political Economy, Security, and Border Stability,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 2 (2017) 239-270.

³⁹ Ibid., 263.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ James Anderson and Liam O’Dowd, “Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance,” *Regional Studies* 33, no. 7 (1999): 593-604.

⁴² Ibid., 594.

facet of Anderson and O'Dowd's work is their attention to the role of borders as both physical manifestations of and factors contributing to national and cultural identities. Similarly, political geographer David Newman concludes that borders are socially constructed by way of "mechanics through which difference is created, exists, and is perpetuated."⁴³ It is this notion of borders that is most useful to understanding why a state might construct a fortified barrier in a case for which the national security objective is an insufficient explanation.

Congruent with this conceptualization of borders as co-constitutive with national and cultural identity is the need for states to maintain ontological security. Ontological security, as Brent Steele explains, is security as being.⁴⁴ Put another way, ontological security is security in the subjective self, identity.⁴⁵ A state's identity shapes and is shaped by its actions. As Mitzen explains, "The consequences of action will always either reproduce or contradict identities, and since identity motivates action its stability over time depends on it being supported in practice."⁴⁶ In extraordinary situations, such as the Second Intifada, the routinized practices that maintain the Israeli state's identity may be insufficient. As Steele elaborates, critical situations cause ontological insecurity because the routines that reaffirm the state's identity are unable to accommodate

⁴³ David Newman, "The Lines That Continue to Separate Us: Borders in Our 'Borderless' World," *Progress in Human Geography* 30, no. 2 (2006): 156.

⁴⁴ Brent J. Steele, "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-Identity: British Neutrality and the American Civil War," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 3 (July, 2005): 526.

⁴⁵ Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (September, 2006): 344.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

extreme circumstances.⁴⁷ In this way, the chaos of the Intifada disrupted the routines that reaffirmed the state's identity, fomenting an identity crisis.

One scholar in particular has applied this theory of ontological security to the very question of why Israel constructed the West Bank Barrier. The tension created between Israel's identities as both a sovereign security-seeker and a Jewish state by the seemingly contradictory solutions to the crisis amounted to what Lupovici calls ontological dissonance. Ontological dissonance, he argues, is created by a clash between solutions meant to address threats to different identities.⁴⁸ In such a crisis, a state recognizes that measures intended to reaffirm its various identities conflict, and this is often reflected in political discourse. Lupovici argues that the political battle over the West Bank barrier, specifically its construction and its route separately, displays such a crisis. He argues that the Second Intifada created a crisis in which Israel's identities as a Jewish state, a security-seeking sovereign, and a democracy were in conflict and that the West Bank barrier was constructed to allay this identity crisis.⁴⁹ This explanation, while nuanced, is unsupported by evidence. If a single policy response can simultaneously reaffirm three separate identities, there is no ontological dissonance. Conversely, if the policy option selected reaffirms a particular identity and not the others (or to the detriment of the other identities), then the reaffirmed identity may be considered paramount, at least in that specific case, and no dissonance exists. How, then, might one discern the intent of this policy vis-à-vis national identity?

⁴⁷ Steele, 526.

⁴⁸ Lupovici, 814.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Lupovici is correct to turn to political discourse. The following section details the methodology of the present study.

Method

This study is a qualitative study combining elements of the approaches of social linguistic analysis and interpretive structuralism to discourse analysis. Utilizing this method, the study examined two sets of data: (1) interviews with Knesset Members, political journalists, and academics in Israel and (2) political speeches, op-eds, and news articles discussing the proposed barrier and the violence emanating from the West Bank during the Second Intifada. Data analysis focused on the meaning applied to the Second Intifada and how the barrier policy was legitimized through discourse. Several studies have used discourse analysis to examine national identity from various approaches.⁵⁰ In this section, I will discuss the theoretical foundations of discourse analysis, address common criticisms as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the method, and outline the specific analytical strategies employed in this study.

Foundations of Discourse Analysis

A discourse is “the content and construction of meaning and the organization of knowledge in a particular realm” and sets the “terms of intelligibility of thought,

⁵⁰ See, for example, Dalia Gavriely-Nuri, “The Idiosyncratic Language of Israeli ‘Peace’: A Cultural Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CCDA,” *Discourse and Society* 21, no. 5 (September, 2010): 565-85; Jennifer Milliken, “Intervention and Identity: Reconstructing the West in Korea,” in *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger*, edited by Jutta Weldes and George Marcus (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); and Umut Ozguc, “Remaking Canadian Identity: A Critical Analysis of Canada’s Human Security Discourse,” *Journal of Human Security* 7, no. 3 (2011), 37-59.

speech, and action.”⁵¹ Discourses are lenses of interpretation through which problems can be viewed, and these lenses privilege certain policy solutions over others.⁵²

Discourse analysis explores the relationship between discourse and reality, how discourses are *made* meaningful and how they “contribute to the constitution of social reality by *making meaning*.”⁵³ These relationships and processes are ascertained through the structured and systematic analysis of texts.⁵⁴ In discourse analysis, *texts* may be written texts, spoken words, visual representations, and physical artifacts.

Texts are the sites of the emergence of complexes of social meanings, produced in the particular history of the situation of production, that record in partial ways the histories of both the participants in the production of the text and of the institutions that are “invoked” or brought into play, indeed a partial history of the language and the social system, a partiality due to the structurings of relations of power of the participants.⁵⁵

In this way, discourse analysis is a means by which the meanings actors assign to phenomena, the possibilities of action they perceive, and the relationships between actors, discourses, and social reality can be discovered. This is accomplished through the “retroduction of a discourse through the empirical analysis of its realization in practices.”⁵⁶ According to Laffey and Weldes, discourse analysis “reasons backward” through texts within a particular discourse to “establish structure from its empirical

⁵¹ Neta C. Crawford, “Understanding Discourse: A Method of Ethical Argument Analysis,” *Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 22.

⁵² Karen Litfin, *Ozone Discourses: Science and Politics in Global Environmental Cooperation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 194.

⁵³ Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy, *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 3-4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁵ Gunther Kress, “The Social Production of Language: History and Structures of Domination,” in *Discourse in Society: Systemic Functional Perspectives*, ed. Peter Howard Fries and Michael Gregory (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1995), 122.

⁵⁶ Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes, “Methodological Reflections on Discourse Analysis,” *Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 28.

manifestations” and examines how such a discourse is “naturalized in such a way as to become taken for granted.”⁵⁷

Discourse analysis, as a self-consciously constructivist method, entails a set of assumptions rooted in an understanding of social reality as continuously constructed and reconstructed through interactions, which are themselves informed and constrained by norms and institutions. Indeed, some scholars argue that discourse analysis cannot be divorced from its theoretical foundations and, therefore, must be understood as a methodology, rather than a method.⁵⁸ In discourse analysis, “the nature of being cannot be separated from ways of knowing.”⁵⁹ It is important, therefore, to highlight here the theoretical commitments and assumptions of discourse analysis, as these inform and constrain the researcher’s decision making.

Discourses and the social world are co-constitutive. That is, even as discourses are shaped by the realities they describe, they also influence interlocutors’ application of meaning to these realities and constrain how they are perceived. As Milliken explains, “things do not mean (the material world does not convey meaning); rather, people construct the meaning of things” using a system of signification, a discourse.⁶⁰ In this way, discourses construct social realities, but they are also constructed by them. Elements of discourse like meanings and categorizations are ‘social, not natural

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Karin Fierke, “World or Worlds? The Analysis of Content and Discourse,” *Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 36; and Phillips and Hardy, 3-5.

⁵⁹ Fierke, 36.

⁶⁰ Jennifer Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods,” *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 2 (1999), 229.

kinds.’⁶¹ These elements originate in the wider context of a discourse and are then reproduced, reimagined, and redefined through the filter of meaning constituted by discourse.

Discourses produce norms that constrain behavior. Milliken explains, “Beyond giving a language for speaking about phenomena, discourses make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular regime of truth while excluding other possible modes of identity and action.”⁶²

Discourses exert normative force on behavior by limiting possibilities of meaning of objects and events, selecting out certain perspectives, for example, by delimiting the bounds of what is taken for granted as common sense. These limits are produced intersubjectively through interaction and become taken for granted through repetition. In this way, even actors themselves are in part constituted by the routinized practices in which they engage.⁶³ Discourses work to constitute actors by changing actors’ perceptions of their own interests and even altering political situations, producing changes in actors’ material capabilities.⁶⁴

Discourses are unstable. Because discourses are produced and reproduced through interactions and depend upon repetition and context, they change. They require

⁶¹ Ted Hopf, “Discourse and Content Analysis: Some Fundamental Incompatibilities,” *Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 31.

⁶² Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations,” 229.

⁶³ Roxanne L. Doty, “Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines,” *International Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (September 1993), 297-320.

⁶⁴ Crawford, 24.

work to “articulate and rearticulate their knowledges and identities...making discourses changeable and in fact historically contingent.”⁶⁵

Common Criticisms

Some international relations scholars have criticized discourse scholarship as bad science, claiming a lack of testable theories or empirical analyses.⁶⁶ Addressing this criticism, Milliken rightly points to developments in discourse scholarship that have strengthened the method over time. These developments include the specification of various analytic approaches and strategies and, “via a growing number of substantive empirical analyses, the development of both theoretical concepts for and critical readings of International Relations.”⁶⁷ Furthermore, as Milliken notes, discourse scholarship is not as abnormal a research program as detractors argue. As with other methods, discourse analysts engage with the work of scholars considered important for the research program and build their work upon certain theoretical commitments (described above) that inform and constrain means of discovery and justification.⁶⁸

Another common criticism of discourse analysis is the notion that this method lacks rigor. This criticism arises from the method’s lack of standardized, systematic procedures, which are often found in the natural sciences and quantitative research in the social sciences. In response, some discourse analysts contend that a major advantage of discourse analysis is that it self-consciously avoids the reification of concepts and

⁶⁵ Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations,” 230.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Robert Keohane, “International Institutions: Two Approaches,” *International Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1988), 83-105; and John Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19, no. 3 (Winter 1994/5), 5-49.

⁶⁷ Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations,” 228.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

objects, which more systematic and mechanical techniques characteristic of other methods fail to address.⁶⁹ Phillips and Hardy agree, adding that more systematic and labor-saving methods, like content analysis, are detrimental to the aim of discourse analysis because they seek to rapidly consolidate categories, whereas discourse analysis seeks to draw existing categorizations from texts.⁷⁰ Milliken adds to this defense, arguing that discourse analysis is more “critically self-aware of the closures imposed” by research methods and techniques of analysis that scholars frequently use. Furthermore, though discourse analysis does not impose upon the researcher a single, standardized analytical framework, scholars who utilize the method have produced a plethora of work outlining various analytical strategies.⁷¹ This allows the researcher to choose the strategy or combination of strategies that best suits the project.

Finally, some scholars claim that discourse analysis is too subjective, that the analyst brings subjective interpretations or perceptions to the coding of texts.⁷² In fact, it is this imposition of the analyst’s preconceptions on the data that discourse analysis helps to minimize. Rather than choosing themes or categories to search for within a text, the analyst engages with texts in a two or multi stage process in which he or she first identifies the existing themes and patterns within the texts and then goes about coding the data. As Fierke explains, “The appearance and frequency of a particular grammar is not down to the interpretation of the analyst. These patterns emerge across texts and are

⁶⁹ Erica Burman and Ian Parker, “Against Discursive Imperialism, Empiricism and Constructionism: Thirty-two Problems with Discourse Analysis,” in *Discourse Analytic Research: Repertoires and Readings of Texts in Action*, eds. Erica Burman and Ian Parker (London: Routledge, 1993), 155-172.

⁷⁰ Phillips and Hardy, 74.

⁷¹ See, for example, Phillips and Hardy; Milliken, “The Study of Discourse in International Relations,”; also Michael K. Mauws, “But Is It Art? Decision Making and Discursive Resources in the Field of Cultural Production,” *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 36, no. 2 (2000).

⁷² Fierke, 37.

discovered by the analyst [emphasis added].”⁷³ While this means that discourse analysis is more time consuming than some other methods, the time and labor invested help to ensure more accurate findings with regard to the discursive patterns at work in a particular discourse or an intersection of discourses.

While the strengths of discourse analysis help to address many criticisms of the method, these strengths come at a cost. Discourses comprise sets of meanings that change over time with context, and it is difficult to know with certainty the limits of a particular discourse. That is, discourses are part of open social systems.⁷⁴ The meaning of a particular word or phrase within a specific discourse is dependent upon relationships between relevant texts, discourses, and contexts. This means that the analyst must be cautious in drawing generalized conclusions from the findings of a discourse analysis.⁷⁵ Rather than attempting to make results more generalizable, the discourse analyst accepts the changing nature of discourses and contexts and limits claims to the spatial and temporal context of the sample. This study, for example, draws conclusions specific to Israeli policymaking regarding security in the Intifada period without making claims about Israeli policymaking at other times or policymaking elsewhere. The following details the specific application of discourse analysis to this study.

The Current Study

⁷³ Ibid., 38.

⁷⁴ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 135.

⁷⁵ Kimberly A. Neuendorf, “Content Analysis: A Contrast and Complement to Discourse Analysis,” *Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 1(Spring 2004), 35.

This study applies elements of the approaches of social linguistic analysis and interpretive structuralism to the analysis of interviews, political speeches, and news articles. Social linguistic analysis entails a close reading of texts to discover the rhetorical strategies used to construct a decision.⁷⁶ While social linguistic analysis emphasizes a close analysis of texts themselves, interpretive structuralism focuses on how interlocutors interpret the context within which decisions are made, thereby discerning the subjective interpretations of the plausibility of policy options.⁷⁷ The present study combines strategies from these approaches to discover how the violence of the Second Intifada was perceived by the Israeli public and the Israeli leadership and how this perception impacted the discursive construction of the West Bank barrier policy.

The data for this study was collected and analyzed in five stages. First, the researcher conducted a series of interviews in Israel in the summer of 2017 with the approval of the Institutional Review Board. The researcher interviewed two Knesset Members, two Knesset advisors, one local political scientist, and two influential political journalists. Preliminary analysis of this data provided the working categories for future stages of analysis. These preliminary categories were: Jewish national identity, democratic national identity, and security exceptionalism. It should be noted here that, because these interviews were conducted many years after the construction of the West Bank barrier and, therefore, were several years removed from the discursive context of interest here, the categories produced by these interviews were then tested against the second round of data.

⁷⁶ Phillips and Hardy, 22.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 30.

The second round of data collection explored the contextual factors pertinent to the state's decision to construct the West Bank barrier. Political speeches and documents from 2000 to 2005 by Knesset members, government ministries, ambassadors, and spokespersons for state agencies provided the raw data for a predicate and rhetorical analysis of the perceived threats to physical and ontological security during the Second Intifada. Using NVIVO software as a coding tool, this analysis identified two major contextual categories: othering and selective legitimation of violence. While the analysis did reveal a recurring theme of anxiety around the Jewish national identity, perceived threat to the democratic national identity is notably absent from this discourse.

