



# DEFINING THE OTHER

Israeli Securitization of the Palestinian population in  
the West Bank and Gaza since 2009

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this research paper is to understand and explain a range of extraordinary policies enacted by the Israeli state towards Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from 2009 to the present using different models of securitization. There is a relative dearth of Israeli case studies in the securitization literature, as well as a need to fully explore alternative models of securitization. This paper will therefore discuss securitization theory and its main critiques, then apply those proposed models to topics drawn from the Israel-Palestine conflict from 2009 to the present day. Doing so reveals that the original model of securitization still offers the most utility for explaining a wide range of events, though this is most likely due to the other schools being underdeveloped rather than fundamental weakness in their argument.

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## 1. Introduction

“Securitization” was originally proposed as a theory that explains how extraordinary policies are enacted, how the concept of “security” is created and used to justify certain actions, or how the concept of “security” is defined and used by actors.<sup>1</sup> It comes out of the constructivist tradition in international relations, which argues that basic assumptions relating to international relations are an “ongoing artifact of practice” rather than deriving from universal rational principles.<sup>2</sup> This analytical framework is useful because it unpacks a rather important concept, such as “security,” which is typically accepted as a given term with a fixed, universal meaning by international relations scholars in the liberal or realist traditions.<sup>3</sup> It is important to note however that within the constructivist tradition there quickly arose multiple competing versions of securitization. For the purposes of this paper, the term “securitization” will simply refer to the total canon of securitization theories, united primarily by their agreement that “security” is at its core a constructed and instrumentalized concept. Where specification of one particular school of securitization is necessary, they will be distinguished as belonging to one of three schools: Copenhagen, Welsh, or Paris.

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*, (Lynne Rienner, 1998), pp. 25

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics,” *International Organization*, 1992, Vol.46(2), pp. 413

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it,” pp. 392

Recently there has been a noticeable increase in scholarship on securitization in the Israeli context, as seen in the works of Coskun,<sup>4</sup> Abulof,<sup>5</sup> Lupovici,<sup>6</sup> and Olesker.<sup>7</sup> However compared to securitization papers in general there is still a relative underrepresentation of Israel-Palestine in favour of examples from Europe and the United States, leading some to speculate that securitization theory is not universal but Eurocentric.<sup>8</sup> In addition to that possibility, Lupovici speculates that there may be unique characteristics to the Israel-Palestine dynamic, such as the unusually strong and pervasive routinization of insecurity,<sup>9</sup> which overwhelms scholars more used to distinct and isolated cases of securitization. This observation has led to others such as Abulof to propose alternative versions of securitization theory using the peculiarities of Israel as a template.<sup>10</sup> Another issue is that much of the work on Israeli securitization primarily draws from the original model of securitization, which known as the Copenhagen school, and neglects the models of Copenhagen's critiques. Granted, the Copenhagen school is the oldest and most fully developed, but various critiques of the Copenhagen school may have achieved sufficient critical mass to be given due consideration.

This paper is therefore intended to address these observed weaknesses in the existing literature on Israeli securitization – the relative dearth of Israeli examples and the underrepresentation of alternative schools of securitization theory. To do so, it will first discuss

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<sup>4</sup> Bezen Balamir Coskun, "History writing and securitization of the other: the construction and reconstruction of Palestinian and Israeli security discourses," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol.23(2), p.281-298

<sup>5</sup> Uriel Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's 'Demographic Demon,'" *International Political Sociology* Vol.8(4) pp. 396-415

<sup>6</sup> Amir Lupovici, "The Limits of Securitization Theory: Observational Criticism and the Curious Absence of Israel," *International Studies Review* Vol.16(3) pp. 390-410

<sup>7</sup> Ronnie Olesker, "National identity and securitization in Israel," *Ethnicities*, Vol. 14(3) pp. 371-391

<sup>8</sup> Claire Wilkinson, "The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?" *Security Dialogue*, Vol.38(1), pp. 8

<sup>9</sup> Amir Lupovici, "The Limits of Securitization Theory," pp. 391

<sup>10</sup> Uriel Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's 'Demographic Demon,'" pp. 397

competing schools of thought within securitization. As it would be impractical to consider the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in full, four particular case studies falling between 2009 to the present day will be introduced, with each part representing a distinct process of securitization. After this the paper will consider case study from the perspective of different securitization schools in order to compare and contrast their explanatory utility. There will also be a consideration of alternative models of securitization proposed by others who found existing securitization theories to be inadequate regarding the Israeli example. In short, this paper will contextualize the existing literature on securitization in contemporary Israel and critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of different securitization theories in explaining the actions of Israeli actors.

## **2. Competing theories of securitization**

### **Security studies and securitization**

International Security Studies is imperfectly distinguished from International Relations (IR),<sup>11</sup> particularly on the topic of security. Historically the focus of ISS on topics such as armed rivalries and arms races made it practically synonymous with the realist branch of IR. However, as the Cold War ended the scope of ISS expanded to encompass a more wholistic focus, from studying the use of force to studying “international security.” Alongside this development was the realization by some scholars that the concept of “security” was itself poorly defined – or rather only one version of “security” was assumed. Historically ISS took the state as its primary referent object, or the “thing” that is being threatened and needing protection.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, (Cambridge University Press: 2009), pp. 16-17

<sup>12</sup> Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, pp. 21

The privileging of the Westphalian state as the referent object has been challenged by those who argue that other objects ranging in scale from the collective of humanity to the individual would make more appropriate or realistic referent objects. In contrast some theorists maintain that the main purpose of security studies is to inform public debate on national security, and that too much separation between the concept of security and the interests of state, and moving away from providing this public good by analyzing “security” from the perspective of other referent objects is distracting and dangerous.<sup>13</sup> Non-traditionalists in turn argue that this emphasis distorts the discipline since in many areas the state is not the primary actor, so state-centrism is therefore limiting the concept of security itself.

One non-traditionalist way to define “security” is that it is a constructed process, an action-and-result known as “securitization. Beginning with the publishing of Barry Buzan’s *People, States and Fear* in 1983, which argued for expanding and developing the concept of security to move security studies beyond “national security” and “militarized interpretation of security,”<sup>14</sup> securitization became widely accepted at least in Europe as a conceptual explanation of “security.”<sup>15</sup> Its supporters came to be known as the Copenhagen School, named after the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute which many of its key theorists worked at. Critiques of the Copenhagen school became known as “critical security studies,” or alternatively organized into the Welsh School (also known as the Aberystwyth School), and the Paris School.

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<sup>13</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 229

<sup>14</sup> Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1991). pp. 26-28

<sup>15</sup> Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*, pp. 215

What the Copenhagen school version of securitization sought to do was to expand upon the state-centric model of security by examining referent objects including but not limited to the state, and the securitization of those threats.<sup>16</sup> It also proposed identifying and separating differing levels of analysis such as international systems, international subsystems, units (generally meaning states), subunits, and individuals;<sup>17</sup> as well as sectoral analysis which differentiates between military, political economic, and/or social sectors in which threats are identified.<sup>18</sup> Crucially, the Copenhagen school proposes that securitization be understood as an intersubjective process through which a threat serious enough to justify the suspension of normal politics is identified, enabling the securitizing actor to break free from the normal rules of behaviour and adopt exceptional or extraordinary policies.<sup>19</sup> As such, “security” is not a fixed concept rooted in the balance of power, but develops from a fluid and contested discursive process.

In contrast, the Welsh school goes beyond the Copenhagen school in how far it seeks to deconstruct traditional security studies. Critiquing the Copenhagen school’s apparent satisfaction to allow the concept of security to remain contested, theorists of this particular tradition such as Booth or McSweeney argue that the fundamental referent object should be at the individual level, and therefore security should be clearly defined as the emancipation of the individual from things that threaten it, including in many cases the state itself.<sup>20</sup> So while the Copenhagen school takes the world as it is and offers a theoretical model for better

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<sup>16</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, pp.4

<sup>17</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, pp. 5

<sup>18</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, pp. 7

<sup>19</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, pp. 25

<sup>20</sup> Ken Booth, “Security and Emancipation,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 319

understanding how it works in order to solve particular problems within it, the Welsh school is concerned with changing the conceptual foundations of security, and taking the social constructivist approach “all the way down” to a fundamental level and thereby deconstructing the state and/or society as meaningful referent objects.<sup>21</sup>

There are still other opponents of traditional security studies. The Paris school of security studies argue that the process of securitization is so often handed over to specialist professionals that they can “transfer the legitimacy they gain from struggles against terrorists...towards other targets.”<sup>22</sup> Securitization is not only the result of deliberate attempts to circumvent normal politics, but at least in part the result of routinized actions by “professionals of the management of unease,” who are in structural competition with each other for access to capital and political legitimacy.<sup>23</sup> According to the Paris school, securitization should not be thought of as the result of deliberate actions by speech actors, but primarily as the result of “Weberian routines of rationalization,” the reduction of persons into data points, and the widespread employment of technology that both enables and justifies these practices. The effect upon the target audience of constant (routinized) securitization is an “embodied sensibility”<sup>24</sup> for security issues, an awareness that to be Israeli is to be a securitizing agent.

The aim of this brief discussion on emerging schools of thought within critical security studies is not meant to be a comprehensive summation of the discipline, but rather to

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<sup>21</sup> Bill McSweeney, “Durkheim and the Copenhagen school: a response to Buzan and Wæver,” *Review of International Studies* Vol.24(1), 24, pp. 137-138

<sup>22</sup> Didier Bigo, “Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease,” *Alternatives* Vol. 27, pp. 63

<sup>23</sup> Didier Bigo and Anastassia Tsoukala, “Understanding (in)security,” in *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty: Illiberal practices of liberal regimes after 9/11*, ed. Bigo and Tsoukala, (Routledge, 2008), pp. 4-5

<sup>24</sup> Matan Shapiro & Nurit Bird-David, “Routinergency: Domestic securitization in contemporary Israel,” *Society and Space* 2007, Vol. 35(4), pp. 639

contextualize the the theory of securitization as understood in the remainder of this paper. It is to reiterate, in the preferred phrasing of securitization and critical security studies theorists, a justification for not adopting a traditionalist state-centric approach to this case study. Not only would such an approach offer little new to the subject, but as will be demonstrated below the Palestinian population do not always pose a “traditional” threat to the State of Israel and Israeli policy was not always state-centric either.

