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CHAPTER 1

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

INTRODUCTION

Since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995 by a radical Jew sympathetic to the demands of the settler movement in the occupied territories, the settlers have been propelled to the front of the political agenda. The increasing number of settlements and the radicalisation of parts of the movement are widely regarded as being one of the main obstacles towards the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians. The segment of radical settlers has been instrumental in prompting increasingly violent responses from the Palestinian population in the occupied territories. The increase in suicide bombings orchestrated by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian groups and the consequent retaliation by the Israeli army has created a dangerous spiral of violence. Violence which over the past years has taken an even more dangerous course leading to the war in Lebanon in 2006 as well as the latest war in the Gaza strip between Hamas and the Israeli army. Many observers of the Middle East conflict see the settlers as a threat, not only to Israeli society but also to the general stability of the entire region.

The Jewish settlements and the Jewish Diaspora have been two of the most important building blocks upon which the Israeli state sovereignty was created and the settlers and the settlement policy has throughout the history of Israel been important issues on the political agenda. The Jewish Diaspora organisations have played an active role in Israeli settlement policy by contributed both financially and by recruiting people to the settlements.

In recent times it is believed that a new more radical segment of the Jewish Diaspora have come from America and Europe to reside in settlements throughout the occupied territories. These are often seen as some of the most reluctant and aggressive opponents to any peace process and a small but growing number have regularly participated in acts of violence, not
only against Palestinians but peace seeking Israelis also, whom they consider as enemies to their cause.

In the last fifteen to twenty years there has been a growing focus by scholars on religious and nationalistic groups in Israeli society. A number of scholars have drawn their attention to some of the more radical nationalistic Jewish groups like Gush Emunim etc (Newman 1981), while others have focused on the growing number of and influence by the orthodox Jews in Israeli society and politics (Shahak & Mezvinsky 1988). A growing attention on different Jewish diaspora groups and organisations has also appeared in recent times (Endelman 1997) and Diaspora studies on the radicalisation within certain nationalistic and/or religious diasporas groups in different parts of the world has also been drawn into attention (Fuglerud 1999). But no research has been made on the possible link between the growing radicalisation on parts of the Jewish diaspora societies and the radicalisation of parts of the settler movement in the occupied territories. This is one of the prime ambitions in this research.

This PhD focuses on migrant-settlers on the West Bank, i.e. people from the Jewish diaspora (US and Europe) who have and still are settling in the occupied territories and by that contributing to the rapid colonization of part of the areas which Palestinians as well as the international society regard belonging to a future Palestine state. This research suggest that by analysing the background and motives of the migrant settlers, who in recent times have become an even more conspicuous and active participants in a conflict that historically mainly was seen as a conflict of security and territorial ownership but now increasingly are informed by religious nationalistic agenda, one can get an important insight to an significant aspect of the dynamic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The migrant settlers will be analysed by means of theories on Identity, Diaspora, Community and institutions and Long-distance Nationalism in particular on the formation of religious, political and nationalist identity. Fieldwork has been undertaken in the Jewish Diaspora in the United States and England amongst diasporas who contemplate moving into a settlement on the West Bank, but even more on the migrant settler’s who have already settled in the occupied territories of the West Bank. Furthermore this research will scrutinize the work of organisations and institutions who undertake a mission promoting the Zionist agenda in the
Diaspora as well as facilitating people from the Jewish Diaspora with economic resources and practical help when moving into the occupied territories.

OBJECTIVES

1) To explore the formation of religious, nationalists and political ideologies in the Jewish diasporic world focusing on the group of Jewish diasporas contemplating or now living at the frontiers of the nation state. This in order to understand the background and motives for why people from the Jewish Diaspora decide to migrate to and settle in one of the most disputed and dangerous areas in the region.

2) To contribute empirically to the understanding of the relationship between home-land, host-land and the Jewish diaspora; firstly by exploring the formation and the dimension of long-distance politics and diasporic networks and secondly by exploring the groups of migrant settlers and their role in the Israeli state formation process.

3) To contribute on a more theoretical level, to the study of the formation of identity in the context of being a part of the Diaspora and engaging in what should be termed as Long-Distance Nationalism in connection with migrating into areas of conflict where the authority of state institutions is strongly contested, not least by radical migrant settlers.

BACKGROUND

DIASPORA

The Jewish Diaspora is one of the largest, oldest and best organised in the world. Historically, Jews have fled from persecution in Europe as well as other parts of the world. As a result, Jewish communities can be found nearly everywhere in the world today. Since 1948 Israel has given the Jews ‘the right of return’ (Israeli Law 1950). The cornerstone of the Israeli nation has been and still is built on the Diaspora Jewry. Until recent years, the vast majority of emigrants have been Jewish refugees from Europe fleeing from pogroms in Eastern Europe; survivors from the holocaust; Arab-Jews coming in the aftermath of the creation of the Israeli
state in 1948; or, as in recent years, emigrants from the former Soviet Republic using their *right of return* to settle in Israel (Sacher 1996).

Throughout Israel’s history a number of emigrants have come for quite different reasons than seeking refuge. These were the idealistic pioneers that came to the country to participate in the building of the nation state. In recent years a new group of Jewish emigrants have appeared on the horizon; nationalistic right-wing Jews coming from the Diaspora, participating in what they see as a struggle for the survival of the Israeli state as well as to accomplish their political and/or religious goal of either/or supporting the enterprise to create the project of ‘greater Israel’ (Lustick 1988) or (as mostly seen in recent years) to fulfil what they see as the sacred obligation to contribute to the creation of a religious Jewish state. This as proscribed by parts of the more extreme religious Jewish nationalist settler population living in the occupied territories. These newcomers, their political ideology, nationalist and religious believe and perception of the Israeli society, as well as the way they perceive and interact with Israeli state formation policy and the current situation are to a large degree shaped in the Diaspora.

The largest Jewish community outside Israel is to be found in the US. The US was, before the establishment of Israel, one of the few safe-havens for Jewish refugees. The number of Jews living in the US amounts close to five million. The American diaspora Jewry often plays an active role in Israeli politics both on domestic issues as well as foreign. Jewish Diaspora organisations often link into Israeli politics. This also applies to the Israeli settlement movements. Jewish Diaspora organisations play a very active role in the shaping of settlement policy as well as settlement activity.

For many years, Diaspora organisations in the US and Europe have been engaged in fundraising for social, religious and political activities in Israel. At the same time, many of these organisations engage in activities helping young people to make ‘Aliyah’ (“ascension” or “going up” is the arrival of Jews as individuals or groups, from exile or Diaspora to live in Israel). A significant number of young Jewish people either travel to or settle in Israel every year and in many cases participate in different activities within Diaspora organisations. Here, they receive guidance and education and it is often in these organisations their ideological and political training is shaped.
This study will focus on the formation of identity in the context of the production of political, religious and nationalist ideologies in institutions and organizations. Furthermore, it will focus on the recruitment of people to settlements in the occupied territories that take place in specific nationalistic Jewish Diaspora organizations in the United States and England. This to determine how the organizations exert their influence on; a) political, religious and nationalistic ideologies of Jews that contemplate moving to the occupied territories as well as; b) the political strategies the group of migrant settlers living in the territories attain while living in the occupied territories.

**SETTLERS AND STATE FORMATION PROCESS**

Jewish settlements were one of the building blocks upon which the Israeli state’s sovereignty was created. Before the state of Israel was recognized by the international community these settlements defined its territorial limits and shaped the ideological landscape of Zionism (Jewish nationalism). From a historical perspective, the settlement movement has its roots in the Zionist movement that emerged in late nineteenth-century Europe, influenced by the nationalist wave that swept the continent (Sacher 1996). During the early years of the Zionist movement two parallel strategies emerged within the Zionist organization (Practical and Political Zionism), (Gilbert 1999). Practical Zionism encouraged young Jews in the Diaspora to settle in the land and emphasised the practical means of attaining Zionist goals, such as Aliyah, rural settlement and educational institutions. The settlement movement and the settlers of today consider their enterprise as originating from the strand of Practical Zionism; this applies both partly to their ideological approach as well as to how they are recruited and funded. It is in this way contemporary settlers and their organizations see themselves as the true successors to the pioneers that formed and built the state of Israel in the late nineteen-century. Contrary to this perception one must highlight as Gabi Taub notes in his latest book “the settlers” that there are of course fundamental differences between both Political Zionism and Practical Zionist in its classical form (and still maintained by the mainstream Zionist in Israel and the diaspora) and that of the religious Zionist of today. The belief streaming from the classical secular Zionist movement was that “the object of their enterprise was the normalization of Jewish life in an earthly national state” (Taub 2010) while the religious settlers of today who subscribe to the religious-nationalist strand (specifically the group of settlers related to the Gush Emunim and the Yesha Council) believes that the object of their enterprise are to be
viewed within the context of their obligation of what they see as proscribed by God and the bible (Taub 2010).

From the very start of the building of a Jewish state, friction between Jews and Arabs gave rise to three different approaches within the Zionist movement, approaches that still play a considerable role in Israeli politics today: The minimalist, the maximalist and the realist approach (Neuberger 2001). The minimalists saw the land as belonging to both peoples. The maximalist approach, believed that a national struggle between the two peoples should be resolved by force. They rejected the presumption that the Arabs had any rights to the land. One of the strongest leaders in this group was Ze’ev Vladimir Jabotinsky the architect of the main revisionist ideology (Sarig 1999). His thoughts have become one of the cornerstones in the ideology of Likud and have ever since inspired many settlers as well as parts of the settlement movement. The realists approach was to try to avert a conflict with the Arabs and they preferred negotiations with the local Arabs. This group led by the Labour party comprised far the largest group in Israel during the first twenty-nine years of the state’s existence.

From the very beginning of the state formation process, the founders of Israel were opposed to the more religious elements of Zionism and that of the radical right (Herut that later became Likud) had very little influence on Israeli policy. The war in 1967 radically changed the agenda on substantial issues regarding the boundaries of the Israeli state. The Israeli victory in the Six-Day War with the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip as well as Sinai and parts of the Golan Heights, re-ignited the dispute between the maximalist and the realists approach. And in addition a “new” Zionist movement with a religious and messianic approach began to play an active and eventually over the years a very powerful and decisive role especially regarding the occupied territories on the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

In 1977 when Labour lost the Israeli elections, Likud - with support from the religious and secular rightist parties - formed and lead the Israeli government. After giving back Sinai to Egypt in 1979, in exchange for peace, Likud launched a settlement policy that would dramatically change the demographic conditions in the territories forever. Within the last twenty years the increase of settlements and settlers has been enormous. After Likud came to power, the settlement policy had become its raison d’être. By 1977 the Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem had already reached fifty thousand. The same year only 7000 settlers in forty-five outposts resided in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Later that year Jimmy Carter requested Menachem
Begin to freeze all Israeli settlement activity in the territories but Begin refused. Since then the development in the territories has rapidly increased especially in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In 1983 29,090 settlers were living in the area. In 1992 this number had risen to 109,784 and in 2001 the number of settlements in the West Bank comprised 130 with a settler population of 299,340. In East Jerusalem the same patterns can be seen, from the 50,000 in 1977 the number reached 141,000 in 1992 and 193,091 in 2011 (FMEP 2011).