While government documents and speeches were useful to uncover the dominant positions within government regarding the violence of the Second Intifada, wider public discourse was necessary to ascertain the extent to which ideas and themes in government discourse was reflected in the popular discourse and to then further refine categories. In this third stage of data collection, the researcher compiled entries and articles from blogs and news sources local to Israel and analyzed these using NVIVO software. Similar themes of otherizing, selective legitimation, and Jewish national identity characterized this data. By comparing these themes with those of the previous stage, the researcher was able to discern the diffusion of ideas between government and non-government sources.

The fourth and fifth stages of this analysis incorporated the processes and categories of stages two and three. Whereas stages two and three focused on the discursive construction of violence in the Second Intifada, stages four and five focused

on the discursive construction of the West Bank barrier policy itself. In the fourth stage, the researcher analyzed government documents and speeches, uncovering themes of national identity in the debate around the barrier policy decision. Then, in the fifth stage, the researcher applied this analytical strategy to blog posts, news articles, and op-eds and comparing discursive themes to assess the flow of ideas in the construction of the barrier policy decision in the public discourse.

The design of this study allowed the researcher to uncover evidence of ontological insecurity not only in the discursive construction of the Second Intifada, but also of the West Bank barrier as a policy decision. Additionally, this design provided a more complete understanding of the exchange of ideas between the political parties, as well as between the Israeli government and Israeli general public. Finally, by examining the discourse on the Second Intifada violence and the West Bank barrier policy separately, the researcher was able to discern the impact of the Intifada on this policy decision. The following chapter provides a detailed discussion of ontological security, and the results of this study are presented in the third chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

A state's need for physical security is taken for granted in international relations. Indeed, the need for states to secure their respective territories and structures of governance speaks to our conceptualization of states and, along with them, the nature of the international system. As Wendt argues, however, states have both physical *and* social drives.⁷⁸ The physical attributes of a state, such as its territory and governance structures are not the only referent objects a state seeks to secure. States also seek to secure their identities in the international system. That is, states seek ontological, as well as physical security. As acts of political violence can threaten the physical security of a state, so too can such acts threaten a state's ontological security. The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate ontological security theory, especially as it applies to international relations, and to unpack the co-constitutive relationships between national identity, routines, discourse, and critical situations to explicate how ontological insecurity might make palatable previously unacceptable policy options. In the following section, I elaborate the individual's social-psychological need for ontological security. Then, I extrapolate ontological security to the state level. The final section explores one application of this theory to the state of Israel and its decision to erect the West Bank barrier and problematizes some of its assumptions.

THE HUMAN NEED FOR ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY

⁷⁸ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 122–123.

Ontological security is defined by Giddens as “a sense of continuity and order in events.”⁷⁹ This sense of continuity only exists when the individual experiences himself or herself as whole and continuous in time, allowing the individual to realize his or her sense of agency.⁸⁰ This means that an individual, in order to realize a sense of agency, must have a continuous conceptualization of self. Mitzen explains this relationship between self and agency:

[A]gency requires a stable cognitive environment. Where an actor has no idea what to expect, she cannot systematically relate ends to means, and it becomes unclear how to pursue her ends. Since ends are constitutive of identity, in turn, deep uncertainty renders the actor’s identity insecure. Individuals are therefore motivated to create cognitive and behavioral certainty, which they do by establishing routines.⁸¹

Actors construct stable cognitive environments through behavioral certainty, established and maintained through routines, which function to construct and affirm the actors’ identities. Ontological insecurity, then, obtains when “individuals are uncomfortable with who they are, more specifically [when] they are uncomfortable with their identity as social (inter)actors.”⁸² Identity is central to ontological security.

Identity

For the purposes of this work, I find Hopf and Allan’s definition of identity satisfactory. They define an identity as “how one understands oneself in relationship to another.”⁸³ This definition points to two important aspects of the nature of identity: the

⁷⁹ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 243.

⁸⁰ Ronald D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), 41-42.

⁸¹ Mitzen, 342.

⁸² Steele, 525.

⁸³ Ted Hopf and Bentley Allan, *Making Identity Count: Building a National Identity Database* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5.

salience of perception to identity and the inherent nature of identity as socially constructed. An individual's identity is not simply assigned to him by his interlocutors. Nor is it chosen solely by the individual. An identity is constructed intersubjectively and is dependent upon the individual's perceptions of himself, his internally constructed biographical narrative, as well as his interlocutors' perceptions of him, what he appears to be. These perceptions are informed and constrained by the normative structures of the social environment. Consider an aspiring fashion model who supports himself by working at his local department store until he can secure a modeling contract. Although he may consider himself a model, his community and the fashion industry may not, likely regarding him as a salesperson instead. Is he a model or a salesperson? According to Hopf and Allan's definition, it depends on his relationship to others. If his relationships to others involve routines that reinforce his identity as a model, such as meeting with designers for fittings, scheduling photoshoots, or taking part in runway shows, his identity as a model is supported in those relationships. Conversely, if his routines involve helping customers, styling displays, and stocking inventory, his identity as a salesperson is supported in those respective relationships. This leads to an important characteristic of identities: they can change. Maintaining or changing identities is achieved through routines.

Routines

Routines, the "internally programmed cognitive and behavioral responses to information or stimuli, make social life and the self knowable."⁸⁴ While some routines are exclusively personal, social relationships are the most important source of routines. Routinized responses are habitual and require no conscious decision between options or

⁸⁴ Mitzen, 346.

deliberate weighing of information. They are taken-for-granted and inoculate the individual against the paralyzing knowledge that, underneath the routinized responses to our daily lives, “chaos lurks.”⁸⁵ The individual does not weigh his options and their potential consequences in routines, thereby creating a “cognitive cocoon” or “basic trust system” which enables actors to “trust that their cognitive world will be reproduced”.⁸⁶ Let us return to our hypothetical fashion model/salesperson. While working in the department store, he does not critically evaluate his relationship to a customer or his responses to her. When she asks for assistance, he does not carefully weigh his options for response. His options are informed and constrained by his identity as a salesperson in this particular relationship; his response, routinized, will be in line with his identity as a salesperson, thereby reinforcing it. Conversely, if his identity as a model remains unsupported by routines while his identity as a salesperson continues to be reinforced in his daily interactions, the latter will become more central to his conceptualization of self.

Because routines affirm and support identity and stabilize their cognitive environments, actors become attached to their routines and the relationships in which they exist. Abandoning a relationship and the routines through which it is maintained would entail sacrificing the stability of an identity, thereby paralyzing the individual’s capacity to act, to realize his agency.⁸⁷ It is important to note that the nature of the relationship and, therefore, the content of the identity it supports is often immaterial to the individual’s attachment to it. That is, actors may develop attachments to healthy as well as unhealthy routines. Additionally, because routines depend upon interlocutors

⁸⁵ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity*, 36.

⁸⁶ Mitzen, 346.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 347.

responding according to shared rules and norms defined by the relationship, i.e. predictably, “the self-conceptions that motivate intentional action cannot always be reinforced.”⁸⁸ External factors such as environmental changes, a breakdown of intersubjective meaning in crisis, or the interventions of powerful outside actors influence how an individual’s actions are perceived and, in turn, the response they evoke. An actor’s self-conception, therefore, cannot always be affirmed. In such a case, the actor may develop attachment to a set of relationships and routines that support a less preferred identity.⁸⁹ This means that ontological security-seeking may result in an actor adopting an identity that is not necessarily his desired identity. Adopting such a “second-best” identity does not produce ontological insecurity, as the routines in which the individual participates do not require the actor to consciously scrutinize his behavior against a preferred identity. Rather, they support the same basic trust system mentioned above that allows the actor to perceive his social environment and himself as knowable and, therefore, actionable. Ontological security-seeking, then, is the “drive to minimize hard uncertainty by imposing cognitive order on the environment.”⁹⁰

Ontological Insecurity and Critical Situations

At the individual level, ontological insecurity is rarely evidenced, so profound is our attachment to routines and our need for ontological security. It is in cases of trauma, when the cognitive-affective ordering of the social environment is interrupted, that ontological insecurity arises. Mitzen defines ontological insecurity as the “deep, incapacitating state of not knowing which dangers to confront and which to ignore.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 346.

⁹¹ Ibid., 345.

This definition highlights the fundamental relationship between identity and agency. In a state of ontological insecurity, an individual cannot systematically draw connections between means and ends, impeding her ability to evaluate options and to plan ahead. She cannot confidently rely upon predictable routines. Giddens refers to such instances as “critical situations.”

Critical situations are “circumstances of a radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalized routines.”⁹² Such situations critically damage an actor’s ability to trust his or her knowledge of the social environment and to act accordingly. Such confusion and paralysis engender insecurity. Steele explains the resulting insecurity as a discomfort with who one is, specifically a discomfort with one’s identity as a social (inter)actor.⁹³ The actor’s experience with such insecurity is one of anxiety. Giddens distinguishes fear from anxiety, explaining that fear is ‘a response to a specific threat and therefore has a definite object, while anxiety is characterized by ‘a generalised state of the emotions of the given individual’ resulting from a challenge to the individual’s identity.⁹⁴ An actor suffering from anxiety in such a case is insecure, presenting a ‘failure to develop or sustain trust in his own self-integrity,’ subjecting his thoughts and behavior to “constant scrutiny.”⁹⁵ This constant scrutiny degrades the integrity of the individual’s basic trust system as routines give way to unpredictable responses that fail to reaffirm the individual’s identity.

Additionally, as the individual can no longer connect means to ends in a predictable and

⁹² Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 61.

⁹³ Steele, 525.

⁹⁴ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 43-44.

⁹⁵ Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 55.

knowable social reality, he may choose a course of action that is incompatible with his identity.

Such incongruence results in what Giddens refers to as shame. Unlike guilt, which is the product of a fear of transgression, shame is a more private feeling of insecurity resulting from the perception of having behaved in a way that is incompatible with the individual's self-identity.⁹⁶ That is, while guilt is an emotional response to the violation of an intersubjectively held rule or norm, shame is the emotional response to the violation of one's sense of self. This section has outlined the social-psychological foundations of ontological security-seeking, including the intersubjective nature of identity, the salience of routines and relationships to basic trust systems, the ways in which critical situations engender ontological insecurity, and the importance of shame to such insecurity. In the following section, I extrapolate the concept of ontological security to the state level before exploring its application to the state of Israel.

THE STATE AS ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY-SEEKER

Like the need for physical security, the state's need for ontological security is extrapolated from the individual level. This is not, however, a sufficient point to argue that states seek ontological security; further justification is needed. To that end, Mitzen offers three helpful defenses for states as ontological security-seekers. First, she points out that international relations scholars' tendency to assume that states need physical security is not entirely unproblematic vis-à-vis anthropomorphizing the state: physical security-seeking assumes that states have physical bodies or some such analog that may be harmed or die. Such analogs, however, like states' territory, citizens, or sovereignty

⁹⁶ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 64-65.

are imperfect, as they are either not exactly physical or, as in the case of territory, it is unclear how much of it a state may lose and maintain its status as a state.⁹⁷ If we can accept such ambiguity and take for granted the state's need for physical security, the notion that a state as a social actor might have other human needs is not altogether far-fetched.

Secondly, as argued in the previous section, individuals require cognitive stability in order to secure their identities. Therefore, individuals become attached to stable group identities such as a national identity, meaning that the ontological security needs of citizens influence the identity of the group as one that also needs ontological security.⁹⁸ "Because losing a sense of state distinctiveness would threaten the ontological security of its members, states can be seen as motivated to preserve the national group identity and not simply the national 'body.'"⁹⁹ This defense of states as ontological security-seekers is particularly helpful, as it highlights the nature of the state not as a conscious monolith possessed of human qualities, but as simply a social group. Conceptualizing the state as a social group leaves room for considerations of ingroup and outgroup behavior, which is particularly helpful to uncovering national identities, as such identities are performed in these ingroup/outgroup relationships.

A final justification for conceptualizing states as ontological security-seekers is its explanatory value. The nature of states as corporate actors, Mitzen argues, can reproduce macro-level outcomes across decision-makers that are inconsistent with the assumptions of other explanatory models, such as those put forth by neorealists.¹⁰⁰ That

⁹⁷ Mitzen, 351.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

is, states exhibit patterns of behavior across time (or administrations) that cannot be explained in terms of the individual decisionmaker's identity or in terms of the state's need for physical security in an anarchic international system characterized by unequal capabilities between actors. While any theorist who undertakes to apply anthropomorphic attributes to states must contend with the issue of state personhood, as Wendt cautions, such a practice may provide as much heuristic value to the understanding of states as ontological security-seekers as it does to the understanding of states as physical security-seekers.¹⁰¹ As mentioned above, however, problems associated with anthropomorphizing the state are mitigated by the conceptualization of the state as a social group.

Ontological Security and National Identity

Whereas physical security is security as survival, ontological security is "security as being"¹⁰² McSweeney utilizes this concept of security as being, and he explains this as "confidence in an actor's capacity to manage relations with others."¹⁰³ Relations between actors at the state level, like those at the individual level, are informed and constrained by the actors' social environment. This means that the environment impacts a state's sense of ontological security as well as physical security.

McSweeney explains:

If we *assume*, with Robert Gilpin, that wherever we live we live in a jungle, then it is reasonable to conclude that it is complacency rather than rational assessment not to elevate physical survival to the highest rank in the hierarchy of human needs. Conversely, it is paranoia to

¹⁰¹ Alexander Wendt, "The State as Person in International Theory," *Review of International Studies* 30, no. 2, (April 2004), 289-290.

¹⁰² Steele, 526.

¹⁰³ Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity, and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 157.

organise our lives on that assumption without compelling evidence to support it.¹⁰⁴

The aforementioned conceptualization of security as strictly survival, then, rests on the assumption that the state exists in a jungle, i.e. an anarchical international system.

Because the state is a social actor, however, it follows that the state would have social, rather than strictly physical, needs. A secure national identity is a social need.

Furthermore, as argued above, a state is a social group, meaning that its identity (and, therefore, its interests) are constructed by its individual members even as it informs their identities.¹⁰⁵

Just as states have social objectives as part of their nature as corporate social actors, they also possess identities. Recall that an identity is how one understands oneself in relation to another. Building on this basic understanding of an identity, Hopf and Allan define national identity as “a constellation of categories that define the nation or what it means to be a member of a nation.”¹⁰⁶ These sets of categories are “constituted by societal discourses that are shaped by and constrain individuals who draw on shared knowledge to form their personal identities.”¹⁰⁷ Such a definition has several implications. First, it implies that national identities and societal discourses are co-constitutive. Intersubjective knowledge informs and constrains interactions, which, as outlined above, construct and maintain identities when routinized. Second, this definition implies that the same routines and intersubjective knowledge that inform individual identities also inform national identities. This logic is consistent with

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 153.