### **Using the theories of securitization**

A generally accepted definition of securitization is that an issue is given enough salience as a threat to some identified referent object, which then “win[s] the assent of the audience” and allows those tasked with dealing with that issue greater flexibility in their means.<sup>25</sup> The four important concepts implied in this statement are: the securitizing actor, which identifies and raises the issue to the level of a threat; the referent object which needs protection; the identified threat; and the audience whose agreement is required to elevate the issue to the level of threat. Sub-concepts in operation, implied by the main concepts, are speech acts distinct from normal political discourse and the subsequent existence of extraordinary policies that are enacted in response to the threat. Where necessary this analysis will be done by disaggregating the overall relationship by sectors such as military and social, or by spatial scale such as international and subnational, for the purposes of illuminating key insights. As will be demonstrated by the research presented below, in this case study the securitizing actors are not all closely associated with the Israeli state, the referent object not necessarily the Israeli

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<sup>25</sup> Thierry Balzacq, Sarah Léonard, Jan Ruzicka, “‘Securitization’ Revisited: Theory and Cases,” *International Relations*, 2016, Vol.30(4), pp. 495

state, and the audience not necessarily the general population of Israel. Identification of speech acts and extraordinary policies will further demonstrate how the conception of security in the Israeli-Palestinian contest is distinct from the interests of the Israeli state.

Looking at the case study from the perspective of the Copenhagen school's critics is also useful. Using the arguments of the Paris school that the "politics of terror" succeed in securitizing government policies primarily due to the overall structure of the increasingly complex and technologically bewildering world of today.<sup>26</sup> This theory allows for the deconstruction of essentialist arguments for the causes of Israeli actions as well as providing a starting point for generalizing the phenomenon of securitizing "threat" populations beyond the Israeli-Palestinian case. In shifting the cause of securitization away from choices by identifiable actors and their audiences, and towards impersonal bureaucratic processes as well as international trends, the Paris school's version of securitization also provides a depoliticized context for evaluating the reasonableness of Israeli actions.

On the other hand, adopting the position advocated by the Welsh school generates a more-or-less objectifiable standard for comparing the Israeli-Palestinian case with other similar cases, since the referent object would be practically reduced to an indivisible scale (the level of the individual). This approach eliminates debate over what constitutes a valid referent object and instead focuses on what constitutes threats "sufficiently existentially threatening to warrant emergency action."<sup>27</sup> Like the perspective of the Paris school, this perspective can be used to contextualize Israeli actions according to a universalizable standard. This is particularly

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<sup>26</sup> Bigo and Tsoukala, *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty*, pp. 8

<sup>27</sup> Scott Watson, "The 'human' as referent object? Humanitarianism as securitization," *Security Dialogue* 42(1), pp. 7

useful when Israeli speech acts explicitly identify certain threats, which can be evaluated according to this standard. Moreover, the Welsh school's perspective could be applied to the Palestinian population as well, whose status as valid referent objects has not always been emphasized in Israeli rhetoric.

### **3. Examination of the evidence**

Palestinian actions have long ceased to pose any real existential threat to the Israeli state by the year 2009. Despite multiple clashes between the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and various Palestinian groups between 2009 and the present day, the fundamental military position of Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians has not changed. The outcome of these struggles has also tended towards the same pattern – relatively limited casualties for the Israelis and significantly higher ones for the Palestinians, typically due to the imbalance in firepower and targeting capability.

For instance, on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the latest in a series of conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians erupted when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) entered the Gaza Strip. Lasting 22 days, the Gaza War of 2008-2009 or Operation Cast Lead as is known within Israel unsurprisingly resulted in an Israeli military victory – the number of Palestinian dead<sup>28</sup> predictably dwarfing that of Israel,<sup>29</sup> with the levels of physical destruction in Gaza and Israel correspondingly lopsided. Also notable was the fact that the Palestinian group Hamas had decided sometime after to suspend its rocket attacks, without any evidence of concessions by

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<sup>28</sup> "Fatalities during Operation Cast Lead," *B'Tselem*, Accessed May 6, 2018. URL: <https://www.btselem.org/statistics/fatalities/during-cast-lead/by-date-of-event>

<sup>29</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "IDF Operation in Gaza: Cast Lead," Accessed May 6, 2018. URL: [http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/Aerial\\_strike\\_weapon\\_development\\_center%20\\_Gaza\\_28-Dec-2008.aspx](http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/Aerial_strike_weapon_development_center%20_Gaza_28-Dec-2008.aspx)

Israel, and instead to focus on “winning support at home and abroad through cultural initiatives and public relations.”<sup>30</sup> Given that escalating rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel was the stated *causis belli* for the Israeli operation, this outcome exemplifies the trend of Israel enjoying overwhelming advantage over the Palestinians across a multitude of sectors, ranging from military to intelligence to economic.

However, violence between combatants is sadly not the entirety of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Since 2009 low-level violence targeting Israeli civilians has also occurred. Though often conducted with relatively low-tech means far removed from the destructive firepower of modern weapons, incidents such as the Bat Ayin axe attack,<sup>31</sup> the 2011 Jerusalem bus bombing,<sup>32</sup> and what the Israeli Ministry calls “thirty months of terror”<sup>33</sup> demonstrate that Israeli society does face real threats from the Palestinians. These incidents can also lead to revenge attacks against Palestinian civilians,<sup>34</sup> as well as causing military escalation between the IDF and various Palestinian actors.<sup>35</sup> However, regardless of how tragic and outrageous the attacks, they fall well short of posing an existential threat to Israel given the previously mentioned disparity in power between Israel and the Palestinians. What these threats do

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<sup>30</sup> Ethan Bronner, “ Hamas Shifts from Rockets to Culture War,” *The New York Times*, July 23, 2009. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/24/world/middleeast/24gaza.html>

<sup>31</sup> Jonathan Lis, Nadav Shragai and Anshel Pfeffer, “Bat Ayin Teen Killed, Child Hurt in Ax Attack, Terrorist Escapes,” *Haaretz*, Apr 03, 2009. URL: <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5031884>

<sup>32</sup> Conal Urquhart, “Bomb explodes near Jerusalem bus station,” *The Guardian*, Mar 23, 2011. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/23/jerusalem-bus-bomb>

<sup>33</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Wave of terror 2015-2018,” Accessed May 6, 2018. URL: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Palestinian/Pages/Wave-of-terror-October-2015.aspx>

<sup>34</sup> Robert Tait, “Three confess to murdering and burning Palestinian boy, say police,” *The Telegraph*, July 7, 2014. URL: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/10951875/Three-confess-to-murdering-and-burning-Palestinian-boy-say-police.html#murder>

<sup>35</sup> Peter Beaumont, “Israeli jets pound Gaza as Netanyahu blames Hamas for teenagers' deaths,” *The Guardian*, July 1, 2014. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/01/israeli-jets-gaza-netanyahu-hamas-teenagers-deaths>

instead is to remind Israelis that many Palestinians continue to contest the legitimacy of the Zionist project – a state for Jews in the Levant. Fear of “losing” this contest, however unlikely, is a significant and largely understandable motive behind securitized policies enacted by the Israeli state, as well as public support for those policies. However this is a shallow explanation, and does not provide any useful insights into the conflict or securitization theory. To do so requires an in-depth examination of the evidence and analysis. The following are four examples demonstrating recent Israeli securitization of Palestinian, focusing on policy choices which indicate securitization.

### **Israeli determination to maintain the Gaza blockade**

Since 2007 the Gaza Strip has been under Israeli blockade, in an effort by Israel to prevent weapons (particularly rockets) from being smuggled into the territory. Israel was particularly concerned since the Gaza Strip had been ruled by Hamas (which defeated its rival Fatah in 2005 for control of Gaza), a group which Israel accuses of being responsible for terrorism. Despite this reasonable-sounding premise, some side-effects of the blockade have been economically severe, including “staggering” rates of unemployment and poverty and “pervasive” feelings of hopelessness.<sup>36</sup> This has led to many international organizations calling for the lifting of the blockade on humanitarian grounds, as seen in the open letter published on the UN Relief and Works Agency website by 38 prominent NGOs and humanitarian organizations.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The World Bank, “Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,” May 27, 2015, URL: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/563181468182960504/pdf/96601-REVISED-WP-Box391464B-AHLC-May-21-Book-fix-footnotes.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, “Statement by Humanitarian Organisations, NGOs And Un Organisations On The Second Anniversary Of The Gaza Blockade,” 17 June 2009, URL:

Many other groups such as the Free Gaza Movement have chosen instead to try and challenge the blockade physically, by attempting to sail directly to Gaza and in doing so challenge Israel's ability to control entry and exit for the Gaza Strip.<sup>38</sup> Vessels operated under the groups aegis were able to successfully dock at Gaza in August and October 2008, but subsequent attempts were intercepted by Israeli forces. In May 2010, the ninth attempt by the group to reach Gaza resulted in significant violence and loss of life as well as major international controversy. When Israeli soldiers attempted to board vessels operated by the anti-blockade activists, they were attacked by people onboard using various improvised weapons.<sup>39</sup> In the ensuing violence, nine of the activists were killed.

