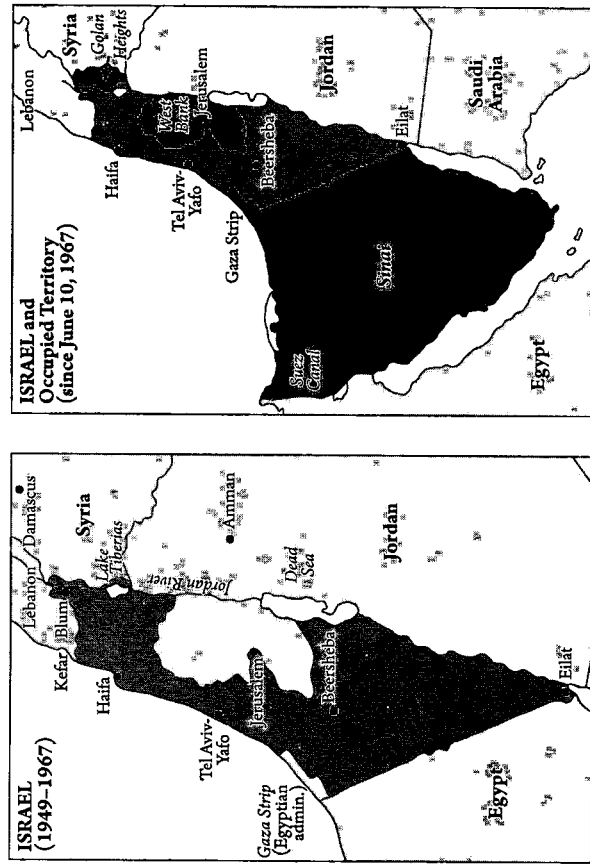


## Introduction

On the morning of the May 19, 1999, two days after the national elections, I leafed through the *Ha'aretz* newspaper, as was my daily habit. When I arrived at the opinion section, I felt a shiver of excitement run down my spine; the editor had published the op-ed that I had sent in a day earlier. My piece was first published under the heading "The Radical Right 1999." It put forward the argument that the common definition of the radical Right in Israel, which was based on notions of territorial expansionism and the establishment settlements in Greater Israel (Eretz Yisrael HaSheleima), should be extended to include ethnic exclusionism as well as anti-democratic ideas—the same qualities that featured prominently in election propaganda campaigns of the Shas and Yisrael Beiteinu political parties. If we adopted this perspective, I argued, the power of the radical Right in the new parliament should be considered an unprecedented phenomenon in Israel's history.<sup>1</sup>

This elucidation, which had struck me some time before, I credit to Piero Ignazi, who is among the most important scholars of the radical Right in Europe.<sup>2</sup> In August 1998, I had the privilege of spending two intense weeks in the company of doctoral students and senior scholars at a workshop held by the European Consortium for Political Research, the subject of which was political parties. During the course of the workshop, each of the doctoral students was asked to present his or her research to a leading scholar and receive that scholar's comments. I admit to being a little weak-kneed as I presented my doctoral work on the institutionalization of the Israeli radical right-wing parties before the entire forum. Much to my relief, the atmosphere at the conference was far more relaxed than that to which I was accustomed in Israel.

My fledgling presentation was received with politeness. I attributed the mild smattering of questions and comments from the audience to a combination of good European manners and the fact that conference attendees longed to wrap up the morning session and make a dash for the dining room. I was delighted to discover that the conference organizers, Ferdinand Müller-Rommel and Kurt Richard Luther, had arranged that I would lunch with Professor Ignazi. On the



■ Territory Occupied During the Six-Day War

Figure 1.1 ISRAEL'S BORDERS BEFORE AND AFTER THE SIX-DAY WAR. Source: Issues in the Middle East, Atlas, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1973. Israel 1949–1967 and Israel and Occupied Territory since June 10, 1967. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

way to the dining room Professor Ignazi asked me in a parenthetical fashion why my study focused only on the settlers' parties but omitted parties that fostered xenophobia and criticized democracy. At that moment, I failed to produce a satisfactory reply, and this niggling question continued to bother me on my way back to Israel. It soon forced me to reexamine the definition of the radical Right in Israel and to extend the boundaries of my research accordingly.<sup>3</sup> More than a decade after my op-ed was published the Israeli radical Right has proven to be a multifaceted political movement that became the dominant force in Israeli politics.