¹⁰⁵ George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviourist*, (Berlin: Heptagon, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ Hopf and Allan, 21.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Mitzen's conceptualization of group identity as arising from individuals' self-identities as members of such group.¹⁰⁸ Finally, the definition implies that discourses, as products of intersubjective meaning, are co-constitutive of routines and, as such, work to order the social environment.

It is important to note that, as states' identities are constructed as collective identities through intersubjectively held knowledge of individuals, states' identities are not fixed, and states may have more than one identity. In part, discourses of national identity are sets of "categories that individuals use to understand the nation and themselves as members of a country."¹⁰⁹ As a state's identity is partly constructed and maintained by individuals' conceptions of the state and what it means to be a member of it, such an identity is subject to change as one discourse yields hegemony to another. Berger and Luckmann's approach to identity elaborates this important aspect of identity. They argue that individuals perceive the social world through categories acquired from intersubjectively shared knowledge.¹¹⁰ These categories exert a normative force on discourse, limiting the possibilities of interpretation to that knowledge that is intersubjectively shared within the group.¹¹¹

Routines, which they call "habits," are the mechanisms through which the range of choice in social interaction is narrowed.¹¹² The dependence of discourse on routines means that, if certain routines are interrupted or replaced by others, the discourses that depended upon them change or give way to discourses that are supported by the new

¹⁰⁸ Mitzen, 351.

¹⁰⁹ Hopf and Allan, 22.

¹¹⁰ Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 23.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33-40.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 53.

routines. Finally, as identity is dependent upon routines performed within relationships, a state has multiple identities that become salient in different relationships. Hopf and Allan explain, “an identity is how one understands oneself in relationship to another,” and “any individual or state has multiple identities because its identity is different in interaction with different others.”¹¹³

Relationships and Routines

The previous section outlined the importance of relationships and routines to individual identity. At the state level, relationships and routines are no less important. States’ identities are constructed and reaffirmed through the discursive performance of the self-identities of individuals as members of that state, their conceptualizations of what that state is, and intersubjectively shared knowledge of what it *means* to be a member of that state. “Discourses of national identity,” as Hopf and Allan explain, “contain multiple elements of identity. These discourses are generated both by ruling elites at the level of the state and in society as a whole, as well as in interactions with other states.”¹¹⁴ That is, national identity discourses are also constructed in the performance of routines in relationships between states. This understanding is supported by our conceptualization of the state as a social group. A significant means by which groups maintain distinct identities is through routinized relationships with other groups.¹¹⁵

Like individual identities are affirmed through interactions between individuals, so too are national identities affirmed through interactions between states. States perform their identities in interactions with other states, and those states respond in

¹¹³ Hopf and Allan, 5.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Mitzen, 352.

ways that reaffirm or challenge that identity. These identities are performed through state actions, especially with regard to other states. Mitzen explains that, as social groups, states have intrinsic as well as role identities.¹¹⁶ Intrinsic identities are those constellations of categories of meaning that define the state, as well as membership in it, which are intersubjectively constructed by members of the social group. Intrinsic identities, according to Mitzen, can be maintained alone, while role identities are dependent upon the group's relationship with other groups to sustain them.¹¹⁷ I argue, however, that an intrinsic identity is one phase of a two-phase identity that is dependent upon a state's relationships with other states to maintain. As explained above, identities are dependent upon routines and relationships to maintain. While the members of a social group may intersubjectively construct identities for the group, that group's identity in relation to other groups is necessarily constitutive of other groups' responses to it. Mitzen argues that, like intrinsic identities, role identities are internalized and motivate group action, but unlike intrinsic identities, "role identities get their meaning from role positions in the social order and therefore are not understandable in terms of qualities individuals have alone."¹¹⁸ In interaction, other states draw conclusions from a state's behavior as to the role that behavior constitutes and regard the state as fulfilling that role.¹¹⁹ More importantly, once this state is regarded by others as fulfilling a certain role, those other states will *treat* that state accordingly, thereby engaging in relationships that may be routinized to support that identity.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 355-359.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 357.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 358.

This view of the relationship between the role identity and intrinsic identity is consistent with George Herbert Mead's understanding of the self as having two phases in social action. The role identity situates and defines the actor in relation to the actor's social context; this identity is comprised of a set of routines and relationships that define the actor as an object of social experience. Mead regards the stage of the self that is the social object as the "Me".¹²⁰ The role identity (the "Me"), is internalized. For a state, this means that the internal discourse evinces an elite/mass consensus, a presumable taken-for-grantedness.¹²¹ The role identity becomes part of the state's intrinsic identity, motivating future social behavior (the "I").¹²² Once the actions of the "I" are objectified and recognized by interlocutors, those behaviors become part of the social object, the "Me." In this way, we can understand intrinsic and role identities of the state as two phases of a dialectical relationship.

Some international relations scholars understand state action as serving rational and material interests, i.e. as following the "logic of consequences."¹²³ Interests, however, cannot be strictly material. As interests and identities are co-constitutive, all interests derive from a state's identity in relation to another in a given context. Hopf and Allan argue that states may, therefore, adhere to three additional logics: States may follow the "logic of appropriateness," meaning they choose a certain action because it is consistent with their identities; they may also adopt the "logic of affect," meaning they choose an action specifically to evoke affective feelings toward other states; finally,

¹²⁰ Mead, 173-178.

¹²¹ Hopf and Allan, 246.

¹²² Mead, 175-178.

¹²³ James March and Johan Olsen, "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 949-951.

states may follow the logic of habit, i.e. performing routinized behaviors unreflectively.¹²⁴

Taken with our understanding of the co-constitutive relationships between identity, interests, and routines, however, I argue that the three logics proposed by Hopf and Allen are not necessarily distinct from one another under normal conditions. That is, barring the previously discussed “critical situations,” wherein state actors may be forced to choose between actions that adhere to an identity and actions that produce affect, these three logics function as essentially a single logic. This is especially clear when one remembers that the successful performance of national identity always follows the “logic of habit,” as identities must be supported by routines.

Attachment

As mentioned in the preceding section, individuals develop attachment to routines that support their identities, whether those routines are healthy or not. This is also true for states. Consider a state that evinces an identity as a physical security-seeker in its discourse but behaves as though it is seeking conflict by rejecting gestures from other states, missing opportunities for diplomacy, or issuing threats of its own. A realist might consider this behavior irrational. Ontological security, however, might explain this behavior as a rational attachment to a set of routines that support an identity and provide the state with the certainty required to render its social world knowable. As Mitzen explains, “states can become attached to physically dangerous relationships and unable, or unwilling, to learn their way out.”¹²⁵ A state’s ability to learn its way out of

¹²⁴ Hopf and Allan, 7.

¹²⁵ Mitzen, 354.

dangerous routines and into more desirable alternatives depends upon its mode of attachment.

While all social actors routinize their relationships, they vary in what Mitzen refers to as their “modes of attachment.”¹²⁶ A state may be attached to its routines rigidly or reflexively, and the state’s mode of attachment is evidenced by the state’s reaction to uncertainty. A state with a reflexive mode of attachment can tolerate uncertainty and even some ontological insecurity, regarding disruption to routines as temporary.¹²⁷ Such a social group trusts the stability of the social environment. This enables the state to make room for new or unexpected information, to respond flexibly, and even restructure relationships as necessary. Thus, a state with a reflexive mode of attachment has a “healthy basic trust system,” and, therefore, a greater capacity to pursue interests beyond physical security.

Conversely, a state with a rigid mode of attachment treats routines as ends in themselves, valuing the routines rather than the identities they support. For such a state, even temporary disruptions are perceived as threatening, and the response is to rigidly adhere to routines in extreme avoidance of uncertainty.¹²⁸ Such an actor has an unhealthy basic trust system, so, while action is possible, it is internally limited. Because learning requires the disruption of routines, the state with a rigid mode of attachment has a reduced capacity to learn.¹²⁹ When routines are rigidly held, disruption of routines makes the state vulnerable to ontological insecurity. Therefore, a state may rigidly cling to an adversarial relationship in an extreme avoidance of the uncertainty

¹²⁶ Ibid., 343.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 350.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 351.

engendered by the disruption of routines. Mitzen uses the example of an unsupported security-seeker identity to illuminate this attachment:

[I]f the cocoon of routines providing a state with basic trust does not support its possible self, it will develop a basic trust system that supports a less desired self, the competitor rather than the security-seeker. It did not intend to be a competitor, and indeed may maintain security-seeking aspirations in principle, but once ontological security needs are met through relationships that sustain competition, those aspirations are effectively insulated from practice.¹³⁰

Once such an identity is internalized by the social group's members, the state will then reject future opportunities to establish new routines that support its once-preferred identity as security-seeker, strictly averse to the insecurity and uncertainty inherent in the construction of new routines. In this section, I have extrapolated the social-psychological theory of ontological security to the state level, explained the nature of the state as a social group, and explored how states might maintain ontological security and respond to ontological insecurity. In the following section, I detail one application of this theory to the case of the state of Israel and its decision to construct the West Bank barrier and problematize some of the argument's assumptions.

ONTOLOGICAL DISSONANCE? ISRAEL AND THE WEST BANK BARRIER

In a 2012 article, Lupovici conceptualizes what he calls ontological dissonance at the state level and tests this concept against the case of Israel's policy responses to the Second Intifada. He is concerned with situations in which a state may face threats to more than one of its identities, specifically cases in which the solutions to these threats are contradictory. In such cases, the state faces a choice between its identities. Lupovici

¹³⁰ Ibid., 361.

argues that, in these cases, avoidance may provide an attractive alternative.¹³¹ He then applies this theoretical framework to Israel's policy decisions in the wake of the Second Intifada. The Intifada, he argues, amounted to a critical situation in which a number of Israel's identities were threatened in such a way as to emphasize incompatibilities between these identities.¹³² Avoidance, then, in the shape of the West Bank barrier as part of Israel's unilateral disengagement plan became the most attractive option. Using discourse analysis, Lupovici identifies the Israeli identities salient to the social situation and explains how the Intifada threatened each. This section discusses ontological dissonance and evaluates its application to this case.

Ontological Dissonance

Lupovici describes ontological dissonance as a type of ontological insecurity in which multiple state identities are threatened and "there is conflict between the measures that must be taken to resolve the various threats, aggravating the threat to each of the challenged identities."¹³³ That is, ontological dissonance obtains when more than one identity is threatened, and the action aimed to secure one identity threatens another. Particularly salient to his conceptualization of ontological dissonance is the *perception* on the part of the state that the actions necessary to resolve the threat to each identity are themselves in conflict. This conceptualization has several important implications. First, it implies that states can hold identities that are incompatible with one another. The co-constitutive connection between routinized relationships and identity supports this implication. As long as the routines that order the state's social world and make it knowable remain stable, a state need not scrutinize them. Furthermore, each of a state's

¹³¹ Lupovici, 809.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 810.

incongruous identities can be supported by multiple different relationships simultaneously. Second, it suggests that critical situations can bring these incompatibilities to the fore, causing insecurity. The salience of routines also supports this. In a critical situation, a social actor's routines are disrupted, opening the actor's once automatic modes of relating and, therefore, its identities, to scrutiny. Such scrutiny, as Giddens warns, exposes the underlying chaos heretofore obscured by the actor's basic trust system.¹³⁴ Third, Lupovici's conceptualization of ontological dissonance implies that ontological dissonance is not an objective condition of a state but is instead *experienced* by the state as uncertainty. This emphasis on perception is consistent with ontological security theory, but does the discourse evince the perception that an ontological dissonance existed during the Second Intifada? The results of this study, explicated in the following chapter, suggest otherwise. While some uncertainty did exist around whether the means to address the security-seeking identity of the state were congruous with the Jewish national identity, attempts to approve construction of the West Bank barrier were not successful until the policy was discursively constructed as a *solution* to the anxiety around the Jewish national identity as well.

Lupovici argues that one attractive option for states experiencing ontological dissonance is avoidance, though this is a maladaptive response. Avoidance, he explains, "is a mechanism that perpetuates and sustains conflicts, as it may undermine an actor's sensitivity to new information and its ability to respond to it."¹³⁵ He compares this option to two others. In addition to avoidance, a state may reconstruct its identity or

¹³⁴ Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity*, 35-37.

¹³⁵ Lupovici, 811.

change its behavior.¹³⁶ He argues that states' attachment to their identities makes it difficult for them to implement behavioral or identity changes.¹³⁷ I would argue, however, that it is an actor's attachment to routines, as outlined in the previous section, that determines its ability to change identity or behavior. Recall that a state that is reflexively attached to routines can learn and, therefore, incorporate new information and tolerate the mild insecurity necessary to changing routines. Conversely, a state that is rigidly attached has a reduced capacity to incorporate new information and establish new routines. Therefore, we can expect rigidly attached actors to have maladaptive responses to critical situations. Another option for addressing ontological dissonance is discursive justification. According to Sandholtz, states exist in a system of overlapping, and often conflicting, sets of rules, creating vastly more possibilities for justificatory behavior than simple cases in which only one rule set applies.¹³⁸ In such complex cases, states must navigate conflicting rule sets by justifying their behavior in terms of these rules, where one rule may negate another and vice versa. This justificatory behavior is evident in ontological security crises, as well, which is shown in the following chapter. A state may address threats to its identities by arguing that its behavior and questioned identity are not, in fact, in conflict.

Nevertheless, the option of avoidance does provide heuristic value. Let us again return to our model/salesperson. Suppose that, after many years of maintaining his identities as a model and a salesperson, performing the salesperson identity through everyday relations with customers and a promotion to team leader, and performing the

¹³⁶ Ibid., 817.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Wayne Sandholtz, "Dynamics of International Norm Change: Rules against Wartime Plunder," *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 1 (2008): 101-106.

model identity through the occasional small job with a local designer, he is faced with a threat to both of these identities. Suppose the store where he works as a salesperson closes permanently and his supervisor offers him a position in another city. Here, the course of action that will secure one identity threatens another. To avoid actively choosing one identity over another, he may choose instead to leave the city and move back home with his parents, creating a comfortable ambiguity around the identity threat by telling himself that he will get back on his feet and try again sometime in the future.

Lupovici applies these concepts to the case of Israel and the construction of the West Bank barrier, arguing that the Second Intifada created an ontological dissonance between Israel's identities as a Jewish state, as a security provider, and as a democracy. He argues that the violence of the Second Intifada was perceived to be threatened and that the attacks actually strengthened the Jewish identity of the state.¹³⁹ The threat he identifies is the "demographic threat," i.e. the fear that a growing Palestinian population may diminish the Jewish-Israeli majority. Lupovici also rightly points out that the threat to the Jewish identity of the state is also understood by Israelis "in the context of the lack of clearly defined borders."¹⁴⁰ Borders, he argues, serve a social group's sense of affiliation and belonging.