The subsequent United Nations inquiry into the Gaza flotilla incident of 2010 (also known as the Palmer report) decided that the Israeli blockade was a legitimate security measure justifying interference with freedom of navigation and that a minority of the activists had engaged in premeditated organized violence against the Israelis, however Israel also had acted with "excessive and unreasonable" force by trying to forcibly board the vessels and mistreated the passengers after taking control of the vessels.<sup>40</sup> In its recommendations, ("How to Avoid Similar Situations in the Future") the Palmer Report stresses that new flotillas attempting to break through the Israeli blockade should be discouraged, since they "provoke destabilization of the regional climate." Its primary concern with the blockade was that Israel

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<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/statement-humanitarian-organisations-ngos-and-un-organisations-second?id=451>

<sup>38</sup> FreeGaza Movement, "Our Mission," Accessed June 9, 2018, URL: <http://www.freegaza.org/about-us/our-mission/>

<sup>39</sup> Robert Booth, "Israeli attack on Gaza flotilla sparks international outrage," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2010, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/31/israeli-attacks-gaza-flotilla-activists>

<sup>40</sup> *Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident*, September 2011, URL: [http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/middle\\_east/Gaza\\_Flotilla\\_Panel\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/middle_east/Gaza_Flotilla_Panel_Report.pdf)

keep its policies under “regular review,” to ensure that its actions remain proportionate to the threat it faces. In determining the legitimacy of Israel’s blockade, the Palmer Report rather unsatisfactorily cites articles 93-108 of the non-binding 1994 San Remo Manual, which provides some technical qualifications describing a blockade.<sup>41</sup> The Palmer Report appears to consider the existence of these provisions as customary international law, and therefore considers the legality of blockades to be entirely dependent on the blockading actor’s *operational* compliance with the San Remo Manual. According to the manual, only when the population is deprived of goods “essential for its survival” does it become illegal, ignoring the fact that a severe economic crises short of abject starvation might also be a relevant factor in determining the legitimacy of a state’s actions.

Shortly after the incident, Israel also held an official inquiry known as the Turkel Commission, which produced two reports. “Part One,”<sup>42</sup> published fairly rapidly after the flotilla incident is concerned with the specifics of that incident, specifically while “Part Two”<sup>43</sup> which was published in February 2013 focuses on the adequacy of Israel’s existing mechanisms for investigating complaints of Israeli violations of international law. For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on the findings of Part One.

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<sup>41</sup> “San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea,” 12 June 1994, URL: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=96F4C27D2F07BE8FC12563FB0049E4BC>

<sup>42</sup> “The Public Commission to Examine the Maritime Incident of 31 May 2010,” (The Turkel Commission – Report Part One) January 2010, URL: [http://www.pmo.gov.il/SiteCollectionDocuments/turkel\\_eng\\_a.pdf](http://www.pmo.gov.il/SiteCollectionDocuments/turkel_eng_a.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> “The Public Commission to Examine the Maritime Incident of 31 May 2010: Israel’s Mechanisms for Examining and Investigating Complaints and Claims of Violations of the Laws of Armed Conflict According to International Law,” (The Turkel Commission – Second Report), February 2013, URL: [https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/alternatefiles/he/turkel\\_eng\\_b1-474\\_0.pdf](https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/alternatefiles/he/turkel_eng_b1-474_0.pdf)

Part one of the Turkel Report found that that blockade of Gaza was lawful given that Israel was fulfilling the required humanitarian obligations of a blockading party. Notably the report asserts that “[t]he conflict between Israel and the Gaza Strip is an international armed conflict.” This assertion serves as a speech act identifying the Gaza Strip as a threat to Israel (indeed as Israel’s antagonist in an international armed conflict) while minimizing and undifferentiating the Palestinian population. The implication being that Israel will acknowledge judgement of its actions *only according to international law relating to armed conflict*, and not based on political arguments regarding the political status of the Gaza Strip and therefore how Israel may or may not be violating the rights of Gaza’s inhabitants. Another finding in “Chapter B: Conclusions” was that the activists’ were primarily seeking “to bring publicity to the humanitarian situation in Gaza by attempting to breach the blockade. If the primary purpose was simply to deliver humanitarian aid then according to the duties of a blockading party, as per the San Remo Manual, Israel would be obligated to allow the activists free passage. Like the Palmer Report, the Turkel Report cites the San Remo Manual as customary international law and does not go further in considering any other obligations for Israel towards Gaza in this situation. If an economic blockade has been imposed for legitimate security-related reasons, the UN, Israel, and customary international law all concur that Israel is permitted to intercept those attempting to breach it for any non-humanitarian reasons.

Aside from these arguments, Part One of the Turkel Report also highlights the security threat posed *by* the flotilla to Israel and its personnel. In the section discussing the actions of the Turkish NGO İnsani Yardım Vakfı (IHH), the report accuses its members of engaging in violence against the IDF personnel attempting to take control of the *Mavi Marmara*, one of the

ships in the flotilla. Citing article 51(3) of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention,<sup>44</sup> the Turkel Report argues that the IHH activists, despite their civilian status, were acceptable targets for the IDF since they took “direct part in hostilities” between Israel and Gaza, which invalidates their protected status according to the the First Protocol. This is relatively uncontroversial and does not even require securitization since it is written in a widely accepted foundational document for international law. However, the Turkel report goes further by citing the decision from the (Israeli) Supreme Court regarding targeted killings by Israel. The interpretation by the court in that case on what exactly constitutes “hostilities” appears to extend the category of civilians taking “direct part in hostilities” to include those “preparing himself for the hostilities,” and argues that “[i]t is possible to take part in hostilities without using weapons at all.”<sup>45</sup> On the deck of the *Mavi Marmara*, where the fighting took place at night, involving a fairly large number of people and at close quarters, applying such a definition could essentially render all 500+ people on board to at least temporarily be considered legitimate targets even though the vast majority of them simply wished to deliver civilian goods to the Gaza Strip. In fairness to the IDF, there is compelling evidence to prove that the initial IDF boarding team were violently attacked (including photographic evidence), and they did seek to distinguish between those passengers who posed a reasonable threat and those who did not

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<sup>44</sup> “Protection of the Civilian Population,” *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts*, (Protocol I) 8 June 1977, URL: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=4BEED9920AE0AEAE12563CD0051DC9E>

<sup>45</sup> *The Public Committee against Torture in Israel v. The Government of Israel*, The Supreme Court Sitting as the High Court of Justice, Dec 11, 2005, paragraph 33. URL: <https://www.law.upenn.edu/institutes/cerl/conferences/targetedkilling/papers/IsraeliTargetedKillingCase.pdf>

after taking control of the ship.<sup>46</sup> Though in fairness to Israel's detractors, many of those shot by the IDF in the ensuing fighting appeared to have been shot from behind, or while prone, or were journalists.<sup>47</sup> Not only do these injuries (and deaths) highlight the risk to civilians of Israel's interpretation of what it is allowed to do in self-defense, they also demonstrate Israel's willingness to risk causing injury or death to foreign nationals in order to maintain its Gaza policy.

If the blockade policy represents the *existence* of securitizing processes, the flotilla incident might represent the *severity* with which the securitizing logic has taken hold. When polled in the wake of the flotilla incident, clear majorities of the Israeli public believed that the Gaza blockade was of greater benefit than harm to Israel and had greater confidence in the state and security leadership.<sup>48</sup> For Israelis the importance of stopping rocket fire (which has a relatively limited effect on Israelis) far outweighs the economic penalty or the actual military damage inflicted by the IDF on the Palestinian "threat" population, and attempts by foreign nationals to undermine Israel's chosen methods for stopping rocket fire justify the use of lethal force against them.

### **No Palestinian statehood without Israeli security?**

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<sup>46</sup> "Detailed testimony from IDF officers and soldiers, supported by documentation, reveals for the first time the aggressive, brutal fighting carried out by IHH operatives and their accomplices against Israeli forces aboard the Mavi Marmara," *The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, Jan 23, 2011. URL: [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/pdf/PDF\\_19076\\_2.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/pdf/PDF_19076_2.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> "Report on the Israeli Attack on the Humanitarian Aid Convoy to Gaza on 31 May 2010," *Turkish National Commission of Inquiry*, Ankara, (February 2011), pp. 26-29 URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/Turkish%20Report%20Final%20-%20UN%20Copy.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> "Israeli Public Opinion Polls: Opinion of the Gaza Flotilla Incident," *Jewish Virtual Library*, URL: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israeli-opinion-of-the-gaza-flotilla-incident>

On November 29, 2012 the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 67/19, which granted Palestine “non-member observer State status in the United Nations,” and called for “peace and security with Israel on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.”<sup>49</sup> This is an upgrade for Palestine from “non-member observer entity” to something that at least has “state” in the title, while also (again) rejecting the legitimacy of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. In his speech to the General Assembly urging the members to support the resolution, the leader of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas (a.k.a. Abu Mazen) argued that recognition for Palestine was not a delegitimation of the State of Israel, but rather it would “to breathe new life into the negotiations [with Israel],” while warning that “[t]he rope of patience is shortening” as more Palestinians are killed or injured as a result of conflict.<sup>50</sup>

Israel’s official response to this event was telling. Calling it a “meaningless decision,” the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) argued that Palestinian statehood would not be possible without security guarantees for Israeli citizens.<sup>51</sup> Using an alternative name for the West Bank, the Israeli PMO claimed that “Iranian terrorism” could use Judea and Samaria as bases for attacking Israel, if Palestine were permitted independence. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu argued that this was exactly what had happened after the Israeli withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 and from the Gaza Strip in 2005. “There will be no Palestinian state without an arrangement in which the security of Israeli citizens will be ensured,” declared Netanyahu. “Abu

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<sup>49</sup> “Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 29 November 2012,” *Status of Palestine in the United Nations*, United Nations general Assembly, November 29, 2012, , accessed July 17, 2018, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/19](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/19).

<sup>50</sup> “Full text of Mahmoud Abbas’s speech to the UN General Assembly, November 29, 2012,” *The Times of Israel*, Nov 29, 2012. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-mahmoud-abbass-speech-to-the-un-general-assembly-november-29-2012/>

<sup>51</sup> “PM’s Office Response to the UN General Assembly decision and to Abu Mazen’s Speech,” *Prime Minister’s Office*, Nov 29, 2012. URL: <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokeUN291112.aspx>

Mazen did not see fit to say even a single word about the terrorism and rocket fire being directed against Israeli citizens; this is not the talk of a man who wants peace.” Underlining this rejection, shortly after the vote at the UN the Israeli Cabinet decided that “there is nothing in the aforesaid resolution that changes the status of the areas under dispute,” and that “the aforesaid decision will not constitute a basis for future negotiations.”<sup>52</sup>

Leaving aside the difficult political question of whether Palestine deserves to be a state, or whether Israel has unfairly undermined its statehood, the question posed by Netanyahu deserves closer examination. Does Israel have anything to truly fear security-wise from a hypothetical Palestinian state? The converse to that question, which was touched upon by Mahmoud Abbas’ speech at the UN, is the possibility that Israeli security is in more danger without a Palestinian state.