Ehud Sprinzak's seminal works predominantly focused on the rapidly emerging settlers' movement and parties.<sup>4</sup> As he predicted, before its absorption by its successor, this camp, to which I will refer as the "old radical Right," left a remarkable mark on Israel. When Sprinzak's book was published in 1991, the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank stood at a little over 94,000.<sup>5</sup> By 2008, it had more than tripled at 290,000. This figure does not include the Jewish residents in East Jerusalem, whose number increased by 69,000 in the course of seventeen years and in 2008 stood at 184,000. Furthermore, a quick look at the maps reveals the degree to which the dispersion of the settlements in the West Bank and Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem had changed since the early 1990s. Until the

signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians, the settlers—as well as most Israeli cabinets—were interested mainly in enhancing the Jewish presence in the West Bank and thus supported the establishment of settlements in close proximity to the Green Line.<sup>6</sup> Today, the settlers' main goal is to prevent the possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from these areas and the formation of a viable Palestinian state. New settlements and outposts continue to be erected in the heart of the West Bank and at the center of Palestinian population centers in Jerusalem. This is only one element, however—and not necessarily the most important one—in a much larger picture.

The new radical Right—which seeks to enhance the ethnic discrimination of non-Jewish minorities, to undermine the remnants of the liberal democratic foundations of the state, and to fight the elites—was successful in fusing its agenda with Israel's formal policies. This process can be observed in various realms. For example, Arab citizens who leave Israel for academic pursuits find that after living for a few years abroad, their citizenship has been revoked. Other citizens of Palestinian origin that submit requests to marry non-Israelis are often rejected by the authorities for unspecified "security reasons."<sup>7</sup> Foreign workers in Israel whose visas have expired are subject to a strict deportation policy.<sup>8</sup> Many of them are hunted down and arrested by Israel's newly established Immigration Authority and find themselves incarcerated without due process until their date of deportation.<sup>9</sup> On other fronts, the Supreme Court, the state's media, and academic institutions—which many in the radical right consider to be elitist and advocates of liberal values—are submitted to continuous attacks in hopes of rendering them weak and terrified.

## Setting the Stage—Israel's Old and New Radical Right

The Israeli radical Right is a phenomenon that can be easily recognized if one happens to come across it. For this reason, despite its rapid growth and immense impact on the country's domestic and foreign policies, few have actually taken the trouble to conceptualize it.<sup>10</sup> In other parts of the world (most notably Western Europe, which still struggles with the recent history of Fascism), the topic has secured a prominent place on many scholars' agendas over the last two decades, despite the fact that the actual impact of the radical Right remains limited.<sup>11</sup> The lively discussion among European scholars regarding the proper way to conceptualize this contemporary phenomenon resembles the problems with which Israeli scholars are faced. For example, why label it as "radical" rather than "extreme" or "populist"? Further, should a group's position on a single issue—immigration policy, in the European case—serve as sufficient criteria for

determining whether or not that group belongs to the radical right?<sup>12</sup> Or are entities like the radical Right ideologically multifaceted?<sup>13</sup>

For many years, the terms "radical," "extreme," and "populist" Right were used interchangeably. The lack of clear conceptualization generated confusion and slowed down the progress of research in the field. I was fortunate because when I launched my own research in the mid-1990s, academic discussion in this field was already in full swing. Cas Mudde, the researcher most commonly associated with the conceptualization of the ideology of the European Right, was highly aware of the lack of conceptual clarity. Thus, he spent many years carefully delineating the exact features of the phenomenon<sup>14</sup> and offered to collapse its various conceptualizations under the broad category of "populist radical Right," which consists of three main elements:<sup>15</sup> nativism, authoritarianism, and populism.<sup>16</sup> A review of the most recent literature in the field suggests that the majority of scholars adopted this path and gravitated toward Mudde's definition.<sup>17</sup>