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

To understand the main objectives of the research proposal, different but interrelated scholarly discussions will be explored on various analytical levels. The main field of inquiry that will be used in this research will take its point of departure from various fields such as; Transnationalism, Diaspora, migration and not the least the question of identity formation. On the forefront of this research field of inquiry will be to understand the process of religious, political and nationalist identity formation.

IDENTITY, DIASPORA, MIGRATION, AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Studies on migration often used to focus either on the home or the host country and just as often the studies have taken the point of departure that migrants either represent a positive contribution or a negative burden to the country of their destination. These studies tended to emphasise migration as a nation bound, one-ended process that connected migrants to a specific territory. This study takes a different approach as it emphasises the strong relations between the Diaspora, the host and the home country. To be able to understand the dynamics and processes related to the links between the Diaspora organisations and Israel, in relation to issues such as flow of people, religious and nationalist ideas as well as ideology and financial resources this study’s theoretical point of departure will be within the field of Transnationalism. To analyse the Jewish Diaspora as a case of transnational migration this study also hopes to go beyond the tendencies found in many studies on this subjects of seeing the Jewish Diaspora as an exceptional case of migration.

In recent years there has been a rapidly growing interest in exploring the field of Transnationalism. In the era of globalisation an increasing number of scholars have turned
their attention away from the state to focus on the multiple ties and interactions that link people to different institutions across the borders of nation-states (Vertovec 1999).

Transnational studies share at least two main characteristics. The first highlights the high intensity of exchange between the host and home country (Appadurai 1991; Malkki 1992; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994). Diaspora migrants live their lives across international borders while simultaneously maintaining strong social, political and also often economic contacts to their homeland. Diaspora groups often seek to create or maintain communal solidarity and such communal solidarity is often organised within the framework of Diaspora organisations (Sheffer 1997). Activities within these organisations often include the elaboration of transnational networking that engage in political, cultural, social and economical exchange with their country of origin. In the literature on Transnationalism this kind of exchange is often termed flows (Appadurai 1990). The Diaspora organisations and the settlement movement will in this study be understood within the framework of transnational networks and the literature that will inspire this study originates from scholars such as Gupta and Ferguson (1992); Jacobsen (1995); Rogers and Vertovec (1995); Portes (1996); Cohen (1997); Nonini and Ong (1997); Popkin (1999).

Another characteristic within the field of Transnationalism is preoccupied with migrant identity. Most of the transnational researchers today see migration identity as a form of hybrid identity (Bhabha 1990; Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Smith & Guarnizo 1998) shaped both in the home and host country. A significant number of Jews living in the Diaspora have throughout Jewish history maintained their cultural distinctiveness either through their religious beliefs and practice or “just” as cultural Jews. After the creation of Israel many Diaspora Jews added another feature by identifying themselves with the Jewish people in the state of Israel. One of the main purposes of this study is to explore Diaspora consciousness as a feature that creates ties amongst people living as Diaspora minorities in different countries and here the focus will be on the representation within the Diaspora culture emphasising the bonds between people as well as their links to the country of origin.

Benedict Anderson’s two concepts of imagined communities (1983) and long-distance nationalism (1992) will play a role as it firstly points to the links between people in the Jewish Diaspora as well as their connection to the Israeli state, and secondly to the ideological understanding that originates in the Diaspora and travels to the occupied territories either as
political and economical support to the settlements or even more directly by recruiting some of the people moving to these settlements. The study perceives the concept of Diaspora as a way of re-imagining community that takes into account the historical, spatial, and social aspects of being and becoming (Hall 1990). Identity is essentially an historical narrative of telling where one’s self is from. These narratives also reflect how we imagine ourselves positioned within and by the socio-historical relations of production. In this sense, identities are tentative yet historically specific (Anderson 1983&1994; Safran 1991; Hall 1992; Bowman 1994; Cohen 1997; Bauman 2000; Shain 2000).

The analytical questions that will be addressed in connection to the above-mentioned theoretical considerations are; (a) How is the production of religious, political and nationalist ideology shaped in the Jewish Diaspora and how is diaspora organisations and institutions an integrated part of this ideological production? (b) What ideological representations and understandings are at play when migrant settlers decide to move to the occupied territories? (c) What strategies do the migrant settlers living in the diaspora apply before, during and after making Aliyah to the occupied territories? This research will use an interdisciplinary approach where social-sociology, anthropology and historical methodological tools has been incorporated in various ways and to different degrees.

FIELDS OF RESEARCH

The areas of investigation have been twofold focusing on: a) the migrant settlers and members of the Diaspora in the United States and UK that contemplate settling in the occupied territories. b) The Diaspora organisations and Aliyah organisations that embark in nurturing and developing the relationship between Diasporas, their homeland and their host-land.

The first area has two main focuses. a) to analyse the creation of political identity amongst people in Diaspora organisations that contemplate or already have decided to settle in the occupied territories b) to analyse the political strategies as well as the creation of political, religious and nationalist identity amongst the migrant in various settlements on the West Bank. The study is based on migrant-stories and/or life-stories interviews with the participants. By analysing their representations on these subjects one will find elements that will be indicative of social, political and cultural (as well as nationalist and religious) context
(Cohen 1994). Here the narrative technique has been chosen for its suitability to capture the individual interpretation of past choices and present practices.

In the second area, Diaspora organisations and settlement movements will be selected for further investigation. Informant interviews will be conducted with key actors in the Diaspora organisations. Furthermore, focus on the flow of people, ideology, and financial resources will be included as it can provide important information and data on the migrant settler’s strategies and identification as well as showing the links between the settlement, the Diaspora organisations and the state.
CHAPTER 2

THEORY

INTRODUCTION

This theoretical chapter will take its point of departure from the analytical question posed at the beginning of this thesis, namely: why people from the Jewish diasporic world of the United States and England choose to move into a Jewish community in the occupied territories. And in addition to this: how does the socialization process, which takes place once the migrant settlers have joined a settlement on the West Bank, impact on their political, religious and/or nationalist understanding of issues related to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. This second question will have a minor role to play, as my empirical data is not as strong in this area as the data collected for the first question. As one might anticipate from the concepts implicit in these two questions, certain theoretical fields are almost unavoidable. Identity, Community and Diaspora Theory are obvious theoretical terrains to explore, as these areas inform the very core issues of this research. Furthermore, it would seem appropriate to offer a thorough clarification of how this thesis understands and uses other concepts related to that of identity. Religious, nationalist and political/ideological identity play, as we shall see, a significant role for almost all migrant settlers interviewed for this research. It is important to underline that these identity attributes or identity markers as I shall call them from now on, have become much more important for the groups of migrant settlers who have moved into the various settlements in the occupied territories in recent years.

Another very significant motivational factor for both the individual subject, as well as specific groups of members of the Diaspora when making Aliyah, is the influence posed by certain entities such as the family, schools, Zionist and Aliyah organizations etc. These various institutions have undertaken the challenge of actively shaping the individual migrant’s identity, or have at least contributed to the formation of that identity by offering diaspora groups basic positions on issues relating to ideology, religion, politics and cultural matters and in some cases even nationalistic thoughts or ideas. These are important attributes, which in many cases lay the groundwork of an individual’s motivation for making Aliyah later in life. And indeed, some of these institutions have employed quite practical and material methods to
facilitate individuals in the process of uprooting themselves from their place of birth to settle in what they have come to think of as their "country of origin"\(^1\).

Narrative is another important concept which will be highlighted in this research. Narratives, not only in the sense of stories told by individual people, for instance an individual’s biographical narrative (which we will see examples of in Chapter Five), but also the narratives told by larger collective entities like: institutions, communities, societies and nations as a whole. Narrative is an extremely important factor when shaping and developing one’s personal identity, as well as in the context of group and national identities. Furthermore, narratives are used as frameworks for identity markers both by individuals and larger entities. Identity markers are essential as instruments to navigate the modern world; a world that has in many ways become increasingly more complex, at least when seen in the larger historical perspective. Some of the most significant identity markers used by the migrant settlers of this research are, as we shall see later in this thesis: religion, nationalism, ideology and, in a more subtle and deep way what could be understood as, a person’s sense of security. Concepts which will be defined later in this theoretical chapter\(^2\).

**WHY IDENTITY?**

Let me start this theoretical chapter by focusing on the concept of identity, as this would seem the most obvious place to begin a research that seeks to understand what motivates people when choosing to move into a Jewish settlement in the West Bank. I will start by focusing, first and foremost, on the individual level of identity formation, and then work outwards by taking a closer look at the features and dynamics of identity shaping, at the group or community level. As we reach the end of the first part of this chapter, I will turn my attention to how identities are established on a national level. This is because, as we shall see, the established national narrative is in fact crucial to an understanding of why some individual members of

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\(^1\) Country of origin should in the cases in hand be understood as the country from which the actors believe they - through their ancestors – originate from in contrast to their country of birth.

\(^2\) As a way of understanding these above mentioned processes, I will, as we shall see later present important theoretical elements borrowed from the theoretical body of what Benedict Anderson has termed "Long-distance Nationalism".
the Diaspora choose, or contemplate choosing to move to occupied territories like the West Bank.

So, why is identity and identification such an important concept to be scrutinized? And why, in precedence to examining other relevant concepts? The answer to this is that identification cuts directly to the heart of this research. The strong attachment to the Jewish people in general; the Jewish cultural and religious heritage; and not least the Israeli state, which some people perceive as *Jewish land given by God* to the Jewish people: all issues which the vast majority of migrant settlers regard, as we shall see as crucial, integrated components of their biographical narrative. Almost every migrant settler I spoke with during my fieldwork in the West Bank mentioned a strong affiliation with these issues. And indeed most expressed a strong sympathy for many of the religious/nationalistic elements of *modern religious Zionism* and had thereby identified with many of the values of the settler community before joining the settlement movement.

Identity entails identification, and identification is in many ways the single most highlighted emotion mentioned by all the migrant settlers interviewed. The strong emotional connection to the state of Israel is naturally one of the most important identification markers for people making Aliyah, but for migrant settlers the picture is somewhat more complex as they have decided to move beyond what are considered to be Israel’s internationally recognized boundaries. I will touch on this issue in greater depth, later on in this research.

But what does it mean to feel closely attached to, or identifying with, a place or people, as well as an ideology and heritage and from where does this strong attachment originate? This is the question which is at the heart of what this research hopes to deal with, and during the many hours I spent interviewing people from the Jewish Diaspora, as well as the many people I met in Israel and the occupied territories, it was also the single most important issue raised by individual migrants during our conversations.