Currently, the Palestinian Authority (PA) depends on external support and Israeli cooperation to cover its budget, and as a consequence many of its budgetary priorities are oriented towards internal security services which target individuals and groups who may be a threat to Israel.<sup>53</sup> This focus may be lost if Palestine were to become independent. The governing institutions of Palestine would presumably be able to raise more funds, especially if it were no longer dependent on Israeli cooperation for part of its taxation and customs collection.<sup>54</sup> This would allow the hypothetical independent Palestine greater discretion in what

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<sup>52</sup> “At the weekly Cabinet meeting 02.12.12,” *Prime Minister’s Office*, Dec 2, 2012. URL:

<http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/SecretaryAnnouncements/Pages/govmes021212.aspx>

<sup>53</sup> “Repressive PA police trained, equipped by Western donors,” *The Electronic Intifada*, July 7, 2012. URL:

<https://electronicintifada.net/content/repressive-pa-police-trained-equipped-western-donors/11473>

<sup>54</sup> Rex Byrnen, “Public Finance, Conflict, and Statebuilding: The Case of Palestine,” Final version prepared for the project on “Public Finance in Post-Conflict Statebuilding,” (Center on International Cooperation, NYU: 2005), pp. 11 URL: <http://site.iugaza.edu.ps/walhabil/files/2010/11/Public-Finance-Conflict-and-State-Building-Case-of-Palestine.pdf>

it chooses to add in its budget, and it may choose to prioritize other goals apart from close cooperation with Israel to counter terrorism. This may give terrorist groups or even individuals plotting violence greater leeway to do so, although the possibility also exists that the citizens of independent Palestine would be able to find more economic opportunities which would reduce the appeal of violence. Nevertheless, Israeli security could be undermined if an independent Palestine proves unwilling to be as cooperative, and is not structurally obligated to be cooperative, in terms of combatting terror threats to Israel.

Another possibility is that the hypothetically independent Palestine acts in a way that directly threatens Israel. Since Israel is a significant military and economic actor in the region, and given their long history of conflict, a hypothetically independent Palestine might be fearful of its survival.<sup>55</sup> As such it may seek to balance against Israel either internally through a military buildup,<sup>56</sup> or externally through strategic alliances.<sup>57</sup> If Palestine chooses to acquire significant offensive weapons, those weapons could be used against Israelis in an act of war, used by Palestinian personnel with grievances towards Israel of their own accord, or be stolen/sold to non-state actors who wish to threaten Israel. If on the other Palestine chooses external balancing, it would likely be forced to seek state support from other states who already have an antagonistic relationship with Israel, such as Iran, given the likely possibility of Israel and the US applying diplomatic pressure or providing incentives to prevent Palestine from acquiring allies to balance against Israel. Regardless of which other state(s) a hypothetical Palestine manages to secure as allies, Israel would have its freedom of action greatly curtailed since any future conflict

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<sup>55</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Realism and International Politics*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 137

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Realism and International Politics*, pp. 168

<sup>57</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Realism and International Politics*, pp. 118

against Palestine could draw in other state actors. This could make Israel less secure since it would have fewer options to deal with threats, as well as increasing the availability of weapons in the region to potential enemies.

Another “threat” could be the fact that as an independent state Palestine could initiate legal cases against Israel. The International Criminal Court (ICC), which can investigate and put on trial individuals accused of “genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression,”<sup>58</sup> requires that cases be referred to its Prosecutor by a “State body.”<sup>59</sup> Similarly the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which can adjudicate “legal disputes between States” or provide “advisory opinions on legal questions,” also only recognizes states as valid parties.<sup>60</sup> While Israel may refuse to enter into a special agreement with a hypothetical Palestine to submit a dispute to the court, or refuse to cooperate with the ICC’s investigation, or surrender individuals indicted by the ICC, it is likely to suffer reputational damage in rejecting dispute resolution at the ICC or ICJ. A unilateral effort by Palestine to seek legal redress at either of those institutions is likely to be seen by the wider international community as a commendable attempt at peaceful, non-threatening dispute resolution, which in turn would put pressure on Israel to demonstrate a comparable commitment to peace. While the likelihood of actually losing a case is low, given the diplomatic pressure that Israel and its allies can bring to bear to avoid such an outcome, such pressure would further isolate Israel from nations who value a rules-based international order with functional dispute resolution mechanisms. As such, an

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<sup>58</sup> UN General Assembly, “Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,” Article 5, July 17, 1998, ISBN No. 92-9227-227-6, URL: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html>

<sup>59</sup> UN General Assembly, “Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,” Article 14

<sup>60</sup> “How the Court Works,” *The International Court of Justice*, (Accessed June 12, 2018), URL: <http://www.icj-cij.org/en/how-the-court-works>

independent Palestine could realistically “threaten” Israeli leaders with the embarrassment of ICC indictment, or the reputational damage of having to wriggle out of an ICJ dispute resolution process. Of course, Israel *could* simply comply with whatever case is brought fourth by Palestine, though then there is the risk that Israel could lose, and thus face an even greater dilemma of whether to comply with the outcome or face accusations of contempt.

However, many of the same threats that come along with a hypothetical independent Palestine already exist for Israel: independent Palestinian groups such as Hamas are already adopting internal and external balancing strategies against Israel, while the ongoing occupation of the West Bank inflicts a constant stream of reputational damage. Instead, the main threat posed by the movement towards Palestinian statehood is based on a subjective fear informed by the assumption that a Palestinian state would be composed of, or inevitably be taken over by, anti-Israel extremist groups – something noted in Israeli Ambassador Ron Prozor’s speech to the General Assembly during the debate over Resolution 67/19. “Our conflict has never been about the establishment of a Palestinian state,” argued Ambassador Prozor. “It has always been about the existence of the Jewish state.”<sup>61</sup> The argument is that creating a Palestinian state without the consent of Israel and the involvement of Israeli interests would inevitably result in “another terror-ocracy,” which empowers extremists and has access to the resources and status of a sovereign state to perpetually harass and threaten Israel to the point where its existence could not be taken for granted.

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<sup>61</sup> “Ambassador Prozor addresses UNGA on the Question of Palestine,” *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, (Nov 24, 2014). URL: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/InternatlOrgs/Speeches/Pages/Amb-Prozor-addresses-UNGA-on-the-Question-of-Palestine-24-Nov-2014.aspx>

Unlike in the Gaza case, here the process of securitization is ongoing, except the target audience appears to be the international community. To justify its preferred (extraordinary) policy, the rejection of any form of statehood for Palestine without the input of Israel, various Israeli representatives frame a hypothetical Palestinian state as a threat to Israel and the wider international community. Similar to the Gaza case however is a lack of differentiation between Palestinian groups, despite Israel cooperating with the Palestinian Authority and being at war (technically by virtue of the Gaza blockade) with Hamas. Presumably, this is done in order to enhance the coherence of the “threat” posed by a hypothetical Palestinian state, as for Israel any hypothetical state that might see Hamas elected to power is a credible threat.

### **Securitizing the Arabic language**

Scholars using a linguistic landscape analysis (concerning the arraignment of the symbolic public space) have alleged that Arabic is being slowly marginalized in Israel.<sup>62</sup> Camelia Suleiman’s research demonstrates how Arabic on public signage in the country is often a transliteration of the Hebrew,<sup>63</sup> printed in smaller font or not including as much information as the Hebrew,<sup>64</sup> or simply missing even in significant public spaces such as the memorial for Yitzhak Rabin’s assassination.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, in some instances the Arabic displayed is incorrect, showing “a carelessness regarding how Arabic should be represented.”<sup>66</sup> Despite Arabic being an official language of Israel, there is significant evidence showing that the status of Arabic is not equivalent to Hebrew. As examples provided in Suleiman’s linguistic landscape analysis is

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<sup>62</sup> Camelia Suleiman, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel: A Sociolinguistic Analysis*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 73

<sup>63</sup> Camelia Suleiman, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel*, pp. 77-78 (Figures 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4)

<sup>64</sup> Camelia Suleiman, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel*, pp. 80-81 (Figures 3.6 and 3.7)

<sup>65</sup> Camelia Suleiman, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel*, pp. 84 (Figure 3.10)

<sup>66</sup> Camelia Suleiman, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel*, pp. 90-92 (Figures 3.17, 3.18 and 3.19)

drawn from a wide range of places inside Israeli territory, it is reasonable to conclude that these signs are not the result of oversight but representative of some other phenomenon. Since protecting the public status of minority languages is closely linked to the protection of minority rights,<sup>67</sup> it could be that the public marginalization of Arabic is indicative of some process that justifies the abrogation of some minority rights.

One explanation of this phenomenon is orientalism, or deliberate “othering” of the Palestinians who are seen as playing no role in the Zionist project. The fruit of that project, the State of Israel, is to be “a haven for Jews” and an “insurance for the preservation of Jewish culture.”<sup>68</sup> Palestinians have no place in this new state and according to the architects of Zionism their “barbarism” was to be replaced with (European) culture.<sup>69</sup> This line of thinking would have argued that Arabic, the language of the Palestinians, should be replaced by a more “civilized” language, despite the irony of Arabic possessing a longer literary and cultural history than modern Hebrew. After the *Adalah* case of 2002, in which the Israeli Supreme Court accepted a petition to require all municipalities containing Arab minorities to have Arabic signs in addition to Hebrew,<sup>70</sup> such overt orientalism would be illegal. Though it is easily conceivable that policymakers who were educated in this orientalist mindset might retain some of these

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<sup>67</sup> Denise G. Réaume, “The Constitutional Protection of Language: Survival or Security?” in David Schneiderman, ed., *Language and the State: The Law and Politics of Identity* (Cowansville, Qc: Éditions Yvon Blais, 1991) pp. 46-47

<sup>68</sup> Joseph Massad, “Palestinians and the Limits of Racialized Discourse,” *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians*, (Routledge: 2014), pp. 86

<sup>69</sup> Dan Rabinowitz, “Oriental Othering and National Identity: A Review of Early Israeli Anthropological Studies of Palestinians,” *Identities*, 01 July 2002, Vol.9(3), pp. 319

<sup>70</sup> The Supreme Court of Israel, “Summary of the Supreme Court’s Judgment Regarding Arabic Text on Signs (H.C. 4112/99),” *H.C. 4112/99, Adalah, et. al. v. The Municipality of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, et. al.*), URL: <https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/features/landlangrep/4112decision-eng.pdf>

biases, which would go somewhat towards explaining the lower public status accorded to Arabic on Israeli signs.