Mudde's refined approach, after being subject to several necessary adaptations due to the particularities of the Israeli context, provides a solid foundation for the new demarcation of Israel's radical Right. Further, it keeps the book aligned with Sprinzak's definition in his seminal book on the topic. Sprinzak's conceptualization of the radical Right is very close to Mudde's and contains both nativism and populism, two of Mudde's three pillars.<sup>18</sup>

## Nativism

Nativism is the core feature of both the old and new radical Right in Israel. Specifically, it holds that the "states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (the nation) and that nonnative elements (individuals and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state."<sup>19</sup> The nativism of the Israeli radical Right consists of three elements. The first, which is paradoxical by nature, is the aspiration that the individuals who live within the borders of the sovereign State of Israel belong to the "Jewish ethnicity," even if they were not born in Israel. Meanwhile, native Arabs, foreign workers, and other individuals who do not belong to the Jewish ethnic collective should be deprived of full citizen rights. In a more extreme version of nativism, such individuals should not even be allowed to live in the State of Israel. The second component of nativism is the absolute and exclusive right of the Jewish people over Greater Israel.<sup>20</sup> In the updated version, this includes the borders of the sovereign State of Israel as well the territories that were occupied in 1967: the West Bank, the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, and the jewel in the crown, East Jerusalem. The third component is the rejection of those liberal or multicultural ideas that pose a challenge to the first two components.

## Authoritarianism

The second element in the ideology of the radical Right must be understood in its Israeli context so as to distinguish it from European models. Authoritarianism, as Mudde defined it, is the belief that society must be founded on and ruled by a stringent set of laws that shape the entirety of an individual's life. Insubordination results in severe sanctions.<sup>21</sup> Contemporary European authoritarianism is rooted mostly in modern secular ideas. Thus, it demands full subordination of every part of society to the authority of the state or leader and seeks to reinforce the notion of "law and order" in its strictest sense. But outside of Western Europe, including in the case of Israel, the boundaries between right-wing radicalism and religious fundamentalism can be less distinct.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, authoritarianism in Israel should be defined as the aim to expand the reach of the Jewish legal and penal frameworks, known as *Halakha*, within the constitutional structure of the State of Israel as well as in the quotidian life of its citizens. In the extreme version, adherents to religious authoritarianism aspire to transform the state into a theocracy.<sup>23</sup>

## Populism

Much like the term radicalism, populism was defined in different, sometimes contradictory manners.<sup>24</sup> Some scholars referred to populism as a political style while others considered it to be a full-fledged ideology. Even among scholars who relate to populism as an ideology, there seem to be wide areas of disagreement. In some cases, the differences can be explained by regional dissimilarities. For example, recent advances in the study of Latin American politics have pulled the concept away from the context of exclusionary right-wing groups and utilized it for studying the emergence of inclusionary left-wing ones.<sup>25</sup> Mudde defines populism as an ideology that depicts society as polarized between two homogenous yet antagonistic groups: the pure people and the corrupt elite.<sup>26</sup> Politics, according to the advocates of populist ideology, should express the general will of the pure people. In Israel, the populist worldview perceives the media, the civil society, the universities, and especially the judiciary as institutions controlled by small yet powerful left-wing elitist groups that manipulate the rest of society in accordance with their narrow interests. The worldview of the elite is described as unpatriotic and aimed at subverting the Jewish nature of the State. The populists claim that these institutions must be abolished or restored to the people so that their actions may represent the wishes of the pure population.<sup>27</sup>



## The Radical Right and Policy Making

For decades, scholars researching the radical Right in countries around the world focused their spotlight on one main actor: the political party. This fact shouldn't come as a surprise. Throughout the twentieth century, political parties played a pivotal role in both democracies and dictatorships. Furthermore, radical parties from both the Right and the Left that rose to power either democratically or by brute force were responsible for many of the dramatic, as well as horrific events, of that century. The main questions that most scholars of the contemporary radical Right explore include: Under what conditions do radical right-wing parties emerge? Who votes for them and why? And what are the main causes of their electoral successes and failures? The volume and quality of the scholarship in the field is exceptional. It may seem that every stone on the road to answering these questions has already been overturned. But electoral success, though I do not question its significance, is only one step down a long road. According to the well-known definition by Joseph Schumpeter, "a party is a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power."<sup>28</sup> At the end of the day, for most politicians, getting elected is a means to an end. Whether they are motivated by personal ambition or ideological zeal, they are interested in leaving a mark by turning their convictions into policies. However, the distance between being elected and actually making policies is long,<sup>29</sup> particularly for radical right-wing parties.<sup>30</sup> Thus, in this book, my objective is to provide an answer to the following question: Under what conditions does the radical Right succeed in the making and implementation of policies?