In short, one could say that becoming a settler entails a continued involvement in what can be termed "identity works". Migrant settlers do (as we shall see) position themselves in opposition to other Israelis, Palestinians, Arabs in general and in fact the majority of people outside of their narrow circle, and this is mainly because their political, religious, or
nationalistic positions invariably seem to create animosity amongst people from outside the settler community.

**INDIVIDUALIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION**

During the last three or four decades, the amount of published academic literature dealing with identity or identity related issues seems to have grown exponentially (Taylor 1989; Hall 1990; 1996; Ricoeur 1991; Giddens 1991; Lash 1991; Beck 1992; Castells 1996; Rose 1997; Jenkins 2004; Bauman 2004; Lawler 2008). Particularly within Sociology, one finds a magnitude of books and articles dealing with all sorts of issues related to the significance and formation of identity. This also accounts for literature in the context of; Israel, Judaism, Zionism etc. (Cohen & Susser 2000; Auerbach 2001; Shafir & Peled 2002; Goldscheider 2002; Habib 2004).

It is difficult to pinpoint precisely why this trend has become so popular in recent years, and I am certain that there is no single answer to the question. However one might be inclined to agree with K. Mercer statement, that "Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis" (Mercer 1990:43). Maybe the world is indeed experiencing some kind of collective identity crisis. In most European countries there has been a rising tension between the native Europeans and their Muslim countrymen. In the Arab world, a growing tension has also been on the rise between extremists and moderates. In some Arab countries Christians are often under pressure as are other religious minorities. In Israel too, one can detect a steady increase in tension between different groups. The tension between the various religious faiths, as well as that between the orthodox and secular Jewish population has been on the rise for at least the last 15-20 years; some would even say, and not without justification, that it has been rising for much longer, perhaps even since the birth of modern Zionism itself during the mid to late 19th century. A topic I will return to later, in Chapter four.

The issue of defining who is who within the context of national, religious and/or ethnic membership has swept the world like a tsunami, and this has been especially so since the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, characteristics of this development had been on the rise long before. And with this in mind, it would seem there is indeed a ring of truth to
Mercer’s statement. Some kind of global identity crisis does seem to be affecting people across the whole world at present.

It is probably not a coincidence that during the same period, and particularly in the West, we have witnessed a simultaneous rise in the focus on the individual. This has been occurring right across the board, in the context of almost all areas of modern life. For example one only has to consider our educational, social and health systems, not to mention the media picture. This also applies when turning our attention to the market place. In recent years, Capitalism has definitely spotted the great potential inherent in focusing on the individual subject as a consumer (Bauman 1998A 1998B, 2001, 2004, 2004). All these areas have in fact undergone tremendous transformation, especially during the last three decades: going from collective-orientated systems to more individual-orientated ones and this can be witnessed on a global scale (Giddens 1991; Bauman 2001; Harvey 1990).

In recent years the human and social rights of the individual, as well as the duties of the individual, have drawn more and more sharply into focus. This development is quite apparent when looking at the modern democratic states, however in recent years this development; or rather tendency can also be seen to have affected the more totalitarian societies. The international society, with America and Europe at its vanguard, has in recent years been more aggressive in pushing forward a more individual-orientated, political, liberal agenda. Most strikingly this development can be detected in America’s promotion of both democracy and the liberal economic model of society; this promotion is particularly explicit in the Arab world, but also evident elsewhere, for instance several former Eastern-European countries and Africa (Huntington 1991). Essentially this trend can be seen as part of a much larger, longer-term development where the promotion and cultivation of individualism has long been on the rise.

These developments have resulted in a global rise in what has been termed individualization. This process of individualization has also had a tremendous effect on Israeli society and also Jewish diasporic communities worldwide. Israeli society has undergone tremendous changes during the last 20-25 years. Indeed many academics note the Americanization (Ram, 2004; 3

In most of Zygmunt Baumann’s writings the reference to the individual as a consumer are highlighted. In 1998 Bauman wrote two books that extensively dealt with the question and consequences of consumerism; “Globalization: The Human Consequences” and “Work, consumerism and the new poor.”
Rebhun & Waxman 2000) of Israel and there is no doubt that the more collective, socialist elements of Israeli society, which had in many ways dominated the country in its early years, have now been replaced by much more individualistic elements. Incidentally, this is a trend that Israeli society shares with many European countries.

The changes that have occurred in the Jewish diasporic communities are also apparent. Most strikingly is the global tendency of disintegration within Jewish communities, with its fragmentation and polarization (Kaplan 2005). Moreover, we have seen a constant rise of assimilation amongst the Jewish population in most western democratic states over the last century, as well as a decline of the traditional closed knitted Jewish communities living as isolated islands in their host countries. In general one can say, that the tremendous changes which have occurred within all societies of the world, naturally also have had an impact on the Jewish population of the Diaspora. It will be too extensive in this context to elaborate more on these issues. But the point to make here is that some of these changes are important elements in understanding the background for why some Jewish people at present decide to uproot themselves from their country of birth and become migrant settlers in the West Bank.

It is definitely not a coincidence that these developments also coincides with the changes seen in the wake of globalization: a theme many academics have embraced as an important factor in the formation of “new identity” in the post-modern world of today (Featherstone 1985; Bauman 2000; Giddens 1991 and many others). The variety of topics dealt with by these theorists in connection with issues related to the formation of identity and identification in general, stretches from politics to religion, gender to nationalism, and on to countless other subjects. The list seems endless.

In this research I will touch upon some of the above-mentioned subjects, as they have in many ways been an important source inspiration for writing this thesis. But many of the above-mentioned academics tend to adopt a meta-theoretical approach to many of these questions, something I will be trying to avoid, at least in the first part of my analysis.

**IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION**
So, what is identity and how will it be used within the context of this research? Rather than using a very narrow, theoretical definition of the concept, I will instead emphasise, as Stephanie Lawler highlights in her book "Identity - Sociological Perspectives" (Lawler 2008:2), that "it's important not to define identity in a singular manner". A narrow definition will, in my view, prevent the use of more than one theoretical perspective when dealing with the issues at hand. And as this research tries to deal with the formation of identity from a cross-theoretical perspective (for the most part those perspectives found within sociology, anthropology and psychology) the broadness of one's conceptual definitions becomes very important indeed. As a consequence I have chosen to borrow from Richard Jenkins' theoretical chest by using his very broad definition of identification: "...identification can be defined [minimally] as the ways in which individuals and collectivises [sic] are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivises" (Jenkins 2004:5). With such a loose definition I think it would be useful to clarify some of the more distinctive attributes connected to the concept of identity.

The process of identification is, as we can see above, a relational process; it is something that takes place "amongst and between people", both on the individual as well as the collective level. Like Richard Jenkins, I think it is important to distinguish between what can be termed as one's 'personal identity' and one's 'social identity'. Personal identity should be understood as that which differentiates discrete selves from other selves; whereas social identity is "... the internalisation of, often stereotypical, collective identification. Social identity is [in contrast to 'personal identity'] sometime the more salient influence on individual behaviour." In this research I will deal primarily with the level of "social identities", both in connection with the level of individual identity as well as group identity. It is important to underline that I see individual and group identification, at least when discussing the process of formation of identity, as very similar processes. In fact they should be understood as basically the "same phenomena", as Richard Jenkins also specifies in his writing (Jenkins 2006:15).

Identity, or rather identification, as I will mostly refer to it from this point on, is a process that draws on other processes of "similarity and difference" (Jenkins 2004:4). To explain it in a slightly different way: identity formation is about identifying oneself with others (similarity) as well as distinguishing (differentiating) oneself from others. The formation of identities is an
ongoing process that takes place throughout a person’s life, or, if we talk about it on a group level, at least as long as the collective entity exists.

While most post-modern, constructivist, theoretical approaches often emphasise that identity formation is predominantly characterized and dominated by the process of differentiation and less on the drawing of similarities this research intends to underline that the process of drawing on similarity, recognition and inclusion is at least as significant as that drawing on differentiation, boundaries and exclusion. Looking for sameness within and with others is crucial. Searching for individuals or groups who resemble oneself and who share most of one’s basic values and worldview was, as we shall see later, of utmost importance to almost all the people interviewed for this research. To illustrate this I will cite a quote from my field diary. When asked why individuals had chosen to make Aliyah, a frequent reply was: “I made Aliyah to Israel because here I can live with people whom I share the most important things in life like; ethnicity, religion, culture, humour and fate” (field diary Shaul: 4).

In many ways the impulse to seek sameness and similarity originates from the fact that people in general are looking for places and people whom they feel safe and comfortable with. One of the most important preconditions for maintaining this feeling of security is continuity. According to Eriksson: "identity is made up of a conscious striving for continuity [...] a solidarity with a group’s ideal” (Eriksson 1968:208) In Eriksson’s analysis, “identity requires both stability and identification with the wider social group so that identity provides some sense of continuity with the past and the future trajectory with a core identity that locates each of us as individuals in the social world”. (Woodward 2002:39). Feelings of safety, solidarity, continuity and security are all particularly important issues to bear in mind, when analyzing people who have been persecuted historically, as has been the case with the Jews, but even more so when considering people who have actively chosen to live in dangerous and, in this case, highly contested areas, namely the occupied territories. This is a topic I will return to later in this thesis.

At this point it is important to emphasise that identity formation is, as we can see, a dual process of identifying who we are similar too, as well as whom we differentiate ourselves from. Or as Richard Jenkins explains: "As for [individual as well as for] collective identification, people must have something significant in common - no matter how vague, apparently unimportant or apparently illusory - before we can talk about their membership of Collectivity.
However, this similarity cannot be recognised without simultaneously evoking differentiation. Logically, inclusion entails exclusion, if only by default." (Jenkins 2006:79). I will return to the question of collective identification through concepts of group identity and community later in this chapter.

Let’s now turn to Stewart Hall to get a more thorough understanding of why he and many other academics see differentiation as the most important element within the process of identification; “Throughout their career, identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render ‘outside’ objected. Every identity has at its ‘margin’ an excess, something more. The unity, the internal homogeneity, which the term identity treats as foundational is not a natural, but a constructed form of closure, every identity naming as its necessary, even if silenced and unspoken other, that which lacks ... So the ‘unities’ which identities proclaim are, in fact, constructed within the play of power and exclusion, and are the result, not of a natural and inevitable or primordial totality but of naturalized, over determined process of ‘closure’” (Hall 1996:5). Stewart Hall emphasises that the process of identity formation relies on skills of differentiation and exclusion. In fact this is seen as a precondition for identification. At the same time he points out that the desire to create unity and internal homogeneity within one’s own identity is in fact an artificial and constructed form of closure; ‘a over determined process of closure’ as he calls it. It is also important to highlight his opinion that it is ‘within the play of power’ (a term he borrows from Michel Foucault) that this process of differentiation takes place. Later in this chapter I will expand further on my use of Foucault’s concept of power, but for now will continue with Hall’s understanding of identity.