During the immediate post-war period, orientalist scholars competed with scholars of modernization theory over which would be the most intellectually valid interpreter of Islamic societies, whether visible differences were due to innate cultural-religious essentialisms or whether they were due to the contrast between “tradition” and “modernity.” However, both schools of thought concurred that there was a fundamental dichotomy between the West and Islam,<sup>71</sup> and scholars of both traditions saw their ultimate purpose as supporting their (western) nations’ national interests in a Cold War context.<sup>72</sup> In the Israeli context a similar dynamic existed, though individuals saw their nation’s interests as much more narrowly defined to the Levant. Starting with the formation of the Israeli state in 1948, a strong argument for the instruction of Arabic among Israelis was made, for the purposes of enhancing the operational effectiveness of the IDF, intelligence services, and generally for the Israeli state in dealing with its Arab neighbours.<sup>73</sup> While *knowledge* of Arabic historic and culture was required (to make good intelligence officers), “positive emotional and ideological bonds” towards Arabic was discouraged.<sup>74</sup> So while Israel may have built up an impressive amount of human capital which is fluent in Arabic, Arabic “experts” tended to not act as bridges between Israeli and Palestinian communities but typically as agents of the Israeli state. These “experts” then became the most “objective” voices for interpreting politics taking place in Arabic for the general Israeli

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<sup>71</sup> Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of The Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, (Cambridge University Press: 2010), pp. 140

<sup>72</sup> Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of The Middle East*, pp. 142

<sup>73</sup> Yonatan Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic: Political and Security Considerations in the Making of Arabic Language Studies in Israel*, (Palgrave Macmillan: 2014), pp. 67-68

<sup>74</sup> Yonatan Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, pp. 79

population,<sup>75</sup> an interpretation that is probably skewed towards maximizing state interests. This dynamic would certainly contribute to the “othering” of Arabic in public discourse as the “language of the enemy,” since state agents tasked with protecting the nation from its enemies were encouraged to learn it.

The rise of globalization and neo-capitalist practices in the 1990s, coinciding with the demise of the Soviet Union, meant that Israeli society also began to open up particularly as more Palestinians became integrated into the local economy, which itself was integrating with the global economy.<sup>76</sup> However, the public mood towards this social integration began to sour, possibly due to the 2<sup>nd</sup> intifada (2000-2005) and by 2009 official efforts were underway to reassert the exclusivity and dominance of Hebrew-Jewish identity. An example of this is the Sa’ar Program (named after then Israeli minister for Education Gideon Sa’ar), which sought to “to deepen Jewish, Zionist and Israeli identity” and which explicitly forbade any commemoration of the Nakhba (Arabic for “catastrophe,” referring to the foundation of Israel from the Palestinian perspective) in the official education system.<sup>77</sup> More generally it sought to link Israeli civic identity with Hebrew while marginalizing Arabic, aligning the Israeli state more closely with the Jewish nation. This is all the more extraordinary considering that cultural and linguistic dilution of Hebrew and Jewishness by English and American culture is not viewed

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<sup>75</sup> Yonatan Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, pp. 226

<sup>76</sup> Camelia Suleiman, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel*, pp. 116

<sup>77</sup> Sawsan Zaher, “The Prohibition on Teaching the Nakba in the Arab Education System in Israel,” *Adalah*, September 2010, URL:

<https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/newsletter/eng/sep10/docs/Sawsan%20Nakba%20English%20final.pdf>

negatively as a threat, with Americanization even being celebrated as a sign of Israel's "normalization."<sup>78</sup>

The argument that Arabic is being securitized provides three important insights into any examination of Israeli securitization of Palestinians. First it provides one way of seeing the idealized role of Palestinians according to the contemporary Zionist ideology. Secondly it shows how the Israeli state approaches the language and culture of the Palestinians, which despite 70+ years of political separation are still shared to some degree between the Palestinians and Israeli Arabs. Last, it demonstrates that there is still a current of insecurity underpinning Zionist ideology. So while many of the examples draw from Israeli domestic politics, they are still representative of the "othering" process that is more explicitly applied to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

### **Do West Bank settlements protect Israel?**

In 1967 Israel prevailed over a coalition of Arab countries in the Six-Day War and captured significant pieces of territory from all of them. From Egypt Israel gained the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, from Syria Israel gained the Golan Heights, and from Jordan Israel gained the West Bank. In the aftermath of this decisive Israeli victory, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 242, which called for Israel to return those territories it captured and respect for the sovereignty of "all States in the area."<sup>79</sup> This document established several critical political positions which remain salient to this day: that Arab states

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<sup>78</sup> Anat First and Eli Avraham, *American in JeruSALEm: Globalization, National Identity, and Israeli Advertising*, (Lexington Books: 2009), pp. 11-12

<sup>79</sup> Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), S/RES/242 (Nov 22, 1967), URL: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/IP%20S%20RES%20242.php>

(and non-state actors) should accept the existence of Israel rather than seek its destruction, that the pre-1967 borders of Israel are internationally recognized as legitimate, that Israel should exchange captured territory in return for peaceful relations, that refugees should be “justly settled.” This resolution paved the way for the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, the text of which was agreed upon by Israeli and Egyptian leaders at the Camp David Accords,<sup>80</sup> and which led to the return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt and the initiation of normal ties between the two countries. The 1994 Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty which established normal ties between Jordan and Israel was also predicated upon Resolution 242,<sup>81</sup>

Peace between Israel and its former Arab state antagonists did not however resolve the status of Gaza or the West Bank. Though it was controlled by Egypt, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty did not stipulate the return of that territory to Egyptian sovereignty. According to Article 2 of the treaty, the permanent boundary of Egypt and Israel was to be the boundary between Egypt and the former Mandate of Palestine, “without prejudice to the issue of the status of the Gaza Strip.” As for the West Bank, Jordan had renounced its claim to it in 1988,<sup>82</sup> and the Israel-Jordan peace treaty stipulated that the “permanent, secure and recognised international boundary between Israel and Jordan” would be demarcated by the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers and the Dead Sea. For good measure, Article 3 of the treaty adds that this border is “without prejudice to the status of any territories that came under Israeli military government control in

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<sup>80</sup> “Camp David Accords,” (Sept 17, 1978), *Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, URL:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/camp%20david%20accords.aspx>

<sup>81</sup> “Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty,” (October 26, 1994) *Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, URL:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/israel-jordan%20peace%20treaty.aspx>

<sup>82</sup> “His Majesty's Address to the Nation, July 31, 1988,” URL: [http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/88\\_july31.html](http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/88_july31.html)

1967.” According to this document, it appears that the Israeli territory extends right up to the Jordan river, implying that the West Bank is a part of Israel.

In addition to historical and legal arguments, others make a cultural and/or religious argument for Israeli control over the West Bank. Using the historical names Judea and Samaria, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs argues on its website that “Jewish presence in this territory has existed for thousands of years” and that the Mandate for Palestine adopted by the League of Nations (a predecessor to the United Nations) in 1922 legally recognized Jewish peoples’ right to settle in the area.<sup>83</sup> Also, as many key historical events of Jewish history took place there, the area is “the cradle of Jewish civilization and the locus of the key events of the Hebrew Bible.” Furthermore, the Ministry argues that the historical Jewish populations inhabiting the area were killed or forcibly expelled by “Arab armies or militia,” implying that Jews, as victims of this earlier injustice, have a moral claim to return to this territory.

Most importantly from a security studies perspective are those arguments which claim that Israeli control of the West Bank enhances the security of Israel. An early example of such thinking can be found in the Allon Plan, which proposes Israeli annexation (and associated Israeli settlement) of parts of the West Bank in order to provide a geographic buffer protecting Israeli territory within the Green Line.<sup>84</sup> The logic is that since much of Israel’s economically productive areas within the Green Line lie in a 14km narrow strip (including its biggest city Tel Aviv), any hostile foreign power in sovereign control of the West Bank could easily cripple Israel

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<sup>83</sup> “Israeli Settlements and International Law,” *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, (Nov 30, 2015), URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/israeli%20settlements%20and%20international%20aw.aspx>

<sup>84</sup> “Progress of the Allon Plan,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Spring, 1972), pp. 148

by launching a surprise attack from the West Bank into this area, possibly cutting Israel in two. Controlling the West Bank would therefore expand the amount of territory any potential enemy would have to fight through before being able to directly threaten the heart of the Israeli state. In other words, the West Bank could provide “strategic depth” to Israel, and therefore it should be under Israeli control.

Apart from the argument based on the rational observation of Israel’s peculiar geography, a more emotive referent object is the city of Jerusalem, which Israel designates as its capital. However, the city sits awkwardly at the tip of a finger of Israeli territory surrounded on three sides by land officially granted to the Palestinians.<sup>85</sup> Militarily, this exposes the city on three sides to potential attack, but perhaps more importantly it literally places Jerusalem at the edge of Israel and on the front-line of the Jewish-Arab conflict, whereas many might prefer to think of Jerusalem as the core of the nation. To insulate Jerusalem from Palestinians, many of whom wish to have East Jerusalem as their capital, rings of Jewish neighbourhoods surrounding the majority-Palestinian East Jerusalem were created along with an “outer ring” of settlements such as Givat Ze’ev, Ma’ale Adumim, and Efrat.<sup>86</sup> Together they effectively turn East Jerusalem into a Palestinian exclave, complicating its potential use as a capital for Palestinians.