## The Changing Configuration of the Radical Right

In order to answer the above question, we should first stop referring to the political party as our main unit of analysis. Indeed, in its early decades Israel, like many other countries, was under the controlling grip of political parties.<sup>31</sup> However, over the years the center of gravity shifted, and parties worldwide have lost much of their sway.<sup>32</sup> The parties that represented the masses and relied on their continuous materialistic support disappeared and were replaced by parties with a narrow and volatile base of voters. The main source of funding of these parties is the state.<sup>33</sup> Radical right-wing parties were particularly vulnerable. During the second half of the twentieth century, these parties, which only several decades earlier were so prominent, found themselves ostracized. They have seldom enjoyed significant electoral achievements in national parliamentary elections.<sup>34</sup> Even in the few cases when they have in fact accumulated significant

political clout, more moderate parties were concerned with preserving their reputations and treated their radical Right counterparts like pariahs, generally refraining from inviting them to take part in coalitions.<sup>35</sup> Even if radical right-wing politicians did overcome these barriers and joined the cabinet table, they quickly found that their opportunities to shape policy were still limited.

In general, when a tough policy on a sensitive issue is made—and it may often correspond with the position of the radical Right—it is in the interest of the more moderate parties to present it to the public in softer and more appealing packaging. By doing so, moderates benefit in two ways. First, they promote a popular policy, such as restrictions on immigration. Second, they prevent the radical right-wing parties from racking up political capital.<sup>36</sup> In light of these barriers it appears that if we adopt an approach in which political parties are still the key pillars of the contemporary policy making process, we will lose the key to understanding the success of the radical right. The present-day political landscape compels us to adopt a more flexible unit of analysis, namely "the political network."<sup>37</sup>

Political networks are a subcategory of social networks.<sup>38</sup> Due to the lack of an agreed-upon definition for this concept, which only recently made its mark in the academic literature,<sup>39</sup> I define the political network as "a loose and dynamic composite of political actors whose worldview on various issues overlaps and who frequently come together for the purpose of shaping policies in the spirit of their shared ideology." Networks of this type include a wide range of actors: social movements, special interest groups, political parties, individual members of parliament, and civil servants. The boundaries of political networks are elusive and tend to expand, contract, and change their shapes quite often. Due to this dynamic nature, networks are devoid of both a clear hierarchy and regulations. Consequently, political networks are not easy to delineate. Their structure instead resembles an entangled web of subgroups, each of which has its own characteristics and agendas.<sup>40</sup>

Political networks thrive in ambiguous settings.<sup>41</sup> Weakening states that are characterized by expanding areas of "gray" serve as an ideal environment in which networks can operate successfully.<sup>42</sup> By gray areas I refer to institutions with overlapping domains of authority, fuzzy legal frameworks, and unclear regulations. Even strong states that enjoy an extensive degree of control over their respective societies do not prevent such networks from operating.<sup>43</sup> The fluid quality of these networks enables them to easily break through the cracks in the barriers of the political process.<sup>44</sup> They usually maneuver slowly and elusively, and follow an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary path.