Lupovici also argues that the Israeli national identity as security provider was threatened by the Second Intifada. Israel, he explains, conceives of itself to be in a hostile political environment, which is reinforced by collective memory of the Holocaust and perceptions of the Palestinian issue as an existential threat.¹⁴¹ During the Intifada years, in which Israel experienced several failures of its general deterrence

¹³⁹ Lupovici, 822.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 823.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 824.

strategy toward Palestinians, the state's perceived failure to provide security had a greater impact than a mere physical security threat. It challenged the state's ontological security by undermining the state's security routines. In the following chapter, I argue that Israel's security-seeker identity is not so simple, as it is underpinned by a carefully maintained self-concept of security exceptionalism and ingroup identification with the international community. It was not, therefore, merely the disruption of security routines that threatened this identity, but also the international community's response to the measures initially taken by the IDF and the perception on the part of the Israeli public that the state was too conciliatory to the Palestinians, to the detriment of its citizens' safety.

Finally, Lupovici argues that the Second Intifada and the measures undertaken in response threatened Israel's identity as a democracy. Israel's actions toward its Arab minority, the occupation of Palestinian territories, and the incompatibility between Judaism and liberalism, according to Lupovici, threaten Israel's democratic identity.¹⁴² The routines of occupation, however, coexisted alongside the routines of the democratic identity through the 1967 war and the First Intifada in the 1980s and did not engender an avoidance strategy. Additionally, the incompatibility between Jewish nationalism and liberalism is only salient if Israel is a liberal democracy. Smootha argues that Israel is a non-liberal democracy and should be, instead, considered an ethnic democracy, which he defines as "a democratic system of government wherein rights are granted to all citizens while, concurrently, a favoured status is conferred upon the majority."¹⁴³

¹⁴² Ibid., 823.

¹⁴³ Sammy Smootha, "Israel as an Ethnic Democracy: Jewish-Democratic State," in *Seven Roads: Theoretical Options for the Status of the Arabs in Israel*, eds. Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, Asad Ghanem, and Ilan Pappé (1999), 24.

The ethnic democracy accepts both the principle of democracy for all and the conflicting principle of the majority's structural subordination of the minority. In the case of Israel, this means that the state is a means for furthering the interests and social objectives of the Jewish majority while the Arab minority cannot identify with the national identity.¹⁴⁴ Smootha recognizes that such opposing principles engender intractable conflicts and dilemmas, but ongoing conflicts and dilemmas are perfectly consistent with ontological security theory. A rigid attachment mode, for example, can cause an actor to cling to adversarial relationships and routines of conflict. If Israel is indeed an ethnic democracy, the Jewish identity and the ethnic democratic identity would be supported by the same routines, drastically decreasing the likelihood that these two identities and the measures needed to secure them could be anything but congruous.

Finally, Israel's actions of exclusion toward its Arab minority may not be as incompatible with its democratic identity as Lupovici assumes. Pedahzur, quoting the Israeli High Court of Justice, argues that the state of Israel is a "defending democracy" and defines this as a state that "possesses an implied power, similar to self-defence, to fight against subversive attempts designed to destroy it."¹⁴⁵ He argues that a defending democracy may exclude from the democratic process groups who are perceived as endangering the state, its regime, or its national consensus.¹⁴⁶ Because the state of Israel considers the routines of a defending democracy legitimate, weakening or excluding a demographic it sees as a threat to its political regime or basic national consensus is well

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ami Pedahzur, *The Israeli Response to Jewish Extremism and Violence: Defending Democracy*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 4.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 5.

within its conceptualization of its democratic identity as an ethnic democracy with routines of a defending democracy and may, in fact, support it rather than threaten it.

It is possible, then, that the Second Intifada threatened Israelis' intersubjectively held national identities, engendering ontological insecurity, without necessarily creating conditions under which measures of resolution would be incompatible with other identities. The Likud party, which held a substantial public mandate at the time of the Second Intifada, might conceptualize democracy differently than Lupovici. If this is the case, and if this conceptualization is salient to the state's decision-making with regard to the West Bank barrier, this understanding of the state's democratic identity must be dominant in the discourse, and it must be perceived to be under threat. If it is dominant in the discourse but is not perceived to be under threat, this would suggest that the Likud party's conceptualization of Israel's democratic identity is compatible with the measures necessary to secure the state's other identities, negating an ontological dissonance where this identity is concerned.

In this chapter, I have detailed the theory of ontological security, incorporating social-psychological concepts of identity, routines, attachment, and critical situations. I then extrapolated these concepts to the state level, conceptualizing the state as a social group and a social actor, and defending the state as an ontological security-seeker. Finally, I outlined one application of this theory to the case of Israel and problematized Lupovici's arguments for ontological dissonance and avoidance as explanations for Israel's construction of the West Bank barrier. The following chapter details my empirical analysis of the discourses salient to the Israeli decision-making process during the Intifada years. I will discuss each identity threatened by the violence of the Intifada

and the role of ontological insecurity in the decision to construct the barrier, providing evidence of the identity threat in the discourse, as well as evidence of the discursive construction of the barrier as a solution to the ontological insecurity.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter details the results of analysis of 63 texts, comprised of 7 interviews, 8 government reports, 41 news articles and op-eds, and 7 political speeches. Discourse analysis finds evidence of an ontological security crisis that threatened the identities of the state of Israel as a security-seeking state and a Jewish state. In contrast to Lupovici's findings as outlined in the previous chapter, this analysis finds no significant evidence that the West Bank barrier was a measure of avoidance. While the evidence does suggest some insecurity around the state's democratic identity, the discourse also shows that, following Sandholtz, this insecurity was largely mitigated through the discursive construction of the measures taken to secure the Jewish national identity as justified and in fact supported by the democratic national identity, especially in the eyes of political elites. This is largely due to a difference between Lupovici's conceptualization of the Israeli democracy and that of the ruling party in the Israeli government (and indeed a large public consensus).

Rather than an avoidance measure, this study finds that the barrier policy as part of Israel's unilateral disengagement plan was eventually, after much discursive work, constructed as a direct solution to the ontological security threat to the state's security-seeking and Jewish identities. The following sections discuss the national identities present in the discourse, both how these identities were threatened by the Second Intifada and how each identity impacted and was impacted by the decision to erect the West Bank barrier. The salient identities evident in the political discourse surrounding the Intifada and the barrier policy decision, as also evident in Lupovici's analysis, are

the security-seeking state identity, the Jewish national identity, and the democratic national identity, with some important conceptual differences to Lupovici's analysis.

The Security-Seeking State Identity

The Second Intifada threatened Israel's identity as a security-seeking state. To understand the threat to this identity posed by the Intifada, it is important to unpack the various concepts that comprise this identity for the state of Israel. Israel's security-seeking state identity is comprised of Israelis' conceptualizations of the state as existing as a law-abiding member of the international system, characterized by a sameness with other states in the system, but within a perpetually exceptional security situation. The state's security-seeker identity is highlighted by what Merom calls the myth of security exceptionalism. He argues that this exceptionalism is the product of the Jewish and Israeli people's historical experiences of persecution, a belief in moral superiority as a divinely "chosen" people, and the perception that Israel's security challenges are unique and, therefore, require unique solutions.¹⁴⁷ Merom explains that the myth of security exceptionalism is reified by the reproduction of three exaggerated perceptions: the perception of a power imbalance between Israel and its neighbors, the perception of Arabs' hostile intentions, and the perception of Arabs' aggressive behavior.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, as Alpher argues, Palestinian terrorism, while not an existential threat to Israel, is nevertheless integrated into Israelis' sense of existential danger.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Israel's identity as a security-seeking state is perfectly encapsulated in an often repeated

¹⁴⁷ Gil Merom, "Israel's National Security and the Myth of Exceptionalism," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 3 (1999): 410-13.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 413.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Alpher, "Israel's Security Concerns in the Peace Process," *International Affairs* 70, no. 2 (April, 1994): 232.

sentiment that “no other nation in the world has before this time faced such an intense wave of terror” and that, faced with such, any other state would respond with at least as much force as Israel has done.¹⁵⁰ Underpinning Israel’s national identity as a security-seeking state is the insistence in the discourse that, particularly when dealing with the Palestinian issue, Israel seeks security—no more, no less. While Israelis conceptualize the state as a law-abiding member of the international community, they understand their security environment as unique.

Recall from the previous chapter that state identities are constructed and maintained through routinized relationships and that disruptions to those routines subject a social actor’s behavior to constant scrutiny. It is this scrutiny that evinces in the discourse, bringing issues of identity into the fore and prompting discursive reassertions of the threatened identity. Discursive reassertions of the security-seeking state identity take three forms: selective legitimization of violence, othering, and identification with the international community. According to this analysis, as the Intifada draws scrutiny from the international community, interlocutors simultaneously assert Israel’s similarity to other states in the international community while emphasizing a perceived uniqueness of its security environment.

Legitimization of Violence

The violence emanating from both sides of the Second Intifada threatened the security-seeking state identity in part by calling into question the legitimacy of the Israeli response. One particular response that receives much criticism in the discourse is

¹⁵⁰ “Saving Lives,” 5.

a recharacterization of the state's relationship with Palestinians vis-à-vis their interactions with the army. Following the outbreak of violence in September of 2000, the Israeli Defense Forces expanded their use of deadly force by defining the events as "armed conflict short of war" and expanding the definition of "life threatening," the acceptable condition for the use of deadly force under Israeli law.¹⁵¹ These changes are widely criticized in the discourse by international and left-leaning domestic sources. For example, one report from a left-leaning Israeli news source refers to the Israeli Defense Forces as "trigger happy" in their response to Palestinian violence.¹⁵² The report elaborates:

Senior IDF officials have repeatedly rejected claims that soldiers fire without justification and claim that the IDF refrains from harming innocent persons. This report contradicts these claims: The IDF's open-fire policy throughout this intifada has resulted in extensive harm to Palestinian civilians who were not involved in any activity against Israel. These incidents are not "exceptional" cases, but rather they constitute a large portion of the casualties throughout the Occupied Territories.¹⁵³

Challenges to the legitimacy of the Israeli government's security response to the Second Intifada threatens the security-seeking state identity, rendering the routines that reaffirm this identity vulnerable to scrutiny. Because the state's security apparatus is perceived

¹⁵¹ "Trigger Happy: Unjustified Gunfire and the IDF's Open-Fire Regulations during the al-Aqsa Intifada," *B'Tselem* (Jerusalem), March, 2002.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

to be motivated by ends that are unrelated to physical security, i.e. they are perceived as illegitimate, the security-seeking state identity is threatened.

Additionally, perceived failure on the part of Israeli representatives to make progress toward physical security ends threatens this identity. A 2001 interview with Former foreign minister Shlomo Ben-Ami published in a left-leaning newspaper exemplifies this perceived failure in the early years of the Intifada. Ben-Ami explains, “Yasser Arafat is hurtling us back into the 1970s, and Ariel Sharon into the 1950s. Even here, in Kfar Sava, you can hear shooting at night. Every night, for nearly the whole night, you can hear shooting from the yard.”¹⁵⁴ This statement is particularly rich with imagery that is common to the early discourse of the Intifada. When Ben-Ami claims that Arafat is hurtling the conflict back into the 1970s, he is calling to mind the anxiety of the last hurrah of pan-Arabism vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, arguing that Arafat is attempting to revive a Cold War style tension between Israel and its neighbors and the heyday of the PLO. This anxiety around the strengthening of Arafat’s political position is prevalent in the discourse.

Additionally, when Ben-Ami recalls the 1950s, he is arguing that then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is pushing the state of Israel back into a time of austerity, rapid confiscation of territory leading to international scrutiny, and intense security threat when the Law of Return (1950) granted Jewish people worldwide the right to make *Aliyah*, religious permanent immigration to Israel, increasing settlements and inflaming tensions with Arab neighbors. The 1950s in Israel was characterized simultaneously by an intense Zionist fervor as well as existential threat to the newly independent state.

¹⁵⁴ Ari Shavit, “End of a Journey,” *Haaretz* (Jerusalem), September 13, 2001.

Finally, Ben-Ami's assertion that gunfire could be heard even from Kfar Sava is a powerful indictment of the government's ability to secure the state and is repeated often in the discourse. Kfar Sava is a city in the Central District of Israel. Cries of audible gunfire in this area point to the failure of the state to secure even its most interior cities. Indeed, mention of clashes in central Israel are frequently juxtaposed with reminders of the state's responsibility to protect its citizens, accusing the government of abdicating this responsibility in futile peace efforts and calling the security-seeking state identity into question.¹⁵⁵ Such accusations and anxiety are present in left and right-leaning sources.

Discursive threats to Israel's identity as a security-seeking state emanate from sources along the entire length of Israel's political spectrum. Far right-leaning news sources question the security-seeking actions of Israel's representatives in their attempts to address the violence of the Intifada, referring to former Prime Minister Ehud Barak's concessions in peace negotiations as "profligate" and the rejection of these concessions as proof that there is no security end served by negotiating.¹⁵⁶ In calls to action, some sources refer to Israel's previous security decisions as signals of weakness to Arafat, including calling into question Israel's withdrawal from the Lebanese civil war, arguing that Arafat "has just seen Israel, facing guerrilla war in Lebanon, abjectly surrender and withdraw unilaterally...now, after a year of his own guerrilla war within Palestine, the balance of forces with Israel has shifted dramatically in his favor," again juxtaposing this accusation with a reminder of the government's responsibility to its

¹⁵⁵ Charles Krauthammer, "Arafat's War: How to End It," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), March 9, 2001.

¹⁵⁶ Elyakim Haetzni, "So What's Your Solution," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), August 1, 2002.

citizens' perceptions of physical security, exclaiming, "Israelis are afraid. They are afraid to send their children to the mall. They are afraid to go to the movies. They are afraid to drive the open road. And even worse, they are demoralized. They have lost hope."¹⁵⁷

By way of response to claims of illegitimacy of violence by international and domestic left-wing interlocutors, the Israeli government reasserts the legitimacy of its actions while delegitimizing Palestinian violence, constructing its use of violence as legitimate by comparison. Israeli government documents and political speeches show a discursive delegitimization of Palestinian violence, which is achieved through minimization and misrepresentation of Palestinians' grievances, as well as discussion of Palestinian violence as distinctly unjustified. One common way in which interlocutors minimize Palestinians' grievances is the misrepresentation of the beginning of the Second Intifada. Israeli government websites and speeches given by government officials minimize the salience of Ariel Sharon's actions on the Temple Mount (known by Muslims as Haram al-Sharif), referring to the event as a "visit" and avoiding any mention of the armed guards, Sharon's antagonistic mission, or perceived desecration of Muslim holy sites.¹⁵⁸

Another minimization of Palestinians' grievances is evident in the imprecise translation of *intifada*. Israeli government documents and news reports translate *intifada* as *uprising*.¹⁵⁹ This is a simplistic translation that ignores what the term means to those

¹⁵⁷ Krauthammer.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions- Palestinian Violence and Terrorism- The International War against Terrorism," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid; also "Four Years of Conflict: Israel's War against Terrorism," Jerusalem: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004.

engaged in intifada demonstrations. *Intifada* comes from an Arabic root word that means “to shake off”. Stripping *intifada* of its context and connotations obscures the subtext of oppression and resistance, minimizing the grievances underpinning the Palestinian violence of the Intifada and rendering such violence illegitimate. This minimization in the discourse reveals the Israeli perception of Palestinian violence as unjustified, illegitimate, and disproportionate and, more importantly, the perceived need on the part of interlocutors to reaffirm the legitimacy of the Israeli response by comparison in support of its identity as a security-seeking state.