The idea of a coherent unity at the heart of one’s identity is of course, as Hall also points out, an illusion. No one has only one identity all of the time. Individuals as well as collectives have a combination of multiple identities and consequently any process of identification is inevitably characterized by a continued process of negotiation. Or as Jenkins put it;

"Identity is our understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and reciprocally, other peoples understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us). The outcome of agreement and disagreement, at least in principle always negotiable, identity is not fixed”. (Jenkins 2005:5)
Although I agree with Jenkins that identity never is, nor can be seen as something totally fixed, one should not confuse this with thinking that identities in general are fragile or unstable. On the contrary most identities are in fact quite stable and indeed fairly predictable.

In order to understand what motivates people like Stewart Hall and many other academics, in the way they approach identity formation, it is useful to look at the theoretical field of psychoanalysis. Especially Jacques Lacan’s writing on childhood development and, more specifically, his concept of the *mirror stage*, which has often been used as a theoretical stepping-stone for many academics within psychology and sociology. As Lacan explains:

"The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is predicated from insufficiency to anticipation - and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic - and, lastly, to the assumption of the amour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject’s entire mental development. Thus to break out of the circle of the Innenwelt into the Umwelt generates the inexhaustible quadrature of the ego’s verifications". (Lacan 2003:47)

The constant chase to verify one’s ego, according to Lacan, seems to be the key to understanding why a subject needs to identify. The mirror stage is Lacan’s way of describing how a child, or rather an infant (as this stage normally takes place when the child is up to about 18 month of age), takes its first steps in creating a separate identity from its mother. The sense of separation from the mother creates a feeling of anxiety within the child. This is in contrast to the feeling of wholeness that the child experiences when it eventually reaches the final stage of the mirror stage, identifying with its own picture in the mirror. Lacan emphasises that the feeling of wholeness is based on an illusion, but nonetheless it is the process of recreating this sense of ‘illusionary’ wholeness that is the root of creating identity.

It would be impossible here to fully discuss Lacan’s theories regarding identification and the formation of identity, but the key point to emphasise is that the root of any identity lies in the fact that everyone needs to identify with something, or someone, and that this is essentially a response to an initial absence of identity (Laclau 1994). Moreover, an identity can never be complete or total. Or as Kate Woodward explains; "... there is the understanding that; Identity is
never fixed. There is a gap, a sense that there is something missing, which haunts us, as a desire that can never quite be fulfilled". (Woodward 2002:17)

As Ernesto Laclau points out in his book from 1995 "The Making of Political Identities", the ego has a misconception of this “fixness” of its identity: Egos [or identities] are “an ensemble of successive imaginary identifications [...]. The world of the ego enjoyed as a reflection, where relationships amongst egos are dual and fixed (fascination, hostility, love). The ego has the function of misrecognizing the impossibility of fullness: the illusion of closure is the illusion of the ego. Throughout its life the ego will be transformed by means of series of identification which will involve two main mechanisms: projection and introjections of the features of a ´object´ of identification”(Laclau 1994:31). What Ernesto Laclau emphasises here is that individuals are doomed to constantly reinvent themselves, both by projecting their identities upon and towards others, and by absorbing new features from the identities of others.

Up to now I have tried to present a thorough understanding of some of the more fundamental mechanisms of identity formation. And the main focus has been on identity at the individual level. Now though, it is time to elaborate on the broader elements and factors that shape identities, this both on the individual (social) level as well as on the collective level. Or as Kath Woodward puts it: "To understand why people [individually as well as groups] take up the identity positions they do, we have to interrogate the material, social circumstances and the symbolic and psychic processes there are involved (Woodward 2002:x). These psychic processes will be dealt with later; for now though, I intend to take a closer look at some of the more significant "material and social circumstances" that frame the process of identity formation.

One could say that identification provides a bridge between the personal and the social. It is through our interaction with other people as well as with the world at large, that the individual creates his or her identity. Sometimes this is a ´conscious act´, but at other times it can be the result of various ´unconscious´ mental processes. Ernesto Laclau points out that "The social world presents itself to us, primarily, as a sedimented ensemble of social practices accepted at face value, without questioning the founding acts of their institutions” (Laclau 1994:3).

But what are these social practices Laclau refers to, and how are they established as primary frameworks of the formation of identity, and in addition, why have they become important
identity markers for the individual? Moreover it is important as well to elaborate further on the collective level of identity formation, and, last but not least, start introducing the institutions and organizations, which prove such important factors in shaping both the individual, and the group.

This thesis takes as its point of departure the notion that identity is shaped throughout different life-stages and earlier I elaborated on how Lacan’s mirror phase constituted the basic mechanism of identification. Now I will continue by adding Richard Jenkins’ theoretical approach to primary identity (Jenkins 2004). It is within this early phase of life that we observe the first actual socialization of the individual. And it is perhaps equally important to note here that during this phase some of the most basic and enduring identity markers are also created.

Primary identities should be understood as the very earliest development of identity formation, taking place during the individual’s early childhood. Here features such as selfhood, human-ness and to a certain extent gender are established (Jenkins 2004:53). These features are not so important for the purposes of this research, and I will instead turn to Jenkins’ concept of kinship and, as we shall see the relevance of later, ethnicity (religion also can be an important element in some kin-groups). Both features, as Jenkins also points out, are probably established (in the majority of cases) during the same life-phase (Jenkins 2004). Kinship and ethnicity are, as this research will show, two of the most important frameworks in which certain groups of individuals shape their adult identity.

"Kin-group membership epitomizes the collectives of identity, locating individuals within a field that has independent of and beyond individually embodied points of view. Naming, the identification of individuals in terms of antecedents and contemporary affiliations, is central to kinship and is given substance by the rights and duties of kin-group membership. Kinship identity establishes relations of similarity with fellow kin in terms of descent, it differentiates the individual from non-kin, classificatory terms, other members of the descent group. Kinship may also establish equivalence - similarities - with non-kin: principles of exogamy and alliance relationship between groups identify potential marriage partners, ritual or exchange partners, and political allies and so on". (Jenkins 2004:64)
The other possible primary identification is ethnicity. There is, as Jenkins points out, some debate over "whether ethnicity is primordial, essential and unchanging, or situational, as manipulable as circumstances require or allow". The idea of primary identification opens up for this debate once again. "As collective identity that may have massive presence in the experience of individuals, ethnicity - including, for the moment, race [and/or religion] - is often an important and early dimension of self-identification. Individuals often learn frameworks for classifying themselves and others by ethnicity [etc] and race during childhood [...]" (Jenkins 2004:64)

When most evident, and presenting itself as a significant identity marker, ethnicity will frequently be seen to have played a crucial role in the development of an individual’s own perception of kin. Ethnicity depends on, as Jenkins explains, “similarity and difference rubbing up against each other collectively: ‘us’ and ‘them’. Ethnic identification weaves together the fate of the individual with collective fate in a distinctive fashion, and it can be enormously consequential”. (Jenkins 2004:64). Bearing this in mind, it is important to note that ethnicity, religion and race can also become important identity markers later in life (as we shall see) and that this can even occur without any apparent kin attachment being formed in early life. Significantly, for groups of people such as the born again⁴, but also others who gradually or suddenly, decide as a matter of conviction to become involved with nationalistic-ethnic based communities, much later in life.

In addition to primary socialization, one also needs to recognize the importance of the socialization process that follows later during the secondary phase, as emphasised by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman in their book from 1966 (Berger & Luckman 1966:129). Secondary socialization should be understood as “the internalization of institutionalized or institution-based ‘subworlds’”. In the context of this research it is important to scrutinize the influence that takes place during secondary socialization, as this inevitably carries a lot of weight in the shaping of an individual’s identity. Also, it is important to consider the significance of the identity markers (as influenced by organisations, institutions, workplaces and, not least, the various communities an individual becomes a part of) that form during this phase.

⁴ Born-again refers in this research to the group of Jews who either was brought up in a secular environment and later in life became religious orthodox or had left a religious lifestyle and once again rediscovered orthodoxy later in life.
This brings me to another central concept used in this thesis, namely that of community. As the two research questions clearly indicate, the actors scrutinized in this research all sense a strong connection to at least one or more communities. Something they in fact share with all other individuals. The relationship between community and individual is like the relationship between a forest and a tree; there is no forest to be found without trees and there is no community without individuals. The relationship between identity and community is in many ways quite obvious as, broadly speaking, a community is a collection of individuals who have, or at least perceive they have something in common. People identify with whole communities just as individuals identify with other individuals. So in that context identity and identification can be seen as an integrated part of the entity we name community. As in the case of identity, to construct a broad, theoretical definition of community might in some ways be counter-productive. Therefore in this research I have decided to follow Anthony P. Cohen in his book “The Symbolic Construction Of Community” (A P Cohen 2007) where he chooses to use a concept of community that fits neatly with the way people use the word in their own daily life, namely as "... a group of people [...] who have something in common with each other, which [...] distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups". (A P Cohen 2007:12)

As we can see from this very broad definition, similarity and difference are again at the centre, just as we saw when dealing with the concept of identity. As I have already emphasised, the process of identification for an individual identity resembles that of collective identities such as communities etc. This also becomes apparent in Cohen’s writing as he continues by explaining that community is "a relational idea"; the community relates to other communities or entities in an oppositional or differential way, which again implies that the formation and maintenance of a community will always be a process, where boundaries are established and re-established time and time again. These boundary functions serve to delineate who should be regarded as part of the community and who belongs somewhere else. Again this process is identical to that of identity formation. Or as Cohen explains while using Barth, "[a boundary] encapsulates the identity of the community and, like the identity of the individual, is called into being by exigencies of social interaction. Boundaries are marked because communities interact..."
in some way or other with entities from which they are, or wish to be, distinguished". (Barth 1969 in A P Cohen 2007:12)

Zygmunt Bauman reminds us that communities are not all identical, and that the meanings we ascribe to them can be very different, "It is common to say that ´communities´ (to which identity refer as to entities that define them) are of two kinds, there are communities of life and fate whose members (according to Siegfried Kracauer's formula) ´live together in an indissoluble attachment`, and communities that are ´welded together solely by ideas or various principles`. [...] The question of identity arises only with exposure to ´communities of the second category - and it does so only because there is more than one idea to conjure up and hold together the ´communities welded by ideas´ to which one is exposed in our variegated, polycultural world". (Bauman 2004:11) As we will see later in this research, this very significant distinction, drawn between "communities of life and fate" and communities "welded together solely by ideas or various principles", has (at least in recent years) become increasingly blurred. However we still see clear examples of both types of community within this research context. In general, one can say that the majority of communities across the Hassidic orthodox and classical orthodox spectrum encapsulate the "communities of life and fate". Whereas the majority of communities dealt with in the context of this research, belong to the second category.