Networks operate in many ways.<sup>45</sup> To give just two illustrative examples, if a political party that is associated with a network fails to enter policy-making

circles, it is possible to mobilize members of other parties who do succeed in getting elected and to collaborate with them in order to advance common goals. No less interesting is the recruitment of bureaucrats who are in positions of influence on policy making, by central actors in the network, and even the installation of civil servants in such positions. In many countries, bureaucrats wield much more power than is customarily attributed to them.<sup>46</sup> Unlike elected officials, they spend a considerable part of their career in one ministry, are well-versed in its maze of regulations, and, in situations in which there is a lack of consistency at the elected political level, they become both makers and implementers of policies.<sup>47</sup>

To sum up, the fluid configuration of the network and the fact that it is not easy to attribute its different segments and operations to one big political maneuver enables it to slowly permeate the state, operate from within, and cumulatively advance its agenda. Only if we move the camera lens backwards to the point where it is possible to observe the process from a greater distance in terms of both time and space can we grasp how much larger and more powerful is the whole in comparison to the mere sum of its parts.

Today, radical right-wing political networks operate in many parts of the world. However, their success in shaping policies on the national level is still limited.<sup>48</sup> Actually, it is impossible to identify recent cases in which they have become the central political force in a given country<sup>49</sup>—with the exception of Israel.

### The Success of the Israeli Radical Right: General and Particular Factors

Some of the factors that facilitated the recent success of the Israeli radical Right could be manifested in other countries and thus be tested in comparative research, while others are unique to the Israeli context. Among these general factors are: party system traits as well as the rules of electoral processes; tensions between centers and peripheries; and shifting political agendas. These factors have already received meticulous scholarly attention.<sup>50</sup>

But the case of Israel engenders hypotheses regarding other factors that have, so far, generated less interest. The first is demography. Demographic shifts have been carefully examined by scholars of the radical Right who are interested in anti-immigrant sentiments among veteran inhabitants of the absorbing societies.<sup>51</sup> However, demographic shifts have other outcomes that could be relevant for the radical Right. The combination of decreasing birthrates among some societal segments, increasing birthrates among others, and large waves of immigration within and between continents are changing the political landscapes in

many local and national arenas.<sup>52</sup> Contrary to conventional wisdom, newcomers to a political scene sometimes support the radical Right, a fact that can result in sweeping policy changes. The departure from individualism is the second factor. Voters in democracies are traditionally considered to be self-interested and independent.<sup>53</sup> However, there are cases, especially in developing democracies, where voting is hardly an individual act. Strong primordial ties to a clan, an extended family, an ethnic community, or a religious sect can lead to collective voting. In tight-knit communities, leaders often mobilize their followers and provide them with clear voting instructions that they follow to the letter.<sup>54</sup> Radical right-wing parties, especially those that represent distinct ethnic or religious groups, are likely to be beneficiaries of this phenomenon. Finally, there are leaders. The impact of the personality of a single leader on history in general, and in the context of radical movements in particular, has been the subject of countless studies.<sup>55</sup> Charismatic leadership has also been studied with respect to the ways in which radical right-wing parties mobilize support<sup>56</sup> and with respect to their ability to institutionalize and endure.<sup>57</sup> However, the behavior of maverick or charismatic radical right-wing leaders in office and their actual impact on the formation and the implementation of policies have yet to be explored.

As for the more contextual factors, I elaborate in chapter 1 on some distinctive features of Israel that contribute to the success of the radical Right. Yet, more broadly, three unique pillars have shaped the collective mind-set of the Jews in Israel: the political culture; institutions; and, consequently, political behavior by both the elites and the masses. It is impossible to gain a good grasp of Israeli politics without keeping these factors in mind at all times.

Israel experienced an unusual trajectory of state formation. Global developments in the nineteenth century led to the emergence of Jewish nationalism. By the early twentieth century, Jews from various countries, who had little in common beyond their ethnicity and religious heritage, had begun to arrive in growing numbers to Palestine, which was already inhabited by Arabs. The Jewish state was born half a century later. By the time of its inception, the very foundations of a nation state—such as shared recent memories, common language, and culture—were still lacking, even within the dominant Jewish community. During the first two decades of its existence, while Israel was still learning to walk on its own two feet and at the same time coping with tremendous economic and security challenges, the fledgling nation continued to absorb masses of Jewish immigrants. The formative decades of the state were marked by continuous upheavals and massive population growth. This dramatically impacted the state's characteristics and fertilized the soil for the emergence of a strong radical Right.