However the assumption that controlling the territory of the West Bank achieves some security purpose is not necessarily the consensus within Israel. According to research conducted by the NGO Molad, including contributions from former IDF officers, the task of

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<sup>85</sup> “Territories Occupied by Israel since June 1967,” *United Nations*, Map No. 3243 Rev. 4, (June 1997). URL: <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/cf02d057b04d356385256ddb006dc02f/b08a2e4d1fde5cec85256b98006e752f?OpenDocument>

<sup>86</sup> Larry Derfner, “The Settlement That Broke the Two-State Solution,” *Foreign Policy*, (Dec 26, 2012), URL: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/12/26/the-settlement-that-broke-the-two-state-solution/>

protecting all the Jewish settlements inside the West Bank is overextending the IDF and diverting resources away from actual defense of Israel proper.<sup>87</sup> According to B'Tselem, by 2015 there are approximately 588,000 Israeli settlers living in various government-supported settlements in the West Bank,<sup>88</sup> spread out across 127 settlements (not including those surrounding Jerusalem and in Hebron). Presumably not all these settlements are welcome, given that some, such as those built around Jerusalem, were deliberately placed to cut off Palestinian communities from each other. According to the former IDF deputy chief of staff Moshe Kaplinsky, 80% of the IDF forces positioned in the West Bank are required to guard the settlements,<sup>89</sup> a massive task for the IDF when one considers that one half to two thirds of the entire IDF is deployed to the West Bank at any given time.<sup>90</sup> This burden is compounded for Israel when special circumstances arise, such as Operation Cast Lead, which diverted regular forces to Gaza and therefore necessitated the call-up of reservists to maintain readiness in the West Bank, which in turn is likely to have a significant impact the national economy. Still others have pointed out that the settlements offer no defense whatsoever to some modern security threats facing Israel, such as ballistic missiles with ranges that do not require them to be fired from the West Bank in order to target any point in Israel.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "Israel's National Security and West Bank Settlements," *Molad – the center for the renewal of Israeli democracy*, (Dec 12, 2017), pp. 14 URL: <http://www.molad.org/images/upload/files/settleeng.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> "Statistics on Settlements and Settler Population," *B'Tselem*, (Updated May 11, 2017), URL: <https://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics>

<sup>89</sup> "Israel's National Security and West Bank Settlements," pp. 16

<sup>90</sup> "Israel's National Security and West Bank Settlements," pp. 5

<sup>91</sup> "Defensible Borders and Strategic Depth," *The Council for Peace and Security: Association of national security experts in Israel*, (Sept 2011), URL:

[http://www.shaularieli.com/image/users/77951/ftp/my\\_files/articles\\_in\\_english/brochure\\_eng.pdf?id=9345485](http://www.shaularieli.com/image/users/77951/ftp/my_files/articles_in_english/brochure_eng.pdf?id=9345485)

This lack of consensus is represented by the split in public opinion among Israeli Jews over the impact of the settlements on security.<sup>92</sup> According to a study conducted by the Pew Research center in 2017, 42% of people surveyed thought that the settlements enhance security while 30% were opposed to the idea. More strikingly, the research also found that support or opposition for the settlements-improve-security hypothesis was strongly correlated with the respondents' political persuasion, with the majority of those in support being on the political right and a majority opposed being on the political left.

What this split represents is disagreement over what is the true source for insecurity for Israel. For those who believe that other states invading Israel represents the greatest threat, one would expect them to support the existence of the settlements as offering Israel "strategic depth" to resist this particular threat. For those who see the Palestinians as representing the greatest threat, one could expect either strong support for settlements as a buffer between Palestinians and certain emotively charged areas Israel would like to keep (such as Jerusalem), or opposition to the settlements as they place Israeli civilians and security forces in close proximity to the Palestinians. Still others such as the IDF see other threats as the most important, such as Iranian ballistic missiles, and are opposed to the settlements as they divert military and intelligence resources away from what they see as the main threat facing Israel. This messy disagreement also represents an incomplete securitization process whereby differing securitizing actors are still competing among one another over which threat is more important and whether the settlements should be included within the referent object(s).

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<sup>92</sup> Kelsey Jo Starr, "No consensus among Israeli Jews about settlements' impact on security," *Pew Research Center*, (Jan 3, 2017), URL: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/03/no-consensus-among-israeli-jews-about-settlements-impact-on-security/>

#### 4. Interpretation of evidence using securitization theory

##### The Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip is clearly heavily securitized. Blockades are an act of war according to the San Remo Manual, and the six post-World War 2 cases cited by the Oxford Public International Law database have all taken place in the context of international armed conflict, including a previous case of Israel blockading the Lebanese coastline during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War.<sup>93</sup> To maintain an act of war against a territory from the summer of 2007 to the present day is an extraordinary policy by any measure, particularly considering that it has been challenged by state actors alleging that the blockade is in violation of international law.<sup>94</sup>

One way to explain Israel's success in maintaining the blockade, particularly during the heightened scrutiny following the flotilla confrontation in 2009, is using a sectoral analysis. This can be conceptualized as Israel seeking to degrade and/or destroy the *military* threat posed by Hamas and other groups in Gaza, while permitting limited *economic* exchange to prevent total economic collapse and starvation. Examples of the latter include the updating of lists of civilian goods allowed through the blockade, increases in supply of economic inputs like electricity, and enlarged quotas for Palestinian labour.<sup>95</sup> These acts allow Israel to plausibly deny that it is harming the economic security of Gaza, as would be the case in an all-out siege. Notably, many of the referent objects inherent in the economic sector can be dismissed in this particular case: class has not been a powerful referent actor following the decline of left-wing politics, the state

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<sup>93</sup> Wolff Heintschel von Heinegg, "Blockade," *Oxford Public International Law*, (Oxford University Press: 2015). URL: <http://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e252>

<sup>94</sup> "Report on the Israeli Attack on the Humanitarian Aid Convoy to Gaza on 31 May 2010," pp. 83-84

<sup>95</sup> Or Honig & Ido Yahel, "Entity-Elimination or Threat Management? Explaining Israel's Shifting Policies Towards Terrorist Semi-States," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 04 February 2018, pp. 4

in Gaza – Israel would argue – has been usurped by Hamas, and the firm has a “relatively weak claim to status as a security referent object” because it is an “inherently instrumental” and “ephemeral” entity.<sup>96</sup> Only the referent object of the individual is relevant, which Israel can account for by the limited provision of basic resources, which in any case is a requirement in international law. Thus, Israel can credibly argue that its actions in Gaza are legitimate because actions in the *military* sector are totally distinct from those in the *economic* sector, and since a legitimate government does not exist in Gaza (according to Israel) its military actions are not violating any legitimate actor’s security either.

Meanwhile, the strongest pushback to Israel’s Gaza policy may also have been motivated by a securitizing logic, namely the unexpected popularity of the Copenhagen school as a critique of authoritarian securitizing logic in post-1997, post-military rule in Turkey. As strong securitization justifying repressive policies was the hallmark of Turkish military governments, by 2010 the new political order represented by the Justice and Development Party may have been particularly allergic to securitization and instead favour de-securitization, associating it with European integration.<sup>97</sup> It certainly would have been a factor in the severe official reaction by the Turkish government and civil society, the latter of which might have especially sympathized with the population of Gaza due to their conflation of the Israeli securitization policies with the similar policies and securitizing framing once used against them by Turkey’s former military rulers. Attempts by Israel to frame the (majority-Muslim) population of Gaza as a threat may have evoked similar framing used by the (largely secular)

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<sup>96</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, pp. 100-101

<sup>97</sup> Pinar Bilgin, “The politics of studying securitization? The Copenhagen School in Turkey,” *Security Dialogue* 42(4-5), pp. 406

Turkish military governments against the (majority-Muslim) population. As a nation trying to turn away from overreliance on securitization (to be sure for a variety of reasons apart from enlightened liberalism) Israel's stubborn maintenance of "security" as an answer for its actions likely infuriated both the Turkish government and civil society, which in turn led to a deterioration of relations.

Israel-Turkey relations aside, the flotilla incident did little to change facts on the ground in Gaza. In fact, some have argued that repeated conflict has "turned [Gaza] into a place regarded as exceptional and exceptionally problematic, thereby allowing mounting levels of violence."<sup>98</sup> This is a rather unusual argument from the perspective of securitization, though not necessarily a critique of it. Rather than focus on the referent object, the securitizing actor, and various speech acts, this argument focuses on the inverse of those things – the Gaza Strip as a "threat" object, the "threatening" actor (in the form of Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip), and actors of violence that routinize and reiterate Gaza as a place of war. It is not that this argument subverts securitization theory, as the original components are assumed to exist, just not clearly elaborated. In fact, one can easily pair this with more conventional (from the perspective of the Copenhagen school) interpretations of Operation Cast Lead. For instance, some scholars have argued that the referent object is clearly the state of Israel and the securitizing actor being the Prime Minister of Israel, whose personal ideological convictions determine the perception of threat and thereby the policy response (threat management or threat elimination).<sup>99</sup> The two in combination do not appear to contradict each other, although

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<sup>98</sup> Lori Allen, "The scales of occupation: 'Operation Cast Lead' and the targeting of the Gaza Strip," *Critique of Anthropology* 32(3), pp. 262

<sup>99</sup> Or Honig & Ido Yahel, "Entity-Elimination or Threat Management?" pp. 6

there does seem to be a lack of clarity on the speech act performed by the securitizing actor in order to justify going to war.

An intriguing possibility hinted at in the argument for thinking of securitization as applying to a *place* is that repeated episodes of conflict, presumably beginning with the “classic” Copenhagen school style securitization but slowly routinized and taken over by specialist institutions as per the Paris school’s version, has led to a conflation of alleged threats and location into one nebulous entity, represented in this case by the Gaza Strip itself. In other words, if a place is the site of repeated securitization, it takes on a talismanic status as being the “place of threat” and in turn lends an assumed threatening quality to anything later associated with the place such as a flotilla of activists. As per the critique of the Copenhagen school by Lupovici, it has rather little to say on the effects of repeated securitization, how long security framing effects last on the audience, how current securitizing attempts correspond to previous attempts, or whether cumulative securitization is possible.<sup>100</sup> What the Copenhagen school could say is that the phenomenon of “actorization” in attribution<sup>101</sup> (where the cause of security problems may be misrepresented as deliberate actions by a coherent actor) might be at work the Gaza Strip, where Israeli securitizing agents assume an internal coherence to Gaza where the truth is closer to contestation. Allen’s theory of repeated violence infusing a permanent threatening frame to physical space is an interesting proposed answer to Lupovici’s critique, though it may lack some explanatory power since it is not explicitly presented as a theory within the umbrella of securitization.