In addition to minimization of Palestinians’ grievances, the discourse reveals wholesale delegitimization of all Palestinian violence as unjust and unjustified. Israeli government documents refer to Palestinian acts of violence as “mass murder attacks”, “murderous attacks”, “hostile terrorist activity”, and “indiscriminate terrorism”.¹⁶⁰ This language is also evident in left and right-leaning Israeli news articles and NGO briefs published after the release of these government reports.¹⁶¹ Only far-left domestic sources eschew this language. Couching the Intifada in terms of unjustified and indiscriminate violence absent provocation shows a discursive effort to reassert the security-seeking state identity in the face of international and far-left attacks on this identity as outlined above. As the international community and far-left news sources question the legitimacy of the Israeli response, arguing essentially that Israel’s relationship to Palestinians supports an identity of occupier, rather than of a law-abiding

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ See, for example, Mark Ami-El, “The Destruction of the Temple Mount Antiquities,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, August 1, 2002, <http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp483.htm>.; and Eli Kazhdan, “Jerusalem Issue Brief: What Exactly Does Israel Have on Yasser Arafat?,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, September 30, 2003, <http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief3-6.htm>.

security-seeking state, domestic right and center-left sources attempt to reaffirm the security-seeker identity by delegitimizing Palestinian violence in comparison.

While the Israeli political discourse on the Intifada constructs Palestinian acts of violence as illegitimate, it legitimizes Israeli acts of violence. The same government reports that label Palestinian violence as “indiscriminate terrorism” differentiate Israeli violence by characterizing it as “preventive, precisely targeted operations” against “legitimate military targets,” arguing that “all civilized nations” would behave in the same way.¹⁶² Israeli government reports also emphasize Israeli statehood and sovereignty to bolster claims of legitimate use of force; each government document analyzed refers repeatedly to statehood and sovereignty when discussing Israel’s response to violence.¹⁶³

Additionally, Israeli government officials use misdirection to uphold the legitimacy of the state’s actions in the eyes of interlocutors in the international community, suggesting a need on the part of the government to reassert an identity under threat. For example, in a 2001 interview with C-SPAN contributor Peter Slen, former Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations and then senior advisor to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Dore Gold, dodges questions about Arab civilian deaths at the hands of the Israeli Defense Forces. When asked about a news story in which an Arab child was shot by IDF soldiers in Gaza, Gold responds by arguing that Palestinians should not bring children to areas of confrontation, ignoring the fact that such

¹⁶² See “Answers to Frequently Asked Questions,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs; also “Four Years of Conflict: Israel’s War against Terrorism,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

confrontation often takes place in Palestinian residential districts.¹⁶⁴ In the same interview, when asked about the death of a Palestinian Authority spokeswoman, Gold redirects to an unrelated IDF mission in which a terror group was apprehended before committing a planned attack, transforming the attention on the IDF from negative to positive.¹⁶⁵ Such discursive engagements with the international community in particular show a perceived threat to the security-seeking state identity and an attempt to reassert it. Relationships are co-constitutive of identities. Therefore, Israel's preferred role identity within the international system can only be supported inasmuch as Israel's identity as a law-abiding security-seeking state is recognized by its significant others.

Like Any Other State

One half of the security exceptionalism concept underpinning Israel's identity as a security-seeking state is its perceived unique security environment, as discussed above. The other half of this concept is in Israel's perceived sameness: its identification with other law-abiding states in the international system. Scrutiny of Israel's response to violence during the Intifada called this sameness, and with it Israel's identity as a security-seeking state, into question. In an op-ed published by a right-leaning Israeli news source, for example, the author laments, "Israel is not just suffering, it is isolated. The vilification of Israel, temporarily moderated during the Oslo interlude, has resumed full force at the United Nations, the Arab League and in Europe."¹⁶⁶ The international community's relationship with Israel during the Intifada years failed to affirm Israel's

¹⁶⁴ Dore Gold, interview by Peter Slen, "Middle East Issues," *C-SPAN*, March 20, 2001.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Krauthammer, 2001.

identity as a security-seeking state, prompting much anxiety over this role identity in the discourse.

The discourse on the political far-left reveals an internalized identity insecurity, joining the international community's assessment that Israel violated international law.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, publications by the Israeli government and right-leaning sources include reinterpretations of international law meant to show Israel's compliance and reaffirm its identity vis-à-vis the international community.¹⁶⁸ One government document, for example, asserts, "The Government of Israel has an obligation to defend its citizens against terrorism. This right of self-defense is anchored in international law. The antiterrorist fence is an act of self-defense that saves lives."¹⁶⁹ Arguments within the discourse around Israel's compliance with international law point to a perceived threat against Israel's role identity within the international community, a vital component of the security-seeking state identity.

The anxiety around Israel's identity as a security-seeking state goes beyond mere discursive hand-wringing over international law, appearing in assertions that the state of Israel is an honest international insider, no different from any other state, as well as conceptualizations of the Palestinian leadership as a dishonest other, a rogue outsider. Much of the discourse around Israel's identification with the international community during the Intifada years is characterized by the insistence that Israel is fundamentally no different from other law-abiding states in the international system and

¹⁶⁷ See, for example, "Behind the Barrier: Human Rights Violations As a Result of Israel's Separation Barrier," *B'Tselem* (Jerusalem), April, 2003; Yehezkel Lein, "The Separation Barrier: Position Paper," *B'Tselem* (Jerusalem), 2002.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions- Palestinian Violence," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002; also "Saving Lives," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003.

¹⁶⁹ "Saving Lives," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003.

that other states simply do not understand Israel's unique security environment.

Decrying the international community's response to Israel's anti-terror measures, one right-leaning publication argues, "The policy of targeting terrorist ringleaders has been called "assassination" and widely denounced. These denunciations are the epitome of hypocrisy. What country would not go after those who were sending bombs into the middle of its cities?"¹⁷⁰ Further, "no country can tolerate the bloodshed daily inflicted on Israel by Arafat's war. At some point either this government will act, or it will fall and a new government will do what needs to be done."¹⁷¹

Similar language depicting Israel as no different from other states is also present in left-leaning sources. Explaining the failure of the 2000 Camp David Summit, one Israeli diplomat defines the failure in terms of Israel's good-faith attempts, "In the end, even the most moderate negotiator reaches a point where he understands that there is no end to it."¹⁷² Israeli government documents also repeatedly assert Israel's in-group status, claiming that, faced with similar violence, any other state would respond as Israel has done, if not more forcefully.¹⁷³

Israelis' conceptualization of their national identity as just like any other security-seeking state and its anxiety over this threatened identity is also evidenced in feelings of betrayal or mistreatment by their ingroup: the international community. Railing against the international community's admonishments, some sources point to other states' actions as proof of a hypocritical bias against Israel:

¹⁷⁰ Krauthammer, 2001.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Shavit, 2001.

¹⁷³ "Saving Lives," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003.

In 1998, President Clinton ordered cruise missile attacks on Usama bin Laden's bases in Afghanistan. The obvious objective was to kill him. Or failing that, to kill enough of his followers to deter or slow down their operations. And when, in 1986, the United States found Libya responsible for a terrorist bombing that killed two American soldiers in a Berlin discotheque, it did not send Qaddafi a subpoena. It bombed his tent.¹⁷⁴

Criticism from the international community of Israel's early response to the violence of the Intifada prompted Israeli interlocutors to reassert the legitimacy of the state's security-seeking actions. The form of these discursive reassertions of identity reveal an identification with other states in the international community and anxiety when this identification is not recognized in the state's relationships within its ingroup. A particularly interesting aspect of this ingroup identification is Israel's perception of belonging to a Western ingroup specifically. In justifying the state's turn from diplomacy to unilateral military action during the Intifada, for example, interlocutors commonly place Israel within the context of Western civilization. In an op-ed published by a right-leaning news organization, for example, one author proclaims Israel's need for a military solution in terms of other great military solutions of Western history, arguing that the military victory needed to secure the Israeli state is no different from the conquests of Alexander the Great that led to the establishment of the Hellenistic world, the victory of Napoleon at Waterloo, or Europe's victory over the Third Reich.¹⁷⁵

In addition to asserting its identity as a security-seeking state through its status as a member of an ingroup characterized by such, the state and other domestic sources

¹⁷⁴ Krauthammer, 2001.

¹⁷⁵ Haetzni, 2002.

cast the Palestinian Authority, by contrast, as a dishonest *other*, an outsider. This is not to say that interlocutors necessarily cynically employ discourses of national identity to otherize an enemy. Rather, the way in which Israel conceptualizes the PA's otherness provides insight into its own identity and the threats perceived. One op-ed, for example, highlights the perceived bad-faith negotiating of the Palestinian Authority, exclaiming that Israel took many risks to negotiate in good faith, "giving Arafat his armed mini-state and adding steadily to its territory under relentless pressure from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright" only to have Arafat return the favor with attacks on "innocents outside a Tel Aviv discotheque, in a Jerusalem pizzeria, in a Haifa cafeteria."¹⁷⁶ Such perceived bad-faith negotiating is seen by Israelis as "driving wedges between Israel and its allies," inviting unfair criticism from the international community and intensifying anxiety around the ingroup status that underpins Israel's identity as a security-seeking state.¹⁷⁷

The view of Arafat himself and the PA more broadly as bad-faith negotiators is present in right-leaning and government sources as well as left-leaning sources. A former Labor Party official in an interview for a left-leaning publication, for example, echoes these feelings of betrayal and disappointment, decrying the PA's rigidity in the failed 2000 Camp David Summit:

I asked them which of the sides here wanted to establish a state - us or them. I felt terribly frustrated that we were making such a creative, flexible move and reaching one of the finest moments of the negotiations, and they couldn't free themselves from their gibes, from the need for vindication, from their victimization.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Krauthammer, 2001.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Shavit, 2001.

Much of the discourse of otherization of the PA vis-à-vis the international community juxtaposes the perceived untrustworthy character of Palestinian officials with the perceived surprising level of support they receive from Israel's ingroup. In a widely-circulated op-ed originally published in the *Jerusalem Post* and shared online through blogs and newsletters in 2003, for example, journalist Bret Stephens proclaims Saeb Erekat, former negotiator for the Palestinian Authority, a liar and criticizes Western publications in general and the New York Times specifically for publishing Erekat's pieces uncritically.¹⁷⁹ He argues that the West betrays Israel by taking part in the PA's "propaganda war" and accuses Erekat of intellectual dishonesty, stating, "Let's dispatch with the notion that the existence of settlements simply propels Palestinians to violence, as if they were incapable of mature moral reflection, or that anything less than complete acquiescence to Palestinian demands can make for a peaceful settlement or a two-state solution."¹⁸⁰

The state of Israel, as part of its identity as a security-seeking state, considers itself a law-abiding member of the international community while viewing the PA as an untrustworthy violator of international law. The otherizing discourse around the PA exemplifies Israel's construction of this identity in terms of ingroup and outgroup identification. This is evinced not only in discursive references to the PA, but also in Israelis' feelings of betrayal by the international community more broadly and especially the Western ingroup more specifically. The selective legitimization of violence, as shown by Israeli discourse around themes of statehood and sovereignty,

¹⁷⁹ Bret Stephens, "Liar, Liar," *The Truth about Israel Take a Pen*, January 3, 2003.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

reveals not only the ingroup component of Israel's identity as a security-seeking state but also the anxiety produced by threats to this identity. Multiple reassertions of sovereignty, statehood, and sameness vis-à-vis the international community reveal the threat to the security-seeking state identity caused by international and domestic scrutiny of Israel's response to violence during the Second Intifada. The need to reaffirm the security-seeking state identity to its citizens as well as the international community created a tension between public opinion and international law.

Public opinion surveys confirm the public demand for security by increasingly military means as found in the discourse, but this is not a simple result of Intifada violence. In 2002, 41 percent of Jewish Israelis surveyed said that they were prepared to make fewer concessions to the Palestinians than they were before the Intifada began, compared to 10% who classified their attitudes as having become more conciliatory. This is a significant change compared to the First Intifada. Over the years of the first intifada, from 1987 to 1993, 20% reported becoming more militant, and 20% more conciliatory, while the remainder claimed no change.¹⁸¹ An aggressive military solution, while demanded by the far-right, would have opened Israel to further international condemnation, threatening its role identity vis-à-vis the international community. Conversely, as discussed above, additional concessions on the part of Israel toward negotiations with the PA would further damage Israelis' trust in their state as a security-seeker. The decision to erect a barrier as part of a unilateral disengagement plan provided the least undesirable physical security option vis-à-vis this identity.

¹⁸¹ Arian, 2002.

Opposition to the barrier on the grounds of the security-seeking state identity is absent from the discourse leading up to the decision with the notable exception of very far-left publications like B'Tselem, but the themes evident in these publications are not evident elsewhere and have little impact on the wider discourse. Opposition to the barrier on the grounds of the security-seeking state identity relies solely on the ingroup aspect of this identity, specifically speculation about potential human rights violations that may occur as a result of the barrier, relying on previous routines established between Israel and the Palestinians as evidence.¹⁸² The Israeli government, however, has a long history of interpreting international law in ways that safeguard this identity, insulating the particular routines referenced in these criticisms from scrutiny by discursively dismissing it.¹⁸³ Furthermore, because the only opposition to the barrier's construction within the themes of this security-seeking state identity rely upon a relationship with the Palestinians that is already routinized and well-within the wider Israeli conception of this national identity, such opposition does not successfully problematize the barrier in terms of the security-seeking state identity. Successful problematization is more evident within the context of the Jewish national identity, but this is debated not in terms of the decision to construct the barrier, but its route.

The Jewish National Identity

The Intifada also threatened the Jewish national identity of the state of Israel. According to every interview I conducted with Israeli Knesset members, aids, journalists, and one academic, the most salient identity to the state of Israel, particularly when dealing with

¹⁸² Lein, 2002.

¹⁸³ See, for example, "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions," 2002; also "Saving Lives" 2003.

the Palestinian issue, is the Jewish national identity.¹⁸⁴ It is necessary here to explicate the finer details of this identity to understand how the Second Intifada threatened it and how the separation barrier was discursively constructed as a means to secure it. In an interview with the author in July 2017, a political scientist who requested anonymity explains that the Jewish national identity is inextricable from the Jewish historical experience of persecution and diaspora.¹⁸⁵ For the Jewish people, the political memory of the Holocaust, historical denial of a Jewish homeland, persecution of diaspora communities, and perceived anti-Semitism from the international community produce perceptions of physical insecurity that a Jewish state, existing specifically on the religiously and historically significant Jewish homeland, alleviates.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, these themes of historical trauma, anti-Semitism, and connection to the land are frequently juxtaposed with the Jewish national identity in the discourse, particularly when that identity is perceived to be under threat. This section discusses the perceived threat posed to the Jewish national identity by the Second Intifada and the discursive construction of the barrier as a potential solution or further threat, depending on the interlocutor. Themes of otherizing and delegitimization are also present.