The Jews who immigrated to Israel had at least one thing in common: they were all victims of anti-Semitism, discrimination, persecutions, and pogroms,



which were widespread in their countries of origin for many centuries. The holocaust of the European Jewry was, of course, the peak. Many of the immigrants who arrived at the shores of Palestine (and later Israel) throughout the 1940s and 1950s were survivors of the Nazi systematic effort to exterminate the Jewish people. The scars caused by centuries of anti-Semitism left distinctive marks on the infant Israeli society.<sup>58</sup> This trauma generated a nation constantly on edge, which continues to suffer from a continuous sense of collective anxiety and a highly developed survival instinct.<sup>59</sup>

The persistent conflict with the Arab world and the impassioned rhetoric that accompanied it only exacerbated this collective anxiety, creating a sense of intractability and hopelessness<sup>60</sup> and leading the Jews in Israel to rely upon (and glorify) their nation's security establishment.<sup>61</sup> The large Palestinian minority that remained inside Israel's sovereign borders after 1948 posed a continuous challenge to the anxious majority group. Even today, many Jews consider the Palestinian citizens of Israel to be a fifth column. Ethnic relations in the country are marked by deep divisions, sharp segregation between the communities, and an enduring sense of mistrust.<sup>62</sup> In the coming chapters I discuss the consequences of this reality as well as the opportunities that it presented to the radical right.

### Challenges, Methods, and Caveats

In this section I weave the methodological discussion into my personal journey on the road to understanding the Israeli radical Right. Toward the end of the summer of 1995, the Israeli political system reached a boiling point. Every day seemed worse than the previous one. The streets were constantly crowded with protesters who adamantly objected to the implementation of the Oslo Accords and threatened to remove Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin from power.

Having just finished my first year as a graduate student, the time came for me to pick a topic for my master's thesis. I knew that I wanted to study the Israeli radical Right, I just did not know how and decided to seek advice. The natural person to approach was Professor Ehud Sprinzak, Israel's leading authority on radicalism. After sitting terrified outside his office while waiting for him to arrive, I discovered that (luckily for me) Professor Sprinzak was a gracious person. After a thirty-minute conversation in which he tried to figure out what kind of research I wanted to pursue, he came up with an idea: "So many scholars are currently looking into the protest of the settlers from the West Bank, but no one is following the growing discontent of the Golan Residents Committee with the Rabin administration. Why don't you go to the Golan Heights and check out what is going on there?" He had hit the nail on the head. Not only were the

Golan Heights relatively close to my hometown, Haifa, but the only political scientist who studied the Golan Residents Committee, Professor Yael Yishai, was a member of the faculty at the University of Haifa.

By the very next day I signed up for Professor Yishai's seminar on political movements in Israel. The seminar was held every Sunday morning at 8:15 a.m. The only thing that I can remember about the first meeting is strategizing how to approach the professor and get to write a thesis under her supervision. By the time I gathered the courage Yael was long gone, and I promised myself to be more determined the following week. The next meeting was held on November 5, the day following what was supposed to be the largest rally in support of the Oslo process. Tragically, this rally, which was held in the heart of Tel Aviv, turned into one of the darkest events in Israel's history. While walking toward his car, Yitzhak Rabin was shot three times by Yigal Amir, a right-wing radical who was hoping to put an end to the peace process by assassinating the prime minister. Neither the professor nor the students had much sleep that night, and the atmosphere in the classroom was dark. On that day I decided to stop procrastinating and to launch my research. Yael Yishai was even more resolute than I was. That same day, she signed on to be my advisor and became the driving force behind my research for many years.