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<sup>100</sup> Amir Lupovici, “The Limits of Securitization Theory,” pp. 405

<sup>101</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, pp. 44

## Palestinian statehood

General Assembly Resolution 67/19 recognizing Palestine as a “non-member observer state” in the UN, which passed by a 138-9 majority (with 46 states abstaining or absent), was immediately criticized by the Israeli government on security related grounds. The Israeli argument as laid out by the Netanyahu government was that the security of Israeli citizens could be harmed by Palestine achieving statehood, and therefore Israel would be seeking to prevent such an occurrence. By making this argument, the Israeli government has taken on the classic role of the state as the primary securitizing actor.

It is clear in the language used by Netanyahu that he identified “Israeli citizens” as the referent object(s), rather than the Israeli state. This is a shrewd move since it avoids two potentially difficult pitfalls in successfully securitizing Palestinian statehood. One, it identifies what Welsh school scholars would consider to be “the ultimate referent,” the security of whom is generally not negotiable. Two, it places the Israeli state (correctly, according to the Welsh school) as the *means* for providing security to the only real *end*, which are the people. However, what is also apparent is that the same argument excludes many people who are not Israeli citizens, which nevertheless are affected by the actions of the Israeli state. This is contrary to the conception of security according to the Welsh school, which is not simply the rejection of all referent objects apart from the individual, but also the “emancipation” of the individual based on a “reciprocity of rights.”<sup>102</sup> To paraphrase Booth’s argument, Israelis are not going to obtain reasonable security unless the Palestinians obtain it also. In other words, according to this school of security studies it is not enough to identify the correct referent

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<sup>102</sup> Ken Booth, “Security and Emancipation,” pp. 322

object, but the securitizing actor must also recognize that the referent objects (human individuals) are morally indistinguishable from one another and security for them cannot be neatly divided such that some are secure while others remain insecure.

Another interesting consideration is who Netanyahu intends as his target audience. Going by the voting record of Resolution 67/19, it appears that most other states are unconvinced of his argument. Even if one assumes that the voting patterns of national governments are not necessarily representative of their people's opinions, based on the BBC's country rating poll conducted for 2014, perceptions of Israel's influence among international audiences remain primarily negative.<sup>103</sup> Clearly, the wider international community does not share with Israel an intersubjective understanding of the potential security threat that an independent Palestine would pose. An intersubjective understanding in this case would be a necessary component of securitization because the judgement of other parties on the "reasonableness" of this securitization affects how they would respond to the security claim.<sup>104</sup> A similar argument is made by Olesker who contends that "audience permissiveness" is the key to successful securitization.<sup>105</sup> Since the international community is the one who either will or will not recognize Palestinian statehood, Israel's challenge in this particular case would be to communicate its intersubjective understanding of the "threat" posed by Palestinian statehood to other countries where is little basis for such an understanding, for instance countries which are sympathetic to the Palestinians, which are themselves majority Muslim, or who perceive Israel itself as the threat.

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<sup>103</sup> *BBC Country Ratings Poll*, URL: <https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/country-rating-poll.pdf>

<sup>104</sup> Buzan et al., *Security*, pp. 30

<sup>105</sup> Ronnie Olesker, "National identity and securitization in Israel,"

There is however one state which does appear to share Israel's intersubjective understanding: the United States. Again, based on opinion polls sympathy towards Israel as compared to the Palestinians among Americans has consistently been higher, and in fact growing among most demographics of Americans.<sup>106</sup> American actions regarding the passage of Resolution 67/19, which they voted against, were also consistent with the US sharing Israel's concerns. Intersubjective claims found throughout Ambassador Prozor's 2014 speech are mirrored in claims made by American leaders to their domestic audiences. For instance, Ambassador Prozor's claim that "I know with utter certainty that when our enemies say they want to attack us, they mean it" is strikingly similar to former US president George W. Bush's claim that "[t]he terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans."<sup>107</sup> Even intersubjective claims which one might assume to be particular to Israel, such as Ambassador Prozor's claim that "The bond between the Jewish people and the Jewish land is unbreakable" find support in the US particularly among evangelical Christians who adopt a literal interpretation of Biblical sources to justify present-day Israeli control of disputed areas like Jerusalem.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, no matter how much intersubjective understanding is shared by the two nations, they cannot satisfactorily answer the critique of Welsh school theorists because they make no attempt to reach an intersubjective understanding with the Palestinians. The argument that "we have suffered, we face real threats, and we are genuinely interested in

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<sup>106</sup> "Public Uncertain, Divided over America's Place in the World," *Pew Research Center*, (April 2016) pp. 41-43 URL: <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/05/05-05-2016-Foreign-policy-APW-release.pdf>

<sup>107</sup> "President Bush's address to a joint session of Congress and the nation," *The Washington Post*, (Sept 20, 2011). URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress\\_092001.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html)

<sup>108</sup> Tom Gjelten, "To Some Zionist Christians And Jews, The Bible Says Jerusalem Is Israel's Capital," *National Public Radio*, (December 9, 2017). URL: <https://www.npr.org/2017/12/09/569553464/to-some-zionist-christians-and-jews-the-bible-says-jerusalem-is-israels-capital>

peace” is probably all true, but it does not justify or explain why the Palestinians should be willing to risk their security while Israel cannot take on any risk. The essentialist argument that “extremists and fanatics” totally control the Palestinian agenda has not been convincing to the majority of other countries.

In hindsight, the failure of Israel (and the US) to defeat Resolution 67/19 could be thought of as a failure in securitization, either because both countries failed to account for the lack of intersubjective understanding among their target audience of other UN members or, more generously, that the international community were concerned with the lack of reciprocal justice demonstrated by the ongoing Israel-Palestinian conflict, which sees Israelis enjoying far more actual protection and rights than Palestinians. It is unclear how Israel could persuade other states to adopt its intersubjective preferences, reflected in the apparent lack of emphasis on reciprocal justice in the Israeli discourse. This raises the interesting question of whether the two states of mind are the same thing, and whether there could be a partial synthesis of Copenhagen and Welsh schools of securitization.

### **The Arabic language**

This fascinating topic is an excellent example which demonstrates the fundamentally constructed nature of security, since it does not appear on first glance to have any security implications at all. Arabs and Arabic are, to all intents and purposes, a part of Israeli public life by virtue of the existence of Israeli Arabs, and Israel’s self-conception as a democratic state. However, the simultaneous self-conception as a *Jewish* state introduces the problems highlighted by scholars like Suleiman and Mendel: problematic policies which deliberately or inadvertently marginalize the Arabic language, the relegation of Arabic to purely instrumental

(often security-related) purposes in isolation from its cultural and civilizational context, and the repeated emphasis on Jewishness and Hebrew as a marker of belonging.

One easy way to explain the status of Arabic is by pointing to the theory of securitization as a product of routine. According to scholars of the Paris school of securitization, the situation of Arabic in Israel results from Israeli bureaucracies and institutions repeatedly framing Arabic and Arabic speakers as merely a coded form of communication used by Israel's enemies, typically in the context of justifying coercive policies against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, or to justify budgetary demands. In this context there is no need to support or recognize the historical or cultural value of the language, since all that one needs to do regarding this language is to know when a speaker of it is planning something nefarious. This theory seems almost tailor-made for explaining the quality of Arabic-language instruction in Israel, which as noted above is heavily focused on producing Arabic experts for the security and intelligence services. These experts are needed for the effective function and therefore prestige and legitimacy of these institutions, insofar as the primary targets for Israeli security and intelligence institutions are found in Arabic-speaking populations. A feedback loop is then created whereby the very same experts are held up in society as experts (because of their institution's effectiveness) on all things relating to Arabic speakers, despite their own expertise heavily skewing towards military and intelligence matters. This then naturally results in the rest of Israeli society being provided a skewed interpretation of Arabic-language discussion by their neighbours. This overly-securitized impression of Israel's Arab neighbours then serves to justify yet more resources spent on security and intelligence to protect the nation.

Bureaucratic interests might also explain the apparently anomalous fears proposed by then Minister-Sa'ar that Israeli students' skill in Hebrew and receptivity to Zionism were being neglected. Noting that according to the Paris school's theory that "bureaucracies tend to construct problems to justify the solutions they propose,"<sup>109</sup> it is entirely logical for the head of the education ministry in Israel to warn of the dangers of slipping national language proficiency and civic awareness, something which would obviously justify an infusion of resources, executive attention, and prestige to his organization. When one considers that this attempt at securitization ultimately failed due to public campaigns and legal challenges, a further argument may be made that since the Ministry of Education is not typically seen as a "specialist in the management of unease" such as the IDF or intelligence services, it does not have as strong an ability to securitize in order to achieve its institutional goals.

An alternative way to understand the securitization of Arabic in Israel is with the theory of deep securitization, which builds upon the basic model proposed by the Copenhagen school and suggests that where the scale (of the threat and referent object) and scope (the "spatio-temporal extent" of the securitizing discourse) are sufficiently large, a qualitatively distinct kind of securitization is taking place.<sup>110</sup> In other words, securitization that is pervasive, extends throughout the discourse of the society, and consistently concerns the survival of the nation. According to this logic, normal politics are so frequently securitized that securitization becomes the rule rather than the exception and disparate sectors (for instance, language policy vs.