It is important to underline that none of the communities we enter during our life, are communities to which we fully belong. There are, as Bauman points out, "parts of our modular persons which ´stick out´ and cannot be absorbed nor accommodated by any single group, but which connect and interact with other modules". (Bauman 1999:2) Again this resembles my earlier description of the way in which identities function. Anthony Cohen takes this point a little bit further when he emphasises that;

"...communities need not to be uniformity. It does not clone behaviour or ideas. It is a commonality of form (ways of behaving) who’s content (meanings) may vary considerably amongst its members. The triumph of community is to so contain the variety that its inherent discordance does not subvert the apparent coherence which is expressed by its boundaries. If the members of the community come to feel that they have less in common with each other that they have with other members of other communities then, clearly the boundaries have become anomalous and the integrity of the ´community they enclose has been severely impugned." (A P Cohen 2007:20)
The nature of a community enables a variety of views and opinions amongst its members. By
doing so a community is able to maintain its influence on the members. But this, according to
Cohen, only to a certain degree. The point here is that communities are not by any means a
homogeneous construction that are able to control and standardize the views and/or
positions of its members. In fact one often finds very deviant positions amongst members of
various communities even if the organization has a clear and strong agenda.

So far, the use and understanding of identity and community have been framed in a more
general, theoretical context, but now it is time to tackle the subject in a more concrete way,
firstly by identifying what kind, or rather what category of people we are dealing with in this
research, and this on both the individual as well as the collective level. As is obvious from the
research questions and pretext, the first purpose of this thesis was to engage with people
from the Jewish Diaspora, who have for varying reasons decided to move into a settler
community. So what does it mean when we talk about the Diaspora? And what should we
make of the behaviour and thinking of the Diaspora, both on an individual basis as well as that
of communities as a whole? This is what the next paragraph shall consider.

**DIASPORA**

Let me start this paragraph by stating briefly why I think it is important to use the theoretical
and analytical framework of Diaspora theory within this thesis. As all the participants in this
research had originated from one of the largest, oldest, best organized and most familiar
Diasporas, it seemed logical to pursue a thorough understanding of how far, and in what way
both the individual’s and the diaspora in general’s attachment to their perceived country of
origin had been influenced by being part of that diaspora and living in a “host country”\(^5\). That
is about as concise a formulation as one can offer for why it is important to incorporate the
theoretical as well as the analytical use of Diaspora Theory. I will start by adapting Gabriel
Sheffer’s understanding of the concept of diaspora, which I have borrowed from his book
“Diaspora Politics. At Home Abroad” (Sheffer 2003), as I think it will be a good starting point
for scrutinizing the concept in depth:

“Diaspora is what can be regarded as a social-political formation, created as a result of forced
[some scholars even include voluntary] migration. Diaspora members regard themselves as

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\(^5\) A ‘host country’ is the country where the diaspora resides.
belonging to the same ethno-national entity. They are permanently residing as minorities in one or several host countries, and their members on occasion or regularly maintain contact with what they consider as their homelands as well as with individuals and groups of the same background residing in their own or other countries.” (Sheffer 2003:72)

What we can infer from this description is that, in the context of this research, a diaspora can and shall be seen as a social, political community living as a minority in a host country. A community that consists of individual members who perceive themselves as having a common historical background, namely that of being dispersed from their country of origin. Because of this common historical understanding they, as individuals, feel that they are part of a larger collective entity. And for that reason they see themselves as having at least some interests in common. The typically strong bond between members of such communities nurtures the desire to maintain solidarity, both amongst themselves, but also with kin residing in other host countries. In the case of the Jewish Diaspora this solidarity extends to their kin who are living in what they see as their country of origin namely ‘the Land of Israel’.

Living as an individual outside of one’s homeland is not in itself sufficient to constitute being part of a diaspora, one must also regard oneself as being a part of the diasporic community, or at the very least feel associated with it. By this I mean that a member of a diaspora must, to some extent, fulfill three criteria. The first criterion is a natural extension of the citation used by G. Sheffer in the beginning of this section, namely that one has to belong to a people who historically have been dispersed from their country of origin. A second criterion is that one has to be what Roger Brubaker has called “homeland orientated”. By this he means that one has to have what he calls an "orientation to a real or imagined homeland...". The last but not least important criterion is that Diasporas have to take part in what Brubaker has termed "boundary maintenance". This involves "the preservation of a distinctive identity". (Brubaker 2005:5) These three features seem to be something that most academics across the entire field of Diaspora Theory can agree upon as defining the concept of Diaspora. What is more, it is clear that these criteria are more than met by the migrant settlers dealt with by this research.

The Jewish Diaspora can indeed be described as one of the classical Diasporas (Anthias 1998; Cohen 1997; Sheffer 1995) and fits perfectly into the description above. Also, the Jewish Diaspora, along with the Armenian and Greek Diasporas, has (at least in modern times) been
the group traditionally referred to when using the concept (A P Cohen 1997). Over the years, the concept of diaspora has undergone significant changes, and for that reason it would seem sensible shortly to clarify in finer detail how the concept should be understood within the context of this research. In recent years there has been widespread confusion surrounding the understanding of the concept; both within academia, where scholars from different theoretical schools use the concept in often very differing ways, but also amongst people from outside academia’s narrow circles, such as journalists, politicians, organizational people and laymen in general, all of whom frequently use the term in ways that can be very misleading.

So ‘diaspora’ has become what we may call a traveling term. And in order to clarify my use of the concept I have chosen to highlight what Judith Shuval has described as the "affective-expressive component" of the word’s meaning (Shuval 2000). This very general and classical understanding is taken from the introduction to Robin Cohen's book. Here Cohen writes, "Diaspora signified a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile" (R. Cohen 1997: ix). This description seems both precise and appropriate, given that this research deals with Jews who mostly consider themselves as belonging to a historically persecuted people, who have been forcibly dispersed from not only what they consider as their biblical land, but also from the many successive countries to which they had originally fled (a notion which all of the persons interviewed for this research share).

In recent years there has been an ongoing debate amongst scholars concerning the appropriate content and breadth of the concept of diaspora. There is insufficient space here to list all the different theoretical schools and their understanding of the concept, but by using Gabriel Sheffer's summary of the various approaches I hope, in a more concise way, to show how extremely extensive the field is.

Sheffer describes five different approaches: the "primordials", the "instrumentalist", the "psychological", the "ethno-symbolic and mythical" and last but not least the "constructionist". This is in accordance with Richard Jenkins' discussion of ethnicity (Jenkins 2004). The primordial approach almost speaks for itself, as it offers an essentialist explanation, where biological factors such as "skin color, facial contour, and cultural attributes such as common history, revered myths and legends, language" (Sheffer 2003:18) are seen as the basic elements through which diaspora identity is created and preserved. The instrumentalist school, by contrast, sees diaspora identity as a goal-orientated approach that individual diaspora
members (as well as diaspora groups) use pragmatically. Here, rational choice and calculated reasoning become the heart of the matter. Being, or belonging to a diaspora becomes an asset: an asset understood in its broadest sense. The psychological and the ethno-symbolic and mythical schools both argue that diaspora identity is "based in subjective psychological factors or as in the latter on a strong attachment to symbols and myths. The two approaches also argue that diaspora identity are not "solely [...] based on primordial factors" and that diaspora groups should not necessarily be seen as a "modern phenomenon". In fact some of these diaspora groups have ancient roots (Sheffer 2003:18). This in contrast to the last approach, the constructionist school who see the phenomenon exclusively as a modern social construct, as "artifacts created by cultural engineers" and/or as "imagined political communities" as in Benedict Anderson's famous explanatory term, a term closely linked to another famous concept, again used by Anderson and other scholars, namely Long-distance nationalism. I will return to this concept in a moment, as a thorough understanding of why some members of Diaspora choose to return to their country of origin can indeed be interpreted from within the context of Long-distance nationalism. However before this, it is necessary to clarify where this research is in accordance with the above-mentioned approaches.

The list of contributors to the above-mentioned theoretical schools is very long and their contributions and arguments are even longer. So instead of entering this long debate I have chosen to illustrate some of the more significant, inspirational extracts chosen from the work of various scholars: extracts which have guided me along the way. And to be absolutely clear, I do not think it important to highlight any particular one of these various approaches, firstly because, to a large extent, they overlap each other, and secondly because important elements within them all seem to be complementary and therefore useful in the context of this research.

Judith Shuval was one of my first sources of inspiration as, in her article from 2000 Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm; she highlights one of the most important features that should be taken into account when studying Diasporas. Shuval writes, "Diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longing, dreams, allegorical and virtual elements – all which play a role in establishing a diaspora reality". (Shuval 2000:3)

What we need to examine in Shuval’s account is what role these memories, mythologies and histories play in the diasporic reality, both in context of the individual member of the
Diaspora as well as the community as a whole. In the case of Jewish Diasporas who have become migrant settlers, these features have indeed played a crucial role in the individual’s choice of moving back to what he or she perceives as their homeland, or country of origin, as we shall see later.

Furthermore, Shuval also emphasizes in her account that the understanding of diaspora is based on the notion that it is a "social construct". Shuval positions her understanding of Diaspora Theory within the post-modern, constructionist approach, leaning towards ideas that are closely linked to those of Benedict Anderson not least his understanding of “imagined communities”. As I have already mentioned, Anderson promotes a notion that the phenomenon of nationalism is essentially an artificial construction, one which is closely related to the development of the modern-state and which is therefore also of recent date (Anderson 1983); this notion is in fact shared by most scholars dealing in Diaspora Theory today. Though I find much to agree with within this academic school, I reserve my right to refute one important issue, namely that diaspora identity rests upon nothing more than a "constructed idea". As with Gabriel Sheffer, this research takes instead the point of departure that the Jewish diasporic experience, which has been continuing now for more than two thousand years, does in fact, undermines this very notion. As Sheffer explains:

“…Diasporas do not constitute a recent, modern phenomenon. Rather, this is a perennial phenomenon. Essential aspects of this phenomenon are the endless cultural, social, economic, and especially political struggle of those dispersed ethnic groups, permanently residing in host countries away from their home-lands, to maintain their distinctive identities and connections with their homeland and other dispersed groups from the same nations. These, are neither ‘imagined’ nor ‘invented’ communities.” (Sheffer 2003:7)

Sheffer continues by arguing, and here I fully concur with his assessment, that the Jewish diasporic identity is what can be perceived as “…identities [that] are intricate combinations of primordial, psychological/mythical, and instrumental elements. These identities may undergo certain adaptations to changing circumstances, yet they do not lose their core characteristics. The Diasporas’ struggle for survival is waged while they do their utmost to feel at home in their host countries, which in many instances demonstrate hostility towards them. And they do survive, despite the fact that their homelands, too, have inherently ambiguous attitudes towards them.” (Sheffer 2003:7)
It is important to observe that this notion of being primordial doesn't have to contradict the fact that there can be elements of people’s identity that are both imagined and constructed and that they can co-exist simultaneously; the two features should not in my opinion be understood as excluding each other. Rather they often go hand-in-hand and seem instead to complement each other.