The Arab Other

One way in which the Jewish national identity manifests in the political discourse around the Intifada is in the otherization of Arabs. Israeli government documents, NGO briefs, and news reports discursively separate Arabs in general from the larger Israeli populous, effectively othering the Arab minority while asserting

¹⁸⁴ Binyamin Begin (Member of Knesset), Tal Schneider (journalist), and Or Keshet (Parliamentary Aid) in discussion with the author, June 2017.

¹⁸⁵ Anonymous (political scientist) in discussion with the author, July 2017.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

Jewish national identity. In a 2004 report on the Intifada, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs refers separately to Jewish and Arab Israelis, referring to Israeli Jews as citizens and Israeli Arabs as residents.¹⁸⁷ This rhetoric normalizes the othering of not only Palestinian Arabs, but also those Arabs who hold Israeli citizenship. Furthermore, the same report frequently refers to terror attacks in terms of Jewish holidays.¹⁸⁸ Highlighting terror attacks as occurring the week of Rosh Hashanah or the night before Passover, for example, juxtaposes Arab violence with Jewish identity, intimating an attack on Jewishness specifically, rather than on all Israeli citizens, and othering even Israeli Arab citizens by denying their victimhood. This othering is evident in government documents and right-leaning publications as well as left-leaning sources.¹⁸⁹

This otherizing of Arab-Israeli citizens in Ministry publications is specific to the years of the Second Intifada. In documents published in the years immediately prior to the outset of the Second Intifada, Arab-Israelis are referred to as citizens, rather than residents.¹⁹⁰ Reference to Arab-Israelis as citizens is notably absent from Ministry of Foreign Affairs publications from the years 2000 through 2005, with very few references to Arab-Israelis as anything other than “residents” or “inhabitants” until 2007.¹⁹¹ In a 2016 op-ed in *The Times of Israel* calling for completion of the barrier, one

¹⁸⁷ “Four Years of Conflict: Israel’s War against Terrorism,” 14-18.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-7.

¹⁸⁹ See, for example, “8,000 ‘Serious’ Terror Attacks in Past Year,” *Haaretz.com*, September 24, 2001, <https://www.haaretz.com/8-000-serious-terror-attacks-in-past-year-1.63205>; also Amos Harel, “The Last of the Shooters- for Now,” *Haaretz.com*, September 22, 2002, <https://www.haaretz.com/the-last-of-the-shooters-for-now-1.63215>.

¹⁹⁰ See, for example, “Address in the Knesset by Prime Minister Elect Ehud Barack upon the Presentation of His Government,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 7, 1999; “Basic Guidelines of the Government of Israel,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 6, 1999; and “Remarks by President Clinton and Prime Minister Ehud Barack,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 15, 1999.

¹⁹¹ See, for example, “PMO Dir.-Gen Dinur Meets with Arab Local Council Heads,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 20, 2006; “FM Livni Addresses 7th Herzliya Conference,” Israel Ministry of

interlocutor claims that “benign security conditions” significantly reduced public pressure to complete the “gaping holes” in the barrier, which has remained incomplete since construction halted in 2007.¹⁹² Additionally, Alpher argues that Israel has historically sought to achieve a public *perception* of security.¹⁹³ This suggests that the same perceived threat reduction that led to the abandonment of the barrier’s construction in 2007 may also have led to the abandonment of otherization of Arabs around the same time, pointing to a perceived reduction in the threat to the Jewish national identity.

Another example of the perceived threat to the Jewish identity during the Second Intifada is the practice of publishing data on Jewish victims of violence since the Intifada began in September 2000. In the intense anxiety around the Jewish identity during the Intifada, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya, Israel published a list in 2003 of all the Jewish victims of anti-Semitic violence worldwide from 1968 to the date of publication.¹⁹⁴ This list made national news and spoke to the perceived insecurity of the Jewish identity itself, not only the perceived threat to the Jewish state. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a similar list in 2001 for domestic victims of Palestinian terrorism and keeps this list updated, with the last entry in March of 2018.¹⁹⁵ Here, as in other Israeli government publications mentioned above,

Foreign Affairs, January 22, 2007; “Meeting of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert with the Foreign Press in Israel,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 21, 2007.

¹⁹² Daniel Rosehill, “Israel’s Leaky Security Barrier a Free Pass for Terror Cells,” *Times of Israel*, last modified June 10, 2016, <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/israels-leaky-security-barrier-a-free-pass-for-terror-cells/>.

¹⁹³ Alpher, 232.

¹⁹⁴ Michael Whine, “Terrorist Incidents Against Jewish Communities and Israeli Citizens Abroad, 1968-2003,” International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, December 20, 2003.

¹⁹⁵ “Victims of Palestinian Violence and Terrorism Since September 2000,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Last modified March 18, 2018.

Arab-Israeli citizens who were victims of violence are referred to as “residents”.¹⁹⁶ This suggests that, even after the crisis period of intense threat to the Jewish national identity has ended, Palestinian violence in particular remains a perceived threat to this identity.

While the discourse surrounding the Jewish national identity during the Intifada otherizes Arab-Israelis by denying their citizenship and, with it, their victimhood in the Intifada violence, the discourse further otherizes Arab-Israelis by constructing them as indistinct from the Palestinian enemy. News sources and government reports on violence committed by Palestinians either use the terms “Arab” and “Palestinian” interchangeably or eschew the word “Palestinian” altogether, referring to every perpetrator of a terror attack as an “Arab.” As one article reports, “The police caught a busload of 62 Palestinian infiltrators along the Afula-Jenin highway this afternoon. The Arabs had painted the vehicle to make it look like an Egged bus, and one of the passengers even wore a yarmulke for the occasion.”¹⁹⁷ Highlighting their identities as Arabs as well as Palestinians obscures any distinction between the two, revealing the conceptualization of the Palestinians and Arab-Israelis as more alike than Arab-Israelis and Jewish-Israelis. Later in the same article, the reporter notes, “Later today, Arabs shot at a car north of Ganim in the northern Shomron; no one was hurt, but bullets hit the car...”¹⁹⁸

Other similar reports of violence refer only to “Arab assailants” in opposition to “Israeli” victims, further evincing the conceptualization of *Arab* as indistinct from the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ “Flames of P.A. Violence Simmer,” *Israel National News*, June 24, 2001.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

Palestinian political enemy and, more importantly, as distinctly *not Israeli*.¹⁹⁹ This obscures the distinction between Arab-Israelis and Palestinians, reasserting the Jewish national identity by constructing every Arab as a potentially threatening, non-Israeli other. This construction of Arabs as a threatening other is supported in public opinion surveys, as well. According to a 2002 poll of Jewish Israelis, 42 percent thought that “Arabs wanted to kill much of the Jewish population of Israel” and an additional 26 percent reported thinking Arabs wanted to conquer the state of Israel, meaning that 68 percent of the Jewish-Israelis surveyed perceived Arabs as a threat.²⁰⁰

International Threat to Identity

Perceived threat to the Jewish identity of the Israeli state during the Intifada is also evident in references to Israel’s relationship to the Palestinian Authority, its other Arab neighbors, and its ingroup: the international community. In the public discourse, perceptions of this threat are expressed in themes of trust, betrayal, and anti-Semitism. One op-ed published by Israel’s most popular right-leaning news source exemplifies this sentiment, lamenting, “not only do even pro-Western Arab states, like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, talk of making war on Israel again, but even the basest of anti-Semitic calumnies, the ‘Zionism is racism’ canard, has been resurrected at a U.N. conference on racism, no less. The mask of ‘recognition’ is off.”²⁰¹ The recognition referenced here is the recognition of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. Israel has sought such recognition from its ingroup as well as from the Palestinian Authority in negotiations

¹⁹⁹ “Arab Assault on Israeli Car Results in Accident,” *Israel National News*, March 6, 2001.

²⁰⁰ Asher Arian, *Israeli Public Opinion on National Security*, Tel Aviv University Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 2002, 21.

²⁰¹ Krauthammer, 2001.

from Oslo to Taba, and much insecurity around this recognition is evinced in the discourse during the Intifada years.²⁰² This statement exemplifies Israelis' feelings of betrayal by the international community and perceived dishonesty on the part of Arab states with regard to their recognition of Israel.

Many interlocutors also perceive Arafat himself as uncompromising and his motives as anti-Semitic, making connections to the collective political memory of the Holocaust. For example:

So long as one could imagine him as a peace partner, simply wanting a better deal but ready in the end to accept a Jewish state living side-by-side with Palestine, one could imagine needing him. Yet Arafat has not wavered from the unbroken Palestinian tradition of rejecting compromise. In 1947, when the Palestinians were offered a state side-by-side with a Jewish state, they rejected it in favor of a war of extermination, a war that failed. In 1978, they were offered negotiations and autonomy after the Camp David peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. The PLO rejected the offer root and branch.²⁰³

Reference to a war of extermination calls to mind the motives of the Nazis during the Holocaust, connecting the Palestinian leadership's actions to a historical trauma for Jewish people and drawing into focus the perceived threat, not simply to Israel as a state, but to its Jewish people and Jewish identity. Discursive constructions of this much-desired recognition almost always include references to the Jewish identity.

There Is No Palestine, Only Israel

²⁰² See, for example, Danial J. Elazar, "Why No Separate Palestinian State West of the Jordan," Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, February 1, 2002.

²⁰³ Krauthammer, 2001.

As outlined above, an important component of the Jewish national identity, and one that was clearly threatened by the events of the Second Intifada, is the Jewish connection to Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel. Eretz Yisrael is a concept of the ancient Jewish homeland which includes some areas already under unilateral control of the state of Israel, as well as Jerusalem, Judea and Sumeria (the Biblical and officially recognized names for the two regions comprising the West Bank), and Gaza. In this way, the Jewish national identity includes a claim to specific physical territory that includes land currently occupied by Palestinians. The state's claim to these lands, and therefore its Jewish identity, was threatened during the 2000 Camp David negotiations and the subsequent Intifada, and much anxiety over this identity threat is evident in the discourse. Interlocutors are compelled to insist on Judea and Sumeria as parts of "the rest of Israel," balking at even the term *West Bank*.²⁰⁴

Additionally, ancestral claims to Eretz Yisrael are juxtaposed with delegitimization of Palestinian claims. References to a controversial 1984 book by Joan Peters, in which she argues against Palestinian claims of indigeneity, feature widely in arguments against Palestinians' rights to the land. These arguments are frequently accompanied by the claim that there has never been a Palestinian land, nor Palestinians from which to confiscate land, because there has never been a Palestine.²⁰⁵ The need to discursively delegitimize Palestinian claims to territory on ethno-religious grounds while asserting Jewish claims on the same grounds intimates the perception that

²⁰⁴ "Green Line Patrol Begins" *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), August 6, 2001.

²⁰⁵ David Wilder, "Will the Real Zionism Please Stand Up," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), February 14, 2002; also, Daniel Pipes, "Jerusalem in Islam? Part II," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), November 20, 2001.

challenges to Israel's right to specific lands are perceived as challenges to the Jewish national identity.

The Barrier Debate

The decision to build the West Bank barrier is largely constructed in terms of the Jewish national identity, and debate as to its acceptability as a policy option mostly revolves around the extent to which the barrier would uphold or threaten this identity. As journalist Tal Schneider recalls, support for and opposition to the barrier policy came from the political left as well as the right, but the Jewish national identity remained central to the issue.²⁰⁶ The threat to the Jewish national identity often takes the form of anxiety around a lack of clearly defined borders.²⁰⁷ The Jewish state's lack of clearly defined borders creates an insecurity around Jewish claims to territory, which was intensified after the failure of Camp David and the onset of the Second Intifada. Leaving the Jewish state's borders, and with it its claims to the land, uncertain before a perceived anti-Semitic enemy became intolerable. In support for the barrier policy, many interlocutors reference perceived reluctance on the part of Palestinian leadership to recognize a Jewish state. This perceived reluctance to affirm the state's identity creates uncertainty, particularly as this reluctance is coupled with Palestinians' own claims to land:

Because the fate and political direction of the Palestinians will remain uncertain, Israel must then take one supreme protective measure: enforce a separation between Palestinian and Israeli populations, until the Palestinians decide they actually want to

²⁰⁶ Tal Schneider (journalist) in discussion with the author, June 2017.

²⁰⁷ Newman, "The Lines that Continue to Separate Us: Borders in Our 'Borderless' World," *Progress in Human Geography* 30, no. 2 (2006): 147.

live in openness and peace with the Jewish state. That means erecting a fence separating Israel and Palestinian territory.²⁰⁸

For some, therefore, disengagement is constructed as an interim solution to this uncertainty. This conflicts directly with Lupovici's argument that the West Bank barrier policy was meant to *create* uncertainty as an avoidance measure.

For others, the barrier policy is constructed as merely a first step in securing the Jewish national identity, pointing to a perennial source of anxiety over demographics within Israel. General Security Services (Shin Bet) director Avi Dichter, for example, in the same press briefing in which he announces Shin Bet's official support for the barrier policy, cautions that it does not solve the "problem" of potential threats posed by Arab-Israelis, who might be sympathetic to Palestinian terrorists.²⁰⁹ In response to this announcement, MK Michael Kleiner (Likud), agrees, elaborating that "solutions such as transfer, a Palestinian state, or a fence only address the problem of the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, but do not solve the growing hostility among the Arab citizens of Israel."²¹⁰ Public opinion data supports the prevalence of this sentiment. 46 percent of Jewish-Israelis surveyed in 2002 supported transfer of Palestinians who lived in the territories, and 31% supported the transfer of Israeli Arabs.²¹¹ Furthermore, 60 percent agreed to "government encouraging voluntary emigration of Israeli Arabs", and 53 percent approved of "a more general idea of 'encouraging Arabs to leave the

²⁰⁸ Krauthammer, 2001.

²⁰⁹ "GSS Chief Points to Growing Number of Israeli Arabs Involved in Terrorism," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), February 12, 2002.

²¹⁰ "GSS Wants Fence," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), February 12, 2002

²¹¹ Asher.

country' without stipulating whether this was forced or voluntary, or whether it involved Israeli Arabs or Arabs in the territories."²¹²

In 2002, the National Union-Yisrael Beiteinu party submitted a statement to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon supporting the barrier policy but arguing against ceding territory. In a press release, MK Tzivi Hendel argues, "at least let's try to prevent the fence from being placed on the Green Line, thus effectively giving over all of Yesha to the PA. It would be better to put the fence around Area A- where are most of the Arabs, most of the terrorists..."²¹³ The issue of ceding territory, while considered room for debate by the barrier's supporters, is cause for alarm for the policy's detractors.