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<sup>109</sup> Laurent Bonelli, "'Hidden in plain sight': intelligence, exception and suspicion after 11 September 2001 10," in *Terror, Insecurity and Liberty: Illiberal practices of liberal regimes after 9/11*, ed. Bigo and Tsoukala, (Routledge, 2008), pp. 101

<sup>110</sup> Uriel Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's 'Demographic Demon,'" pp.399

national security) are inextricably together. Israel is in fact held up as the paradigmatic example for this theory, where the society since its very foundation being heavily securitized, informed by historical periods of genuine existential crisis, and engaged in an ongoing clash with Arab neighbours.<sup>111</sup> In this context where generally mundane issues nevertheless take on an existential quality, it is not surprising that some in Israel would fear for the survival of Hebrew despite the evidence that Arabic rather than Hebrew is in decline as a language of academia and culture in Israel.<sup>112</sup>

Both the Paris school and “deep securitization” interpretations would agree that Arabic has been successfully securitized to some degree, differing primarily on whether this represents an isolated process with the potential for reversal, or whether this is a part of a comprehensive securitization that is relatively irreversible. If in the future Israel manages to preserve its democratic institutions and liberal values, then scholars of deep securitization may have to revisit the theory to account for the continued separation of sectors despite repeated securitization. However, if Israel does enact more and more draconian policies aimed to undermine Arabic culture and language, then the theory of deep securitization will be substantially advanced.

### **West Bank Settlements**

The fact that Israeli settlements exist in the West Bank could easily be explained as the outcome of successful securitization according to the Copenhagen school: securitizing actors aim to achieve significant Jewish settlement in the area for various reasons (the desired policy).

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<sup>111</sup> Uriel Abulof, “Deep Securitization and Israel’s ‘Demographic Demon,’” pp. 403-404

<sup>112</sup> Camelia Suleiman, *The Politics of Arabic in Israel*, pp.172

To justify this extraordinary policy, which technically contravenes international law,<sup>113</sup> the securitizing actors identify a variety of threats such as the risk of attack from state and nonstate actors, or the risk of losing control over contested areas like Jerusalem to the Palestinians. As a remedy to those threats the securitizing actor proposes the same policies which they originally desired, and the existence of the settlements appears to verify that this was a fairly successful practice. However the fact that there is significant opposition to the settlements suggests something more complex and multidirectional.

A closer examination of the securitizing process reveals that the primary referent object has apparently changed with time. Whereas the original reference object (according to the Allon plan for instance) is an Israeli state bounded by the Green Line, operating largely within the military sector, over time securitizing actors have gradually introduced the social sector as equally or even more relevant. Specifically while the Allon plan referred to the Green Line or the 1949 armistice border as the territorial extent of the Jewish state, with other territories holding only instrumental value insofar as they serve as buffers, present-day Israel argues that the settlements are “an expression of the Jewish people's deep historic and abiding connection with this land.”<sup>114</sup> This is in fact not just a merging of sectors, but perhaps an expansion in the level of analysis as well. Whereas previously “security” was strictly defined as being the protection of the Israeli state from other states, it now involves protection of Jewish people’s

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<sup>113</sup> “Article 49 - Deportations, Transfers, Evacuations,” *Fourth Geneva Convention*, (relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War). August 12, 1949. URL: <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/WebART/380-600056>

<sup>114</sup> “Israeli Settlements and International Law,” *Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, (Nov 30, 2015). URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/israeli%20settlements%20and%20international%20aw.aspx>

sentiment and at the local as well as the international level. It is possible that not everyone within Israel accepted the necessity for this shift, explaining the diverging opinions.

While the Copenhagen school points out the need to re-aggregate sectors for the purposes of academic cohesion,<sup>115</sup> from the perspective of securitizing actors the deliberate aggregation of sectors and/or analytical levels might also enhance the effectiveness of speech acts. This is because opposing arguments are often limited to one sector but are incongruous as opposing arguments in other sectors. For instance, the argument that the settlements serve no military value in terms of national defense does not directly oppose the argument that Jewish people have a strong attachment to certain lands which outweigh the interests of the Palestinians. This lack of a military-sector argument might be why there remains military protection for West Bank settlements despite limited resources. A similar dynamic may exist across various levels of analysis, whereby arguments in favour of disbanding settlements on the grounds of international law are countered with local-level arguments that the sheer number of settlers makes their presence an “irreversible fact,”<sup>116</sup> preventing realistic solutions mandating their removal. These non-opposing but contradictory arguments again highlight the diverging public opinion on the settlements, indicating the possibility of parallel efforts at securitization.

Since the Copenhagen school is relatively lacking in discussion on the effects of conflating sectors or levels of analysis and how this impacts the outcome of a securitization attempt, other schools of thought might be more illuminating. In fact Abulof’s theory of deep securitization is largely focused on this effect, noting that “in societies undergoing deep

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<sup>115</sup> Buzan et. al *Security*, pp. 167

<sup>116</sup> Dani Dayan, “Israel’s Settlers Are Here to Stay,” *The New York Times*, (July 25,2012). URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/26/opinion/israels-settlers-are-here-to-stay.html>

securitization, various security sectors are combined into a synergetic whole.”<sup>117</sup> This works by conflating many if not most aspects of society with the state, which in turn is heavily associated with national security. In some sense this is similar to the process of “macrosecuritization,” where different securitizing actors align themselves on issues relating to a “higher” referent object, potentially leading securitizing actors which are rivals on one level to rationally collaborate on a higher level.<sup>118</sup> An example of this would be rival nations collaborating to combat climate change as a security threat which affects them all. However a significant difference proposed by deep securitization is that securitizing actors seek out higher referent objects not simply for their own advantage, but to justify their very identity and existence.<sup>119</sup> In order to have this desired intensity of legitimation the referent object typically converges on the nation/ethnic group, which one arguably sees in the rhetoric put forth by supporters of Israeli settlements.

On the other hand opposition to the settlements is better explained by the Welsh school theorists. They would argue that the settlement policy primarily serves the interests of the state or some constructed society, and failing to provide security to individual Israelis. They would certainly dismiss any securitizing argument resting on non-individual human referent objects, such as the need for the nation to control a particular city like Jerusalem in order to maintain its identity. However, it is not the exact same critique found in the Molad report, which sees the maintenance of settlements as a distraction for limited state resources. For

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<sup>117</sup> Uriel Abulof, “Deep Securitization and Israel’s ‘Demographic Demon,’” pp. 401

<sup>118</sup> Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, “Macrosecuritisation and security constellations: reconsidering scale in securitisation theory,” *Review of International Studies* (2009), 35, pp. 258-259

<sup>119</sup> Uriel Abulof, “Deep Securitization and Israel’s ‘Demographic Demon,’” pp. 402

scholars of the Welsh school it would be more accurate to describe the settlements as negatively impacting the human security of Palestinians *and* Israeli settlers. This in turn raises an interesting critique of the Welsh school argument – it does not really consider the political choices of individuals, simply preferring to consider individuals as indivisible and interchangeable from the perspective of security when in reality the choices of individuals can significantly determine the perceived security of others. This prevents the theory from fully addressing the longstanding mutual construction of the “other” as an existential threat between Israelis and Palestinians. According to the Welsh school, such construction is primarily a top-down process conducted by political elites and therefore should be dismissed, but as Coskun points out “construction and reconstruction” of security discourses can be a bottom-up process as well.<sup>120</sup> It may well be true that some Israeli opposition to the settlements is due to rejection of arguments construing the Palestinians as existential threats, but it seems naïve to suggest that as the primary source of the opposition. Many Israelis likely agree that their collective identity is socially constructed, but would not view its expression as “optional” given the intensity and prevalence of identity-based arguments in the Israel-Palestine context.

Unfortunately, the Paris school does not provide a satisfactory way to explain both support and opposition either since there are institutions who benefit from settlement activity and those who do not. More importantly however is the assumption that people take their cue from institutions, rather than from other factors like identity. According to the Paris school, securitization is “generated through a confrontation between the strategies of political actors,”

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<sup>120</sup> Bezen Balamir Coskun, “History writing and securitization of the other,” pp. 285

where those actors are understood to specialize in security-related fields.<sup>121</sup> In fact according to the Molad report it is often leaders in the settlement movement seeking to lead institutions like the IDF along a process of securitization rather than the other way around, or instance by strategically locating settlements in such a way as to make them *more* difficult to defend, *more* provocative to the Palestinian population, thereby necessitating greater resources devoted to their defense.<sup>122</sup> This might point to a relative weakness in the Paris theory when applied outside the context of Europe or the United States – there the relative influence of bureaucracies in policymaking is far stronger than in places like Israel where a different threat environment, identity politics, and history of securitization has reduced the relative influence of institutions as primary drivers of securitization discourse.

The settlements in the West Bank represent a perplexing problem for existing models of securitization because they represent different things to different actors – they are a referent object in and of themselves, a policy response to protect other referent objects, a distraction for security services who should be focusing on more pressing threats, or in fact they are the threat to Israel’s security.

## **5. Conclusion**

A close investigation of evidentiary events, rhetoric, and policies using the lens of securitization unsurprisingly reveals more complexity and nuance. It also reveals the limits of existing models of securitization, which supports the arguments of Lupovici and Abulof that further theoretical innovation is needed in the field. In particular the analysis above points to

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<sup>121</sup> Didier Bigo, “Security and Immigration,” pp. 75

<sup>122</sup> “Israel’s National Security and West Bank Settlements,” pp. 17

some additional areas of weakness within the existing corpus of securitization theory which are inadequately examined: the effect of repeated and/or cumulative securitization, the relationship between reciprocal justice and intersubjective understanding, and the possibility of “deep securitization.” This is in addition to the original weaknesses observed above, that Israeli examples are underrepresented within scholarship of securitization and that the Copenhagen school is predominant among them. Yet the fact that these problems exist demonstrate that securitization theory is not yet “complete,” an encouraging conclusion for those studying it.

While this paper attempted to give equal voice to differing schools of securitization theory, the reality in academia particularly with existing work on Israel-Palestine has tended to focus on the Copenhagen theory. Even where there is new theoretical development, as found in Abulof, the basis is still grounded in the ideas of the original school. The other schools can still at times feel like mere critiques rather than fully independent theories. In part this may be because of the “activist” stance of Welsh school proponents, or due to the It is unclear if this bias towards the Copenhagen school is a detriment to the study of Israel-Palestine, or is immaterial or even beneficial. Even noting the allegations of Eurocentric bias inherent in the Copenhagen school, the fact is that the other two schools do not necessarily offer superior explanations. Based on the issues identified above with securitization theory as a whole, potential solutions may include partial synthesis of the schools.

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**End**