Based on the advice that I received from Ehud Sprinzak and with the relentless support of Yael Yishai, I engaged in field research in the Golan Heights. I wanted to figure out what motivated the Golan settlers, many of whom were members of Rabin's Labor Party, to join the radical right's fierce campaign against him and to determine the consequences of their struggle. Eventually, the thesis turned into a broader study of the Jewish settlements in the Golan Heights.<sup>63</sup> I concluded that despite the burning commitment of the activists and the generous incentives that the government offered, the Israeli attempt to inhabit the Golan Heights with Jewish settlers could not be regarded as a success story. Only few Israelis were tempted to settle this beautiful and tranquil piece of land. With this observation in mind, I decided to devote my PhD dissertation to studying a much more successful settling endeavor: the one in the West Bank. Mainly I was interested in the factors that facilitated the institutionalization of the parties that were committed to the Greater Israel ideology.<sup>64</sup> I spent the next two years interviewing leaders and activists of the Israeli radical Right and combing through archival materials in an attempt to find answers to my questions. During that period, I was lucky to meet Bruce Hoffman, the chair of the Department of International Relations at the University of St. Andrews at the time. Bruce was happy to share his encyclopedic knowledge of Jewish radicalism in the pre-State era and was generous enough to let me dig into his own personal archives.

In the years that followed, I broadened the scope of my research on the Israeli radical Right. Soon after I submitted my dissertation, I launched an offshoot

research project in which I utilized the concept of "defending democracy" in order to assess Israel's responses to the various challenges posed by the radical Right over the years.<sup>65</sup> As a young faculty member at the University of Haifa, I was lucky to find a great group of scholars and graduate students who shared my interests. Together we devised public opinion polls, which followed the expansion of right-wing radicalism among Israeli Jews on an annual basis.<sup>66</sup> We also studied the evolving ideology of the radical Right<sup>67</sup> and identified factors that enabled the parties of this camp to gain significant power in Parliament.<sup>68</sup>

After a fifteen-year journey in which I have followed the Israeli radical Right's every move, I feel that this political phenomenon has reached a significant milestone. In my opinion, the radical Right has become the most influential power in Israeli politics. As such, it deserves to be studied from a fresh and comprehensive perspective. It is important to note that this book is not politically motivated. While separating one's views from any research is not easy, especially when discussing such a contentious topic, I believe that it is doable, and I have done the utmost to control for any personal biases that I may have.

The fact that the study of political networks is still in its infancy poses quite a few methodological challenges to the scholar who wishes to investigate them. The first obstacle relates to the contemporary dominant paradigms in political science. Most of us have been raised to observe a certain unit of analysis: a leader, an elite group, a political party, a social movement, and, of course, formal institutions and the general public. The different methods for studying each of these actors are clearly outlined in the relevant literature. The problem with political networks is that they result from the interaction of a wide range of actors from each one of the above units of analysis, and this can create methodological chaos.<sup>69</sup>

The second obstacle is the logic of the study. Research protocols generally seek to find correlations between variables and to establish the manner in which one variable affects the other. Further, such models are expected to provide an answer as to why a certain effect took place in a specific way and not another.<sup>70</sup> When an amorphous structure (such as a political network) is the central unit of analysis in a research, it poses a significant challenge. Its constantly changing configuration should be regarded as an independent variable critical to explaining various consequences.<sup>71</sup>

The above concerns have merit. However, it is important to remember that when we encounter political developments that are hard to comprehend (let alone study), our initial tendency is to stick to the familiar. Consequently, in many cases we overlook important phenomena for the sake of methodological rigor. As I hinted earlier in this section, this tendency is evident in the existing research on the contemporary radical right. The majority of scholars in the field focus on the predictors of the success of political parties. It is relatively easy to

monitor the successes and failures of political parties by tracing their electoral achievements. It is also not terribly complicated to identify the variables that correlate with different electoral outcomes. The data is easy to attain and satisfies the most scrupulous methodological demands. While I acknowledge the importance of the electoral process as well as methodological rigor, my main interest lies in the outputs of these political processes. More specifically, I am interested in identifying the factors that facilitate success in the formation and implementation of radical right-wing policies. Delineating such policies, cracking open the black box of the policy-making process, and identifying the factors that shape radical right-wing policies are much more complicated.<sup>72</sup> Thus, despite the fact that this road is not fully paved, I have chosen to tackle what appears to me to be a cardinal political issue. This decision comes with a price tag, namely the degree of methodological rigor. For the purpose of this book, which should be accessible to readers who are not specializing in social network analysis, I have decided to follow a softer qualitative research design, which relies on the experience of other researchers who have studied social networks and looked into their impact on policy and politics, as well as no small measure of intuition.<sup>73</sup> It has been a long process of trial and error. There is still a significant distance to go until a solid research method of political networks can be devised. Rapid progress is being made, though, especially in the quantitative realm.<sup>74</sup>