Following this discursive pattern, opposition to the barrier also calls upon the Jewish national identity. Then Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, a Labor Party leader and vocal supporter of the Oslo Accords, in a meeting with barrier supporters within his party, argues specifically against a barrier on the Green Line, stating that "such a border would, among other things, essentially forfeit the blood of the Jewish residents of Yesha who remain on the other side."²¹⁴ Yesha is a Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Here, Peres is arguing that a barrier route along the Green Line amounts to abandoning Jewish settlers in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza. Use of the acronym Yesha is common in the discourse alongside references to Jewish ancestral claims to Eretz Yisrael. Using Yesha as a collective term for non-contiguous parcels of territory evinces the conceptualization of the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people as comprising the whole of Israeli as well as Palestinian territories and as indivisible.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ "More Talk of a Fence," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), January 28, 2002.

²¹⁴ "Green Line Patrol Begins," 2001.

For many interlocutors within the discourse, abandoning Jewish settlers, Jewish holy sites, or any piece of Eretz Yisrael is anathema to the Jewish identity of the state. Public opinion data reflects this anxiety. General support for the separation plan, which included the proposed barrier, was high in 2002, but diminished when the survey delineated the impacts on Jewish settlements and territory. 81 percent of respondents were in favor of unilateral separation, but less than half (48 percent) supported a separation plan that included removal of settlements, and only 38 percent supported ceding 80 percent of the West Bank and retaining 20 percent for future negotiations.²¹⁵ Thus, much of the discourse around the barrier policy hinged on how successful the barrier would be at “defining Israel's borders and preserving its Jewish nature.”²¹⁶

Opposition to the barrier policy in the discourse gives way to support as the government is perceived to be taking measures to safeguard the Jewish national identity. One organization dedicated to Rachel’s Tomb, for example, objected to the barrier in an update dated July 2002, but this objection turned to support in an update on September 12, 2002, shortly after the Security Cabinet announced a revised route for the barrier that would include religiously significant Jewish sites in Palestinian territory around Jerusalem.²¹⁷ Similarly, in an op-ed published by Israel’s most popular right-leaning news source, a former critic of the proposed barrier reverses his position after Sharon’s government announced its plan to extend the barrier into the West Bank to incorporate Jewish settlements, exclaiming, “we have no way of promising something in exchange to the Arabs of Eretz Israel. A voluntary agreement is ruled out, and

²¹⁵ Asher, 26.

²¹⁶ Daniel Pipes, “Quick-Fix Mentality,” *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), September 2, 2001.

²¹⁷ “Update,” The Friends of Rachel’s Tomb, last modified September 12, 2002, <http://www.rachelstomb.org/update.htm>.

therefore settlement can proceed apace only under the protection of a force which is not dependent upon the local population, an iron wall which the local population will be unable to breach.”²¹⁸

Initially, many Likud party members balked at Labor party proposals for the barrier route, arguing that they ceded too much territory, abandoned too many Jewish settlements, and relinquished too many holy sites. One Likud party member’s argument in favor of the barrier, however, appears to have had a great impact on the political right. Arguing in favor of the policy from a different perspective, MK Michael Eitan explains the need for a barrier, specifically “one that would prevent illegal Arab immigration into Israel-proper. Only holders of Israeli passports would be allowed to pass through. Otherwise we have a situation where Arabs from the Palestinian Authority pass through and end up staying in Jaffa, Lod, Taibe, and implementing the Right of Return right under our noses. What, are we crazy?”²¹⁹ This argument is repeated in the discourse and seems to have, along with revised routes that absorb more territory, Jewish settlements, and holy sites, positively influenced support for the barrier among Likud’s more far-right factions.

These factions had initially, as mentioned above, objected to the barrier on the grounds of its perceived failure to secure the Jewish national identity. However, in 2003, after several rounds of route revisions that moved the barrier farther east of the Green Line, the Likud party voted in favor of the barrier. Ironically, MK Michael Eitan withdrew his support for the barrier on the grounds of monetary cost and tentatively

²¹⁸ Haetzni, 2002.

²¹⁹ “Walls and Borders,” 2001.

revived talks with the Palestinian leadership.²²⁰ Fringe opposition to the barrier, therefore, was alleviated by assurances that the Jewish national identity would be secured. The barrier policy had general support from the Israeli population during the Second Intifada, including the support of Likud and Labor party leadership. The discourse on the separation policy, as discussed in this section, shows that even those who did not consider the barrier a security solution supported it on the grounds of a perceived function of securing the Jewish identity of the state. Furthermore, those who doubted this function reversed their positions when the barrier route was revised to better fit their conceptualization of the Jewish national identity. The following section details the discourse around Israel's democratic identity during the Intifada and shows that the barrier policy was not a threat to this identity.

Defending the Ethnic Democracy

Lupovici argues that the Second Intifada threatened the identities of the state of Israel in such a way as to render the solutions to each incompatible with other identities.²²¹ As outlined in the previous chapter, he argues that the state could not simultaneously secure the Jewish identity, the democratic identity, and the security-provider identity. I reconceptualized the security-seeker identity above in accordance with the national identity discourse. Here, I also problematize Lupovici's assumptions regarding Israel's democratic identity; I argue that, rather than a liberal democracy, the political elite understand the Israeli democracy an ethnic democracy in the mode of defending democracy, and show that the barrier policy was not a measure taken to avoid

²²⁰ "Likud to Support Allocating NIS 750M for Security Fence," *Ha'aretz* (Jerusalem), July 21, 2003.

²²¹ Lupovici.

dissonance but rather a policy meant to address directly the threats to the state's identities.

Recall from the previous chapter that Lupovici defines ontological dissonance as a situation in which two or more identities of a social actor are threatened and the means to secure one identity conflicts with another of the actor's identities. According to this understanding of Israel's identities, the barrier policy was a means of avoidance, a measure to create ambiguity. Lupovici supports this argument by citing op-eds calling for a separation from Palestinians and expressing a desire for "quiet."²²² Avoidance of Palestinians, however, is not avoidance of an ontological dissonance. Further, as argued above, the barrier was discursively constructed as a means to *reduce* ambiguity and to address the uncertainty of the territorial boundaries of the Jewish state, not create ambiguity as a means of avoidance.

The Ethnic Democracy and Defending Mode

Central to his argument of ontological security dissonance in the case of Israel during the Second Intifada is the conceptualization of Israel as a liberal democracy. Some scholars have argued, however, that Israel cannot be defined as such and, therefore, take a more communal, rather than individualistic, understanding of Israel's democracy.²²³ Smooha argues, for example, that Israel is a type of democracy that is communal and hierarchical in nature, referring to Israel as an *ethnic democracy*, which he defines as "a system that combines the extension of civil and political rights to individuals and some collective rights to minorities, with institutionalization of majority

²²² Ibid., 828-829.

²²³ See, for example, Elazar 1993; Smooha, 1997.

control over the state.”²²⁴ According to this understanding, ethnic nationalism is not only an accepted part of this type of democracy, but a driving force. He explains:

The state practices a policy of creating a homogenous nation-state, a state of and for a particular ethnic nation, and acts to promote the language, culture, numerical majority, economic well-being, and political interests of this group. Although enjoying citizenship and voting rights, the minorities are treated as second-class citizens, feared as a threat, excluded from the national power structure, and placed under some control. At the same time, the minorities are allowed to conduct a democratic and peaceful struggle that yields incremental improvement in their status.²²⁵

In this way, according to Smootha, the state’s conceptualization of democracy is one that protects the interests of the majority community, rather than the individual. This understanding is congruent with the Jewish national identity as described in the first section of this chapter. Because the Israeli conceptualization of its democracy is one that requires the state to promote the political interests of the Jewish nation, measures that secure the Jewish national identity would be congruous with this democratic national identity. But what about potential conflict between the measures needed to uphold Israel’s identity as a security-seeking state and the democratic identity?

Pedahzur explains the “defending democracy” as “a democracy which excludes from the democratic game groups whose aims or actions may endanger the state, its political regime or its basic national consensus.”²²⁶ Quoting Israeli Supreme Court Justice Yoel Zussman, who characterizes Israel as a “defending democracy,” Pedahzur argues that the Israeli conceptualization of democracy includes a moral obligation to

²²⁴ Smootha, 199.

²²⁵ Ibid., 199-200.

²²⁶ Pedahzur, 5.

defend itself as a democratic state by any means necessary, widening the field of acceptable policy options available to defend the state where it perceives a threat, up to and including barring certain groups from participation in democratic processes.²²⁷ This is also in line with Sandholtz's understanding of justificatory behavior on the part of states seeking to establish their behavior as adhering to, rather than violating, sets of norms.²²⁸

It is important to note, however, that the definition Pedahzur provides may leave the reader with the impression that the defending democracy is a *type* of democracy. This is not the case. As Pedahzur goes on to explain, the defending democracy is best understood not as a form of government but, rather, as “the course chosen by a democracy in its efforts to protect itself...[its] modes of response [to threats].”²²⁹ This leaves room for the possibility that the nature of a particular democracy may dictate its mode of response. Such courses or modes of action here suggest an understanding of defending democracy as a set of routines characterized by rigid attachment modes as explained in the previous chapter. This understanding is very much in line with Israel's identity as a security-seeking state, as it widens the state's field of options to defend itself without threatening its democratic identity. Taken together with the conceptualization of Israel's democracy as an ethnic democracy, then, it is likely that the measures to secure the Jewish identity of the state could also support, rather than threaten, its democratic and security-seeking identities.

Political Exclusion as Defending Democracy

²²⁷ Ibid., 5-6.

²²⁸ Sandholtz.

²²⁹ Pedahzur, 5-6.

One way this ethnic democratic identity and its rigid defending democracy attachment mode manifest in the discourse is in Israelis' anxiety over the loyalty of Arab members of the Knesset during the Second Intifada and suggestions that, to protect the democracy, such members should be excluded. One editorial in Israel's most popular newspaper (by subscription) criticized Arab MKs for participating in Arab celebrations of the IDF's withdrawal from some occupied territories in the West Bank, claiming that the MKs are "stretching the cords of democracy so much that they are in danger of rupturing" and calling for disqualification of their political parties.²³⁰ Support for the political exclusion of Arabs during the Intifada is evident in public opinion data, as well. A 2002 survey of Israelis' opinions on national security finds that 72 percent surveyed opposed the inclusion of Arab political parties in the governing coalition, and 80 percent supported excluding Arab-Israelis from participation in decisions on the state's boundaries.²³¹

Calls for political exclusion and, indeed, actual policies of political exclusion do not amount to a disruption of routines during the Intifada or a threat to the democratic identity. In fact, they are adherence to Israeli law, as the Central Elections Committee's responsibilities include banning political parties it deems threatening to the democracy.²³² In 1988, this meant banning the Progressive List for Peace after it supported a return to the pre-1967 boundaries, as well as the Kach Party, an ultra-orthodox Jewish-nationalist party, for calling for the deportation of all non-Jews from

²³⁰ "Arab MKs Against Israel," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), August 30, 2001.

²³¹ Asher, 36-37.

²³² "Israeli Central Elections Committee," Jewish Virtual Library, last modified March 1, 2003, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israeli-central-elections-committee-2>.

Israel.²³³ It should be noted, however, that bans on left-wing parties sympathetic to the Arab cause are more frequent, with the Kach Party ban being the only ban on a Jewish political party in the state's history.²³⁴ Several center-left and far-left secular parties, as well as Arab parties, have been banned as threats to the state, one notably for supporting the establishment of an Israeli state that is not Jewish in nature.²³⁵ These actions are very much in line with Pedahzur's understanding of the defending democracy as perceiving a responsibility to defend itself against challenges to its "basic national consensus."²³⁶ These actions and the discourse around political exclusion also support Smooha's understanding of Israel as an ethnic democracy, one that institutionalizes the interests of the Jewish population.²³⁷

This political exclusion as a means to secure a democratic identity is also part of Israel's relationship to its Palestinian neighbors. In a speech delivered at the Institute for Contemporary Affairs, shortly after the 2005 election of Mahmoud Abbas as President of the Palestinian National Authority, Minister of Foreign Affairs Silvan Shalom urges the Palestinian leadership to exclude Hamas and other anti-Israel organizations from the political process in order to "normalize relations with Israel."²³⁸ In this speech, he constructs democracy and economic development as necessary conditions for the normalization of relations between Israel and the Palestinian leadership, also intimating that any Palestinian democratic system that included those with fervently anti-Israel

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ "Balad Political Party," Jewish Virtual Library, last modified January 2012, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/balad-political-party>.

²³⁶ Pedahzur, 5.

²³⁷ Smooha, 1997.

²³⁸ "Democracy as a Component of Security," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 21, 2005.

sentiments would not be recognized as a democracy by the state of Israel.²³⁹ After the Hamas victory in elections in 2006, Israel imposed economic sanctions against the Palestinian Authority. This suggests that Israel's conceptualization of its moral obligation to defend its ethnic democracy extends beyond the limits of its own political processes.

The Barrier: An Avoidance?

Lupovici argues, as outlined above, that the barrier was a measure of avoidance, a way to create ambiguity to insulate Israel from an ontological dissonance. To support this view of the democratic identity as threatened by means to secure Israel's other identities, Lupovici quotes a statement from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in an address to the Knesset in favor of the separation plan.²⁴⁰ "We have no desire," he explains, "to permanently rule over millions of Palestinians, who double their numbers every generation. Israel, which wishes to be an exemplary democracy, will not be able to bear such a reality over time."²⁴¹ Lupovici argues that this statement indicates a dissonance between Israel's identity as a democracy and its routines as an occupier, interpreting Sharon's statements in support of disengagement to be a warning against the eroding effects of occupation on the integrity of a democracy. This would be plausible if the Israeli government in general, and Sharon's Likud party more specifically, conceived of Israel's democracy as a liberal one, with its emphasis on individual liberties and equality. As explained above, however, Israel's democracy is an ethnic democracy in a defending mode which obligates the defense of the ethnic democracy, allowing for a

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Lupovici, 828.

²⁴¹ Ariel Sharon, "Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Address to the Knesset- The Vote on the Disengagement Plan," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 25, 2004.

wider range of policy options for defending such a democracy than is fathomable assuming a liberal democracy. Furthermore, Israel does not have an identity as an occupier, and government documents and representatives repeatedly reject this moniker in the discourse, insisting, for example, that the territory is “disputed” and not “occupied.”²⁴²

Finally, Sharon’s statement is actually a reference to the long-standing demographic issue. In urging the Knesset to support the barrier policy and the disengagement plan, Sharon emphasizes the growing Palestinian population. Juxtaposing this fact against concerns for Israel’s democracy places a potential future Palestinian majority in opposition to Israel’s ethnic democracy. While the ethnic democracy institutionalizes the interests of the ethnic majority, it does not disenfranchise the minority, nor does it institutionalize the interests of the minority. An Arab majority under Israeli rule would threaten the Jewish national identity, as well as the ethnic democracy of Israel as a Jewish state. Disengagement, then, is not constructed in the discourse as an avoidance of a dissonance, but a means to secure Israel’s Jewish identity, which is inextricable from its ethnic democracy.