Another important feature when dealing with the Jewish Diaspora is that the Jewish people have historically kept their religious and cultural distinctiveness and maintained strong bonds with their country of origin and, crucially, are the only major religious community who have kept, as an inherent part of their theology, what Yossi Shain explains as a "...conception of homeland as the central tenet of their belief" (Shain 2000:174). Yossi Shain continues by explaining that, "The concept of 'the land of Israel' made [in fact] the character of the Jewish Diaspora unique, since, by religious definition, living outside the land is a sign of Jewish falling, and an eventual return to Zion is viewed as an integral part of God's plan" (Shain 2000:174)

This key feature has always been a very significant component of the Jewish diasporic character and, as we shall see later in this thesis, also plays an important role in the development of Jewish nationalism in both its religious form and also its more secularist expression. Incidentally this theme also has great resonance for the migrant settlers interviewed for this research and I will be returning to this point more than once over the course of the following chapters.

Another interesting feature that has acquired significance for a number of diaspora groups across the modern world and which is therefore by no means an exclusively Jewish phenomenon is the revival of the sense of belonging to, and thinking about oneself as being a part of a diaspora. Judith Shuval highlights this by explaining that:

"[today, the feeling] of diaspora can occur or re-occur after several generations when the group members are themselves no longer immigrants even though their predecessors were. A sense of diaspora is a feeling that is characterised by shifting periods of latency and activism which occurs in response to processes in the three relevant referents: the group itself, the host society and the homeland" (Shuval 2000:5).
This notion should be viewed in contrast to a previous understanding within migration theory where the conventional belief was that members of Diasporas would eventually disappear, just as other groups of migrants, such as migrant workers etc. had disappeared. This belief was closely connected to the idea of the melting pot\(^6\). Migrants of all kinds would, within this paradigm, go through a process of integration. The result of this process of integration would be a subsequent process of assimilation, which would eventually precipitate the disappearance of migrants of all kinds, including Diasporas. As we will see later, the specific feeling of diaspora re-discovery is something shared by all the migrant settlers presented in this research. It should however be underlined that the process of integration and assimilation is, and has been over time, a well-known process characterizing the experience of a great number of migrants of all descendants, and that the Jewish Diaspora has been through and indeed is going through, similar processes of integration and assimilation in almost every country they reside, as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

As one can probably sense from the variety of the above-mentioned processes, members of Diasporas adopt various life, or survival strategies whilst living outside their country of origin, just as other migrants do and assimilation is just one of them. This will be the focus of the next part of this chapter. The various life strategies (a term I will use from now on) employed by members of the Diasporas are, as we shall see, influenced by varying conditions and circumstances. The variation, as well as the magnitude of influence that different societies (democratic, totalitarian, religious etc.) impose on members of the diaspora community, due to the economical, cultural, social and religious framework of the host society, is just one component that determines what strategy to employ. Another important influence is that posed by the country of origin, and we must of course also consider the internal dynamic of the diaspora itself, not to mention the cross-border influence of regions beyond that in which members of Diasporas live.

Given its magnitude, it would be impossible to scrutinize the entire terrain of diaspora behaviour in terms of survival (or life) strategies. For that reason I intend to focus specifically on the relationship between the diaspora and their country of origin, as this is the core issue of this research. Focusing on issues such as how, why and to what extent members of

\(^6\) The use of term “the melting pot” is a symbol for the process whereby immigrants are absorbed into American society and changed into Americans”. Philip Gleason (1964) The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion?
Diasporas organize in their host land and the survival strategies employed by individual members, as well as groups, while living in different host countries. These are all theoretical topics which need to be taken into consideration.

**DIASPORA STRATEGIES**

So what are the strategies employed by members of Diasporas when dealing with life in their host country? What significant influences do the host country and the country of origin exert on the Diasporas? And what particular issues might prompt the specific coping strategies employed? An answer to the first question, at least from a meta-perspective, is quite easy to find. The various strategies fall within a spectrum ranging from complete assimilation, to return to one’s country of origin. For members who adopt either of these two extreme strategies (assimilation, or return) the consequence is in fact an annulment of their diasporic position. And this will, at least formally, result in the dissolution of one’s diaspora identity. The reality though is quite different, as total assimilation mostly occurs only over a period of one or more generations and hardly ever during the lifespan of just one generation. A similar process can be detected when we take a closer look at the members of diaspora societies who decide to return. Even when a person has decided to return to the country of origin, as the migrant settlers of this research all have, they frequently experience difficulties escaping the characteristics of the identity they acquired while living in the Diaspora. This is something they share with other "returnees". Generally speaking, the longer an individual stays in the diaspora, and the more integrated this person seems to have been while remaining in the host country, the harder it is to socialize into the home country. Naturally there are exceptions, but this is the general trend. Furthermore there are other obstacles for the returnees once they return, and some of these obstacles occur particularly during the first phase of the socialization process that follows the initial return.

For now though, let’s take a closer look at the varying survival strategies, as this will hopefully shed some light on why certain members and groups within the diaspora decide to return. It is clear that people seeking to maintain a distinct ethnic, cultural and national character whilst living in the diaspora often pursue a strategy of fostering close bonds with their homeland (Sheffer 2003:25). However, there are exceptions, as is clearly the case with certain
Jewish orthodox sects. As we shall see later, a number of Jewish orthodox congregations have completely rejected Israel as a legitimate Jewish country based on specific theological reasons. What is interesting in these cases is that, at the same time as living in almost complete segregation from the general populace of their host country, members of these sects also keep their distance even from other parts of the Jewish Diaspora there. The only connection they hold to the world outside is to members of similar sects in their respective host or other countries.

This strategy is very similar to the one that Sheffer has termed the "autonomist strategy". The objective of this strategy is for the group of Diasporas to obtain "special political and cultural rights and freedom for the Diasporas within the host country political sphere by extending the territorial concentration and cultural homogeneity of the diaspora group, so that the host-country will be willing to allow some power to be exercised by the ethno-national group itself" (Sheffer 2003:169). Historically, this particular approach has been adopted by a great number of Diasporas. Indeed, the autonomist strategy was commonly used during the nineteenth century by the Jewish diasporic communities of former East European countries. Today however, the autonomist strategy is mostly implemented in a very limited form, most notably by the very orthodox Jewish communities of the United States.

Let's now turn to the diasporic strategy most prevalent amongst the migrant settlers of this research. As we shall see in the following chapters, this group finds it very important to engage in a whole range of activities relating to their diasporic engagement; political, cultural and social engagements that were related to their “homelands”. Many of these Diasporas find it extremely important to build, maintain and preserve their bonds to their homelands both as individuals, but also as members of diaspora communities. The members of such communities often engage in the creation of various institutions and organizations, with the intent of maintaining, or even extending their bonds with kin in their country of origin and/or other countries.

This strategy resembles that of the "communalist" and the "corporatist" strategies, again borrowing from Sheffer’s vocabulary (Sheffer 2003). The diaspora groups who adopt a

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7 The anti-Zionist orthodox Jewish sect Naturei Karta is one of such groups.
8 Another orthodox Jewish sect worth mentioning is the Satmar Hasidim who in line with Naturei Karta are opposed to the existence of a state of Israel. Many of its members thou live in and/or visit Israel. One of the life story interviews is made with a former member of this sect (see life story interview with Laura).
communalist strategy are promoting a “voluntary [and often] loose framework for preserving the ethno-national identity, [this] for defending the diaspora, and for organizing members activities vis-à-vis the host-country, the home land, and other fragment of the dispersed nation.” (Sheffer 2003:164). The aim of the communalist strategy is to achieve a certain degree of integration with the host society, but not an integration that would, or indeed should, lead to full assimilation.

The corporatist strategy is very much in the same vein in that it too is committed to maintaining a discrete ethno-national identity for its members. Here the promotion of organizational and communal activities is actively encouraged, and these activities target the fostering of identification with the group and also provide services that are complementary to those of the host country.

A key question for this research is particularly relevant here. One could ask why some people from a diaspora are so willing to invest materials, resources, time and considerable emotional energy to create such institutions and organizations. Or as Gabriel Sheffer formulates it, “dedicated to nurturing relationships with their host societies and governments, homelands, global and regional actors, and other groups from the same nation residing in other countries” (Sheffer 2003:26). Much of the answer to that question also sheds light on why some people choose, not only to engage in these activities, but also to return ultimately to the country of origin. As is the case for many of the people in this research. Another important phenomenon, also highlighted by Sheffer, is the interesting fact that people from a descendant diaspora generation, and here I am not thinking of first or second generations, sometimes become more engaged in diaspora activities than their parents or grandparents (Skribis 1999). As Sheffer explains:

“...Certain long-established Diasporas that have successfully implemented the assimilations and integrationist strategies should be viewed as dormant Diasporas. [And] Under certain circumstances, those entities can reawaken.” (Sheffer 2003:163).

To illustrate one of the more relevant groups of dormant Diasporas (Sheffer 1993; Shain 1994; Brubaker 2005) in the context of this research, I will point to the group of “new
religious”, also referred to as the born again. This group can be found within religious diaspora communities across the world. The born again Christians are perhaps the most familiar to the public, but the trend of becoming born again, within Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and other religious communities is also on the rise, and in recent years this trend has also spread to people of the Jewish faith, especially if one takes a closer look at the modern and classical orthodox Jewish segments, as we shall indeed see later.

But let me return once more to the issue of how and why a significant number of Diasporas engage in Diaspora activities. Generally speaking one can say that Diasporas who are determined to maintain their diasporic identity will pursue strategies that strengthen their relationship with both their kin and homeland. Chiefly by engaging in various political, social, nationalist, cultural and/or religious activities facilitated by their engagement in diasporic organizations and institutions (Sheffer 2003). It is often through participating in such activities that these core Diasporas, as Gabriel Sheffer refers to them, find emotional fulfilment. And, as we shall see in connection with the various actors of this research, this desire for fulfilment can spring from a variety of different sources. In general though, one can say that in order to thoroughly understand the core elements of this desire, one must first consider several areas connected to the field, as described in Diaspora Theory. Let me mention the more significant ones, which I will be addressing in this thesis. Generally speaking one must take into account what Judith Shuval calls the triangular relationship between: a) the diaspora group itself; b) the host society; and c) the homeland society (Shuval 2000).

By dealing with the first part of this triangle: the diaspora group itself, one will be able to gain an appreciation of the internal dynamics of the various political, religious and cultural strands of the specific diaspora community under consideration. This should yield a more thorough understanding of the environment in which the individual diaspora has been raised, and hopefully in turn afford a more thorough appreciation of those key elements, which have shaped both individual members of the diaspora as well as some of the larger entities within the greater diaspora community.

By dealing with the diaspora in the context of its relationship to the host country and vice versa, one can find a broad range of interesting subjects, which we shall see various examples of later. There will be attempts to include this perspective in this research. Individual
members of Diasporas, as well as diaspora communities as a whole are very sensitive as to how they are perceived and treated by their host society. In recent years, and especially since 9/11, host societies have started to become increasingly more aware of how minorities behave and express themselves, particularly within the context of things such as dual loyalty etc (Cohen, R 1997; Shain 2002; Faist 2004; Sheffer 2005). And this awareness on the part of the host society also accounts for the various diaspora communities represented in these host countries.