## Plan of the Book

In order to provide support to my argument that the ascendance of the radical Right in Israel, which Sprinzak identified more than two decades ago,<sup>75</sup> has in effect developed into a full-fledged victory, I structure the remaining chapters as follows. In the first chapter, I introduce the Israeli radical Right's historical and institutional antecedents and follow its evolution during the formative era of the state. In chapter 2 I move toward analyzing the ideology, trajectory, predicaments, and eventual decline of the old radical Right. I devote the third chapter to introducing the new radical Right, which took root in Israel in the early 1970s and has never since strayed from its triumphant path. In chapters 4 through 8, I offer a combination of chronology and analysis for the radical Right's rise to power over the last two decades. In each chapter I look into several policy areas on which the radical Right tried to leave a mark and discuss the means it applied to attain its goals. I highlight both successes and failures. In chapter 4 I portray the institutionalization of the settlers' network as a response to the outbreak of the first Intifada and analyze its main endeavors during that period. In chapter 5, I review the significant transformations that took place in Israel during the three-year period between the seeming defeat of the Right in the elections and the



assassination of Rabin. The final gasps of the old radical Right, the reconfiguration of the network, its many successes (and occasional failures) in subverting the peace process will stand at the heart of the chapter. In chapter 6 I shift much of my attention to the domestic arena, especially to the social and political dividing lines that facilitated the rapid consolidation of the various elements comprising the new radical Right. Notwithstanding, I follow the role of the radical Right in pushing the peace process toward a cliff. In chapters 7 and 8, I cover the period between the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip. Contrary to the common belief that the second Palestinian uprising and Israel's consequent withdrawal from Gaza served a major blow to the radical Right, I argue that these events actually benefited this camp. By the end of that period, the Israeli public gave up on any hope for peace, the remnants of what used to be the Israeli peace camp were decaying rapidly, and the radical Right network enjoyed unprecedented prosperity in each and every policy arena. I structure the conclusions slightly differently. Alongside a breakdown of the recent leg of the radical Right's victorious spree, I zoom in on the policy realms in which this camp had its major achievements, as well as those in which it was less successful, and offer a cautious assessment of these developments as they relate to the future of Israel.



## The Antecedents of Israel's Contemporary Radical Right

For almost one hundred years, there has been an ongoing and fierce struggle in Israel or Palestine, depending on one's viewpoint, between two young nationalistic movements: the Jewish and the Palestinian. The struggle focuses on the questions: Which is the true native group in this small strip of land that, since 1948, has been recognized as the State of Israel? Is it the Palestinians, whose origins are in the Middle East and Africa and who gathered on this territory over the course of hundreds of years? Or is it the Jews, who were sparsely scattered on this piece of land until the nineteenth century but regarded Eretz Yisrael as the historical origin of their people and the theological mainstay of their religion?<sup>1</sup>

Modern-day Jewish nationalism appeared with the emergence of the Zionist movement, which arose in Europe during the nineteenth century and was profoundly influenced by the galvanization of European nationalism. The rapid growth of the movement can be attributed to the fear that gripped the Jews in the wake of anti-Semitism that swept across the Continent; the dominant factions of the Zionist movement searched for a course or solution that would somehow enable them to transform the Jewish Diaspora into a sovereign nation.

One hazard in the research of political history is the tendency to judge the past through the prism of the present. For example, anti-Zionist circles today commonly locate the roots of Jewish nativism in a reference made by Lord Shaftesbury and later by the British-Zionist writer Israel Zangwill, who described Palestine as a "land without a people for a people without a land."<sup>2</sup> Zangwill is accused of purposely ignoring the fact that the land had been populated with hundreds of thousands of Arabs and was bustling with the life of its local residents. Even so, it is worth remembering that, in those times, the international political order and the Middle East theater in particular were completely different than they are today. Palestine, or Eretz Yisrael, and its neighbors were under the rule of a declining Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. The concept of nationalism that sprang from Europe and left its mark so deeply on many of the continent's