Throughout the original speech referenced by Lupovici, Sharon addresses anxiety not over Israel’s identity as a democracy, but its Jewish national identity. Assuring Knesset members and the Israeli public tuning in of Israel’s commitment to the struggle for a Jewish homeland in Eretz Yisrael, he quotes Likud Party founder and former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, “We do not require anyone to supervise the

²⁴² “Disputed Territories- Forgotten Facts About the West Bank and Gaza Strip,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 1, 2003.

Kashrut of our commitment to the Land of Israel! We have dedicated our lives to the Land of Israel and to the struggle for its liberation and will continue to do so.”²⁴³

‘Supervising Kashrut’ refers to verification by a qualified Jewish religious expert of the adherence to Jewish religious law; this most commonly refers to verification that a kitchen and the food it produces is kosher. Here, quoting Begin, Sharon is insisting to his party and his people that Israel’s religious claims to the land will not be forfeit by the barrier. Furthermore, with the exception of far-left human rights watchdogs like B’Tselem with far more liberal conceptualizations of democracy, anxiety over Israel’s democratic identity vis-à-vis its other identities is absent from the domestic political discourse of identity during the Intifada years.²⁴⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of analysis of news articles, op-eds, government reports, political speeches, and interviews to determine why the Israeli government chose to erect the West Bank barrier. The violence of the Second Intifada and Israel’s initial response to it disrupted Israel’s routinized relationships with not only the Palestinians, but also with Arab-Israelis and the international community. Although the idea of disengagement and a barrier dates back to Yitzhak Rabin in the 1990s, such an option was not yet acceptable by the Israeli public and much of its leadership until the failure of Camp David and the outset of the Second Intifada. That is, until a change in Israel’s environment caused a disruption in its security routines, engendering uncertainty around its identities and resulting in ontological insecurity.

²⁴³ Sharon, 2004.

²⁴⁴ Lein, 2002.

Routines are habitual, requiring no conscious weighing of options or information. The automatic nature of routines insulates social actors against the anxiety-producing unknown. Because routines are produced by relationships, drastic changes to these relationships disrupt routines, rendering the actor's social world unknowable. The failure of Camp David and the beginning of the Second Intifada disrupted the routinized relationship between Israel and the Palestinians, rendering Israel's social world unknowable. Giddens calls such crises "critical situations," explaining them as "circumstances of a radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalized routines."²⁴⁵

The violence of the Second Intifada also disrupted the relationship between Israelis and their public spaces, contributing to an ontological security crisis as the bustling centers of Jewish-Israeli life were rendered unsafe. Recall from Chapter Two that external factors such as environmental changes, a breakdown of intersubjective meaning in crisis, or the interventions of powerful outside actors influence how an individual's actions are perceived and, in turn, the response they evoke. The failure of Camp David constituted an environmental change whereby routines between Israel and the Palestinians evoked different responses than before, bringing the IDF's response to violence under scrutiny, for example, and eroding Israel's basic trust system, i.e. the sense that the state's attempts to secure itself physically would not threaten its national identities.

²⁴⁵ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 61.

Anxiety over Israel's identity as a security-seeking state is evident in news sources and government documents that express feelings of betrayal by the international community, outrage at the international community's criticism of the IDF, and frustration from the Israeli public at the government's hesitation to take unilateral action. Ontological insecurity vis-à-vis Israel's Jewish national identity is evident in fears of a resurgence of international anti-Semitism, public distrust of Arabs and the reported desire to separate from them, anxiety over Palestinian claims to territory, and worry over potentially relinquishing more of Eretz Yisrael. The historical memory of the holocaust, forced migration, and diaspora, coupled with religious traditions connecting the Jewish identity to the Land of Israel, makes the Jewish identity of the state inextricable from Jewish-Israelis' need for physical security. In this way, national security for Israel necessarily entails preservation of a Jewish state on the historical Jewish homeland. The Intifada threatened the Jewish national identity by putting at risk Israel's claims to territory, its Jewish settlements, and recognition of its Jewish nature by the international community.

This analysis finds that the democratic identity of Israel, however, was not continuously threatened by the violence of the Intifada or the state's response to it, as the discourse evinces arguments that construct the Israeli democracy in such a way that actions taken to secure it were seen as congruous with the Jewish national identity and the security-seeking state identity. The existing dissonance, therefore, was addressed discursively before the barrier policy was passed. The barrier, then, was not a policy of avoidance, as Lupovici argues. Rather, following Sandholtz's understanding, the evidence suggests that interlocutors successfully addressed the dissonance between the

Jewish national identity and the democratic national identity by constructing the latter as serving the former. While some anxiety over the Jewish national identity with regard to the barrier policy is prevalent in the early discourse, revised routes, meetings with and concessions to Jewish settlers, and assurances from party leaders on both sides of the political spectrum in Israel allayed this anxiety and successfully constructed the barrier as a solution, rather than a threat, to Israel's Jewish identity. The decision to construct the West Bank barrier, even in the face of doubts that it would serve Israel's physical security, was the result of an ontological security crisis brought on by the failure of Camp David, the subsequent outset of the Second Intifada, and the IDF's initial response. The barrier policy as part of the unilateral disengagement plan served to secure Israel's identities as a security-seeking state, a Jewish state, and an ethnic democracy.

CONCLUSIONS

To say the barrier policy was solely the result of an ontological security crisis is too strong a conclusion to make. A very real physical security threat to the state of Israel generated an ontological security crisis. Several policy options were prevalent in the discourse as possible solutions to the conflict. These included dismantling settlements, return of territory, and an international intermediary, to name a few prominent options.²⁴⁶ The IDF itself concluded that there were four possible security solutions: continuing "current policy vis-à-vis the Palestinians...", declaring war on the PA,

²⁴⁶ See, for example Asher; also "Jerusalem Plan Passes First Hurdle," *Israel National News* (Jerusalem), January 29, 2002.

agreeing to resume the peace talks at the point they stopped in Taba, and unilateral separation”—with continuation of current policy being the preferred security option and unilateral separation being the least desirable.²⁴⁷ In the end, the Israeli government chose the option that was least preferable among favored physical security solutions but best addressed its ontological insecurity. This study has found strong evidence of ontological insecurity in the discourse around the Second Intifada, as well as evidence for the discursive construction of the West Bank barrier as a solution to ontological insecurity. While a conclusion that the barrier policy was solely an ontological security measure cannot be made, the evidence presented here strongly suggests that ontological insecurity played a decisive role in physical security decision-making in this case. Furthermore, ontological security theory provides the best explanation for the barrier’s route, a problem for which realist perspectives offer little explanatory value. This section discusses the implications of this study for ontological security theory, democratic theory, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and highlights a few avenues for future research.

This study has some useful implications for ontological security theory, including building upon existing literature, confirming others’ assumptions, and raising potential questions for further investigation. My analysis, while ultimately diverging from Lupovici’s conclusions, supports his premise that a physical security threat can generate an ontological security threat. This analysis also finds, consistent with the works of Mitzen and Steele, that a state may choose a policy that best secures its identity, even if that policy is not the most prudent physical security option.

²⁴⁷ “Walls and Borders,” 2001.

Additionally, the results of this study imply that a state may respond to an existing physical security threat in ways that engender an ontological security threat, prompting the state to favor securing the latter to the detriment of the former.

Recall from the previous chapter that left-leaning groups within the state of Israel internalized the ontological insecurity around Israel's identity as a security-seeker. The international community's insistence that Israel's initial response to the violence of the Second Intifada constituted human rights violations is echoed by far-left groups in Israel. This internalization, however, is not evident beyond the boundaries of the political far-left in the domestic discourse. This is consistent with Mitzen's understanding of the state as a corporate social actor. That is, as the state is a social group made up of individuals whose conceptualizations of themselves as members of that social group influence that group's identity, incomplete internalization of a challenge to the group's identity does not engender ontological insecurity. This also implies that there may be a tipping point at which internalization of an identity threat is complete enough to generate ontological security at the state level. Future research may seek to uncover under what circumstances internalization at the state level takes place. It is likely that regime type, the ontological insecurity discourse's proximity to power, and framing may play significant roles. A more complete understanding of processes and conditions of internalization would then also have implications for international norm change.

In Chapter Two, I defined national identity, following Hopf and Allen, as a constellation of categories, which require relationships to maintain, meaning that any state has multiple identities and that its identity is different in interaction with different

significant others. Responses in the discourse to the international community and to Palestinian interlocutors differ and suggest that Israel's identities conform to this understanding of identity. In Chapter Three, I discussed the anxiety evident in the discourse around Israel's identity as a security-seeking state. The anxiety produced at having this identity challenged by the international community, compared with the lack of anxiety at Palestinian challenges to this identity, suggests that Israel's identity as a security-seeking state is heavily dependent upon affirming routines between Israel and the international community, and particularly Western states.

For ontological security theory, this implies that the same discursive challenges to a state's identity may have different impacts depending upon the source and that challenges from the significant other salient to that specific identity are more likely to generate ontological insecurity. This also has implications for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Further perceived failures of security routines, such as existing checkpoints and intelligence gathering procedures, to support Israel's identity as a security-seeking state may cause the state to adopt a second-best identity in the future. Recall that this identity is largely constructed discursively through the theme of security exceptionalism, which holds that Israel is exactly like any other state but exists in an exceptionally threatening security environment. If the state's attachment mode to the relationships that affirm this perception of itself as behaving just as any other state would in its environment are rigid, this may engender another ontological security crisis as the international community continues to push back on the state's actions as a security-seeker. As Israel's relationship with the international community, particularly Western states, is especially salient to its security-seeker identity, routines that support a

second-best identity like that of competitor or aggressor may prompt an identity shift. Such a shift may complicate future negotiations as changes to identity engender changes to interests.

In Chapter Two, I discussed how states may form rigid attachments to physically dangerous relationships, rendering them unable or unwilling to develop new routines and learn their way out of the unhealthy rigid attachment. Israel's unilateral disengagement plan may have worked to secure the state's national identities during the Intifada years, but the implementation of this plan has more closely resembled a *partial* disengagement and is currently not maintained unilaterally. The IDF continues to carry out routine operations in parts of the West Bank that remain shared territory with differing levels of administrative control split between the PA and the state of Israel. Because the scope of this study was limited to political discourse on the Second Intifada and the West Bank barrier and texts collected range only from 2000 to 2005 (shortly after the barrier policy was passed in the Knesset), it is impossible to ascertain if this partial disengagement and the continuation of Israel's relationship with the Palestinians after the violence of the Intifada subsided is evidence of a rigid attachment mode to Israel's asymmetrical relationship with the Palestinians. Another possible explanation could be that this partial disengagement further serves the Jewish national identity (with its connections to claims to Eretz Yisrael) and may be related to Israel's perception of the Hamas election victory as a future threat. Further research could determine why Israel chose partial disengagement.

As mentioned above, an actor's preferred identity cannot always be confirmed. As external factors can influence how a social actor's behavior is perceived, causing

routines to cease to support the preferred identity, a social actor may adopt a less preferred, but still acceptable, identity. Adopting a second-best identity can resolve ontological insecurity, as the routines in which the state participates that uphold this less-preferred identity do not require it to scrutinize its behavior. This would support the state's basic trust system and render its social world knowable. After the Knesset approved construction of the West Bank barrier, many in the international community adopted the term "Apartheid Wall" and referred to Israel as an Apartheid state.

One potential avenue of research could be to ascertain whether this continued backlash from the international community, coupled with the Boycott Divest Sanction movement, has caused Israel to reimagine its ingroup and, therefore, its role identity in the international system. As the United States has announced the opening of its embassy in Jerusalem and its withdrawal from the United Nations Human Rights Council explicitly on the grounds of alleged unfair treatment of Israel, all amid mounting criticism against Israel as violence resumed in 2015, the state of Israel may reconceptualize its identification with the international community. That is, Israel may join the United States as it appears to distance itself from Western allies. The ontological security crisis that arose during the Second Intifada suggests a rigid attachment mode on the part of Israel to its relationship with the Palestinians, however unhealthy. Ascertaining Israel's attachment mode to its relationship with its ingroup in the international community may be useful in determining the extent to which this ingroup might successfully play a role in future negotiations.

This study also has implications for democratic theory. Most notably, the results of this study make a case for understanding democracy as a set of partially overlapping

national identities. Although the Israeli democratic national identity was mildly threatened by the Second Intifada, it was successfully discursively subordinated to the Jewish national identity, alleviating ontological dissonance, further suggesting that the decision to construct the West Bank barrier was not an avoidance measure. The democratic identity's prevalence in the discourse, especially juxtaposed with calls to exclude Arabs from the democratic process and fears of the demographic issue, suggest the importance of perception to the democratic national identity. The notion that exclusion from democratic processes can be necessary to secure a state's democracy support Pedahzur's conceptualization of a defending democracy, suggesting a spectrum of acceptable actions within the context of a democracy, depending on the *type* of democracy. Finally, this study also suggests that influential members of the Israeli political elite, as well as large pockets of the Israeli public, understand the Israeli democracy in ways that align with Smooha's conceptualization of Israel as an ethnic democracy. This is further supported by recent moves by the Israeli government to further codify the state's obligation to support the interests of the ethnoreligious majority. In June 2018, the state passed a bill that explicitly establishes Jewish cultural hegemony in the state, giving official status to Jewish holidays and the Jewish calendar, as well as the Hebrew language and religious symbols. The law also obligates the government to support Jewish settlement of Eretz Yisrael, including territory currently recognized as Palestinian, and recognizes the "unique right of national self-determination" of the Jewish people in Israel.²⁴⁸ The Israeli government's conduct of democracy suggests a comfort with the institutionalization of the ethno-religious

²⁴⁸ Jonathan Lis and Hoa Landau, "Israel Passes Controversial Jewish Nation-State Bill After Stormy Debate," *Haaretz* (Jerusalem), July 19, 2018.

majority's interests, suggesting, as Smootha does, a communal understanding of democracy that allows for a hierarchical type of citizenship based on community membership. Future research may seek to understand under what conditions a liberal democracy might take an ethnic turn.

For the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, this intimates that international questions about Israel's democracy may be rhetorically ineffective at influencing the state's behavior. Indeed, one particularly salient, if disheartening, implication of these findings for the peace process is that, even as the United States casts off any semblance of neutrality in future negotiations, eroding the possibility that the Palestinians will accept the United States as a peace broker in the future, Israel's ingroup within the international community is shrinking, reducing the state's other options for a peace broker. It may be that future negotiations include the United States as a broker representing Israeli interests with one or more members of the Arab League taking a leadership role for the Palestinians. This means more identities, more interests, and more individuals at the negotiating table, further complicating the process.

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