As I will show in this thesis, such conditions have a significant impact on both the diaspora community as a whole, as well as on the individual, and this can be witnessed on various levels. And this is particularly so when viewed in context of how it influences the diaspora community’s perception of its home country. A very good illustrative example from the periphery of this research field is the effect precipitated by the treatment of the Soviet Jews prior to 1991. As a result of a very oppressive system, which the Soviet Jews (and others) suffered under during the years of communist rule, more than 700,000 Soviet Jews decided to make Aliyah to Israel (Jones 1996; DellaPergola 1998). This mass migration happened in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union from 1991 onwards.

The third part of the triangular relationship’ as proposed by Judith Shuval, is that existing between the host country and the home country. It is fair to say that relations between homeland and host often have a very direct influence on the diaspora community. This is certainly the case when considering the level of ties between the home country and its "natural" supporters beyond its own borders. For the purposes of this research, this issue will be scrutinized via an examination of the historical connection between the United States, the United Kingdom and Israel. Here the issue of security will provide a useful prism through which to view the influence exerted by the homeland/host land relationship and its impact on the delicate balance of diaspora attachment and how and why this might increase or decrease during certain historical periods.

Let us now turn our attention for a moment to the diaspora members who are eager to assimilate with or become fully integrated into their host societies. It is well known that such groups will typically try to relinquish their diasporic identities by disengaging from the organized diaspora communities of their birth country, or at least refrain from engaging with organizations attached to the immediate diaspora community. By contrast, such persons
prefer to engage in non-diasporic organizations and institutions. In the Jewish example one finds that Jews, who are very integrated, or even almost completely assimilated, often show tremendous impetus to engage in organizations and institutions across a wide variety of cultural, political and social issues. In fact the general level of engagement with the host society, as exhibited by Jews living outside Israel, is very high, certainly when compared to the engagement of other ethnic groups living in the same host country (Wald & Williams 2006).

Finally, the very last strategy to be considered, in the context of this research, is the "separatist" strategy. The separatist strategy is also regarded as one of the most radical, since its affiliates seek to establish an independent state in the Diaspora's former historical homeland, thus facilitating the return to the ethnic nation of all, or most of the ethno-national Diasporas within their group. The struggle to achieve this goal can vary from diplomatic negotiations right through to physical violence.

To some extent this strategy characterizes that employed by the small but influential section of the Jewish Diaspora (as well as parts of the settler community and also their supporters in Israel) whose political struggle takes as its point of departure, the idea that the territories in Judea and Samaria, as well as in Gaza (and for some, even part of Jordan) that these areas should be included in Israel as an inseparable part of what they see as the ancient Jewish homeland.

**DIASPORA: INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

In accordance with Richard Jenkins, the theoretical concept of institutions should, at least in the context of this research, be understood as a "pattern of behavior in any particular setting that has become established over time as 'the way things are done'". Moreover, "institutions has [sic] intersubjective relevance and meaning in the situation concerned: people know about it and recognise it, if only in the normative specification of 'how things are done'" (Jenkins 2004:133). This very loose understanding of the concept, and its striking attendant notion that people are both the creators and users of institutions, and furthermore know and recognise the existence and influence of those institutions, is in fact fundamental for understanding this thesis. Indeed, institutions should be understood very much in accordance with how this research
understands and defines the concept of identity, or as Jenkins puts it, "Institutions - much like identities, in fact - are as much emergent products of what people do, as they are constitutive of what people do. They don’t ‘exist’ in any sense ’above the action’. Institutions are best understood as our collective ideal typifications of continuing processes of institutionalization” (Jenkins 2004:134). In short, one could summarize by saying people are created by institutions, while they themselves are the creators of institutions, and that these almost symbiotic processes often occur simultaneously.

Having said that, I do not of course believe that just because people are the creators, and because they are, to a large extent, aware of the processes of socialization (that take place in the context of institutions) that there is therefore nothing more to be said on the matter. On the contrary, institutions are very important vehicles for shaping both the individual, and the collective identity. It is predominantly through people’s interaction with various institutions that we become who we are. Certainly though, some institutions are more effective vehicles for lasting socialization than others. Obvious examples of this would be some of the institutions we encounter in early life: “The human world that we encounter as axiomatic during early socialization is a world of institutionalized practices. As the products of history, we encounter them as ‘objective’, as not to be questioned, and we seem to move in and out of their shadows. It is, of course, we who actually cast those shadows”. (Jenkins 2004:135)

Family is, for most individuals, the first institution we encounter in life. And as we shall see in this research, an extremely important source to understand when dealing with the group of Diasporas who contemplate or already have made Aliyah to the occupied territories. However, just as the family is of huge importance for modeling our identity, so too is the entire range of learning institutions. Institutions which almost everyone, at least in our modern society, encounters right from a very early age. The most obvious learning institutions to be mentioned here are inevitably schools and kindergartens, but many children participate in other learning environments as well, and this is where the various youth organizations come to mind as some of the most important identity shapers in our society.

The concept of organizations (in this research) overlaps with that of the more formal institutions, and should not be seen as simply “having members”, as has already been mentioned. Organizations also have specific objectives that its members pursue and support. In general, organizations have set structures with a hierarchy and an established pattern of
decision-making that is familiar to its members. An organization needs to recruit new members or it will not last for more than the lifetime of its eldest member; recruitment procedures are therefore very important. Within all organizations there is also what Jenkins calls "a division of labor in the specification of the specialized tasks and functions performed by individual members". (Jenkins 2004:143)

In the context of this research I will focus on formalized institutions and organizations established and patronized by members of the Jewish Diasporic communities in The United States and England. Here, the selection of institutions and organizations falls in two categories, namely: diaspora organizations, whose main purpose is to create, develop and maintain ties amongst its members, thus ensuring the sustainability of the Jewish community well into the future; and secondly, those whose purpose is to preserve, develop and maintain the relationship between the Diaspora, its members and their homeland.

In this instance, as will be shown, these two types of organizations and institutions will to a certain extent overlap each other. In many cases though, diaspora organizations only deal with either one or the other of the above-mentioned aims. In a more general sense, the function of diaspora communities and indeed diaspora organizations is, as Sheffer explains, "on five levels in politics; the domestic level in host countries, the regional level, the trans-state level, the level of the entire diaspora, and the level of homeland politics. On each of those levels, a Diaspora’s functions fall into three broad categories; maintenance, defense, and promotion of its communities’ multifaceted interests." (Sheffer 2003:174-179)

An important aim of this research is to concentrate on diaspora organizations working with matters related to the domestic arena, in conjunction with homeland-related issues and politics. But as we shall see, most of the more significant organizations present in this research, also work at the regional and trans-state level, invariably networking via sister-organizations and with other organizations in neighboring countries and the country of origin.

Another decision of this research is to pay particular attention to diaspora organizations and institutions dealing specifically with diaspora children and/or youth. The main reason being that most of the participants dealt with here had close contacts with such organizations when they were young. And as mentioned earlier, the socialization processes which take place during a person’s youth or childhood often have a much deeper impact on the individual’s
identity, which is of course very useful for this project, as it helps understanding of the background to the strong homeland-related orientation of the individuals of this research.

Another very important aspect to be highlighted here is that such organizations also engage in what Richard Jenkins describes, as "people-production" (Jenkins 2004:162): organizations whose main purpose is to "produce" or "create" certain kinds of individuals. According to Jenkins, there are two kinds of modern organization, firstly the "organisations [that] produce engine parts, meals, telecommunication services, government information, or whatever..." These organizations may not have "people production" as their main priority, but they do "contribute to the production of people", as Jenkins underlines, though not of course in the same way, or to the same extent as those organizations who have "people-production’ as their core business [such as] schools, colleges and other organisations of formal education" (Jenkins 2004:162).

In this context we can mention Jewish schools, Jewish youth organizations, families, religious organizations etc. as all having the common goal of promoting Zionist thoughts and ideas. In many of these, the promotion of Zionist religious ideologies of various strands is at the forefront of their agenda. And as we shall see later in this thesis, a significant number of the migrant settlers, of diaspora background, have indeed been closely involved in the more right winged nationalistic Diaspora organizations before migrating to the occupied territories.

It should be noted that the vast majority of Jews living in the Diaspora do not participate in the overtly politicized or religiously ideological organizations that this research mainly deals with. However it would be fair to say that a large part of the Jewish Diaspora population in the US and UK, as well as in other Western countries, will have had some contact, however tangential, with a variety of diaspora organization in their host country. As Sheffer explains, "Based on a common decision to settle permanently in host countries, but to maintain a common identity, diasporas identity as such, showing solidarity with their group and their entire nation, and they organize and are active in the cultural, social, economic, and political spheres. Among their various activities, members of such Diasporas establish trans-state networks that reflect complex relationships among the Diasporas, their host-countries, their homelands and international actors". (Sheffer 2003:10)
Historically, diaspora communities and their organisations have always been heavily engaged in trans-national networking. The history of the Jewish people is a very good example for highlighting this, especially if one wants to study why, how and to what extent diaspora communities engage in networking with their fellow kin, not just locally and regionally, but globally too. There are a number of reasons for this widespread engagement. As is the case with many other Diasporas, almost every Jewish family has family members living outside their host country. This is a result of repeated migration over the years by large groups of Jews from one country to another. It is not the time or place to offer a more considered account of why and when groups of Jewish people have been forced to flee from their host countries. The more general history is well known. But as a consequence of such movement, it has always seemed natural for Jewish people to engage in trans-border networking, if for no other reason than to maintain contact with their family and kin. Besides keeping up these contacts, there have of course been a number of other motivations for engaging in cross-border activities. Economic assistance and political support are just two important areas to be mentioned. Over the years, Jewish Diaspora communities in Western Europe and America, as well the state of Israel, have supported Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Other communities in distress have also received great attention, political help and economic support, on numerous occasions over the years (Shain 2002). To mention a few: the Ethiopian Jewish community received political and economic help whilst living under violent unrest and in extreme poverty in Ethiopia. They were later evacuated in great numbers, in a famous airlift to Israel. Of historical interest, there was the massive yearlong effort to support a number of East European Jewish communities during the Soviet era. On this occasion the world Jewry was politically and economically engaged for many years, transferring vast amounts of resources, helping to put the issue on the political agenda and pushing for at least a limited immigration for Jews wanting to leave (Sheffer 2005). To a certain degree when supporting their kinfolk, other diaspora communities engage in similar activities to this Jewish example. There are of course differences, as not all diaspora communities have the same level of resources, or sufficiently strong organisational structures to engage in cross-border activities at the level of the example. But generally speaking the type of activities is the same.

Jewish and other diaspora communities also engage in cultural, political and religious cross-border activities. And not only do they cooperate on many different levels, there is also a
constant flow of resources between these organisations and institutions. Diaspora people travel to religious, cultural and political events along with kin from other states, and Diasporas also participate in conferences and seminars which are frequently hosted as joint arrangements organised by communities and organisations across borders. As Gabriel Sheffer points out, that it is through; “Distance-shrinking communication systems and its impact on not only communication, but also on, social, cultural, economics, and political related matters, within and between actors involved in diaspora issues”, (Sheffer 2003:180) that we see an extensive rise of cooperation both amongst Diaspora communities on a trans-border level, but also between diaspora communities and their homeland. Gabriel Sheffer furthermore elaborate on the content of these activities; “These changes of activities ranges from the ability to mobilize actors in specific political and or social and cultural events, and also influences the flow of resources between the diaspora community and the homelands vis-à-vis”. (Sheffer 2003:182)

Let us now turn our attention to these activities and bonds that specifically relate to the relationship between diaspora communities and their homeland. In every diaspora one can find groups of individuals, as well as a number of institutions and organizations, who are specifically interested in preserving, maintaining and sometimes even expanding their connections with the country of origin. Here we are talking about groups of Diasporas and their respective organizations, who for one reason or another have decided to invest a frequently significant portion of their life and energy into homeland related issues, and this through a wide range of activities. Again we find the same variety of activities: cultural, religious, social and political, as has already been mentioned in connection with the cooperation between diaspora communities operating at the trans-border level, but we also find activities that take place only within individual communities.

The engagement in Diaspora-homeland related politics is an important sphere of interest for this research and therefore I will take a little time here to scrutinize the specific case in hand, namely: the relationship between the Jewish Diaspora and Israel. Historically, and in parallel with their engagement with other communities, the Jewish Diaspora has kept close contact with the few, relatively small Jewish communities still located in the area where the biblical land of Israel had once existed. There have been small religious communities living in this area throughout almost the entire history of the Jewish people. And in fact many of these
communities were originally established by Jews, who had themselves arrived from other parts of the Jewish Diaspora.

With the arrival of the first group of Zionist pioneers during the second half of the nineteenth century, links between the communities in the region of Palestine (Sachar 1996; Gilbert 1998) and the Jewish Diaspora organizations, not to mention links with a number of very wealthy Jewish philanthropists (based particularly in Europe and the United States), became even stronger. And indeed, cooperation between the Jewish Diaspora and the Jewish communities in the area has been steadily growing ever since the establishment and subsequent rise of the Zionist movement, which had originally started in West and Eastern Europe with the express purpose of creating favorable conditions for establishing a Jewish homeland in the area.

After Israel's independence in 1948, this interaction between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora has continued growing from year to year. The level of cooperation is probably unprecedented in history and in that sense one could say that the case could be seen as unique. But the fact is that even though the relationship between the Jewish Diaspora and Israel is on a grand scale, it is still fundamentally the same dynamic as that found between other diaspora communities and their home countries. And this can be seen to one degree or another at all levels, whether that be the macro level of organizations and institutions; the level of political engagement; or indeed the micro level of individual personalities and experiences. One point to highlight here is that in recent years we have witnessed a significant rise in the effectiveness and frequency of diasporic homeland-related affairs, as well as an increase in the amount of people and resources involved in such activities. I will return to this issue in chapter four.

During the last century the world has undergone tremendous technological development. This development has been especially significant within areas such as international cooperation, an integral part of globalization, as well as within communication technologies, which has in turn helped stimulate the growing trend of globalization. Whereas most of the interaction between cross-border groups had in earlier days stemmed from the activities of a relatively narrow group of elitists (those running the larger and more important organizations within the diasporic community), today's tendency seems to be less exclusive, with a much broader segment of the diaspora communities now engaging in these sorts of activities. The enthusiastic involvement of this broader cross-section of people has naturally had an impact on the general levels of cooperation and networking, which have increased tremendously.
over the last 20-30 years. The fact that members of the general public can now afford to travel, as well as purchase the newest and most advanced pieces of communication technology: mobile phones, computers and internet access, means that the number of people in the Diaspora taking an active part in all sorts of diaspora activities is far greater than ever seen before. Like other political groups Diasporas use the new media and communication systems to increase their access to homeland and host governments and to facilitate communication among their members as well as for mobilizing potential affiliates. Indeed, one might be inclined to say that the consequences for globalization, as prompted by our post-modern world’s evolution from a low-tech to hi-tech society, have precipitated change even within diaspora-homeland activities, and that this has also been affected by the attendant increase in democratization, with more and more less-privileged people being invited to join the party.

Given the recent rise in numbers of active participants, not to mention the increase in not only activities, but also the resources and money channeled into these activities, it is interesting to consider what impact all of this is having on the actual participants themselves. As we shall see later in this research, there is no general pattern of behavior amongst Diasporas participating in diaspora-homeland related activities. Diaspora and homeland related organizations, and also learning institutions (as understood in the everyday sense of the word) are very different in both type and also agenda. One can of course also argue that on a general level they all seek similarly to support and encourage their members in maintaining bonds to their homeland. However this does not really reveal much about their political or ideological positions, their level of nationalist feeling, or indeed which religious strand, if any, they belong to.

**LONG-DISTANCE NATIONALISM AND ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY**

There are, as we have seen, a group of elitists amongst the core diaspora: people whose life and identity is strongly interlinked with Diaspora-homeland related politics and activities. And it is partly members within this group that this research deals with. Typically, most if not all of the migrant settlers here, were involved in Diaspora-homeland related organizations or activities prior to moving into Jewish settlements on the West Bank. As Gabriel Sheffer points
out in his book *Diaspora Politics – at home and abroad*, “The nature of diasporic entities...[is that]...their members tend to become deeply involved in the political affairs of their host countries’ homelands, as well as regional and international politics” (Sheffer 2003:199). And some of these people eventually decide to pack up and move from their country of birth or residence, back to what they regard as their country of origin. Another, even smaller group decide not only to return to their homeland, but specifically to areas whose occupation is disputed even by many of their own people, and in doing so, choose to engage in a conflict not only with other people who live in, and also claim, these areas, but also with people from the perceived homeland. And to a certain extent this aspect makes this research unique in terms of Diaspora-homeland research, as nobody has scrutinized this area before.

Of course it is important to underline here that, despite any active involvement in Diaspora-homeland related activities, not all members of diaspora communities become interested in moving "back" to their homeland. In fact, figures show that only a very small percentage of Diasporas even think about returning (Kosmin, Lerman & Goldberg 1997:3), and furthermore the number of actual returnees is even smaller again. At least this is what the various researches suggest (Hein 2007).

As this research deals primarily with what could be described as the very hardcore segment of the diaspora population, it is important to take a closer look at issues relating to what has been termed *Long-distance Nationalism* or, as in the work of other academics, *Diaspora Nationalism* (Gellner 1983; Smith 1996; Habib 2006). The fact is that those individuals in this research, who for one reason or another, have decided to devote their time, effort and indeed lives to taking part in Diaspora-homeland related politics, are in fact embarking on Diaspora Nationalism. And the activities they pursue are in most cases conducted under the aegis of a particular type of Diaspora-homeland related organization: one whose active purpose is to engage in political and nationalist conflicts in the country of origin.

So what are Diaspora Nationalism and Long-distance Nationalism? In his article "Mobilizing Diasporas in National Conflicts" John Kenny defined the concept of Diaspora Nationalism in the following way, "Diaspora nationalism...is a process whereby a self-conscious community is formed to establish a political state in their real or imagined homeland" (Kenny 1993:5). In this definition the emphasis is primarily on the community level, but there is no reason why this should not also include the level of individuals, as part of an understanding of how Diaspora
Nationalism has become an integrated part of people’s identity. Long-distance Nationalism is just another way of describing nationalism as a cross-border phenomenon. Nationalism should in this thesis be seen as "...a set of beliefs and practices that link together people of a nation and its territory", as we have learnt from Nina Glick Schiller in her famous article “George Woke Up Laughing” (Schiller & Fouron 2001:17). In this instance the Jewish people were understood as a nation, whose national aspiration, formulated within the framework of Zionism, has at its heart an understanding and belief that they are entitled to have, keep and even expand\(^9\) that territory which was theirs in biblical times. According to most of the main actors of this thesis, their homeland stretches to areas beyond the current, internationally recognized borders of Israel. And therefore one can argue that these people are active participants in a power struggle of minds, bodies and territory: a power struggle, taking place amongst the various political and religious parties within the State of Israel, but also amongst the Jews of the Diaspora themselves.

For the last part of this theoretical chapter I will concentrate on this specific group of hardcore Diasporas, who are dedicated to engaging in diaspora politics by working and participating in various Diaspora-homeland related activities. And it is important to underline that, in the words of Gabriel Sheffer, "It is clear that the decisions to join such entities (groups representing hardcore nationalists) and act on their behalf, perhaps leading to serious political consequences, are voluntary decisions on the part of the individual and small groups [...] the core members of Diasporas tend to retain deeply rooted loyalties to their homelands and are often ready to act on their behalf" (Sheffer 2003:200-201). What is more, we can say that this particular group chooses to go a step further than this by ultimately deciding to take a direct part in the conflict, by moving to and fighting for the occupied territories.

What is important to notice here is that this group of Diasporas also seems to be part of a growing religious segment: a segment that has in recent years been increasing in popularity amongst certain segments of Jewish people in both Israel and the Jewish Diaspora. I will return to this issue in the coming chapters, however it should be noted that this increase in religious numbers is not an isolated trend amongst Jews, it is in fact a global tendency across all faiths (Marty & Appleby 1991). In parallel with this trend we also notice a tendency of

\(^9\)The desire to expand the territory of Israel has a long history and involves many individuals as well as groups (i.e. political parties, religious beliefs etc.)
some religious people becoming more fervent in their religious beliefs and practices. Today, those people actively engaged in diaspora politics seem to have become more radical both in their religious beliefs and their political and nationalistic views.

But how do we explain theoretically why a group of Diasporas engage in homeland-related policies: an engagement which seems to have become more and more extreme in recent years? The fact is, as we shall see in Chapter four, the percentage of what could be called the hardcore religious and nationalist segments within the Jewish Diaspora, those deciding in recent years to migrate to Israel and crucially to the occupied territories, is on the rise. And this growing number corresponds, as we shall also see in the next chapter, with a steadily growing radicalization, both nationally and religiously, of a specific segment of people living in the Jewish Diaspora of the Britain and USA.

SECURITY

Basically there is no theoretical literature within the field of Diaspora Theory that can offer a thorough explanation of the specific phenomenon of why some, but not all Diasporas exhibit such a strong emotional and psychological attachment to their homeland, as witnessed amongst these hardcore Diasporas. Therefore I suggest that we return to some of the basic theoretical elements already elaborated on earlier in this chapter. For instance in a previous section where I dealt with Lacan’s understanding of lack of wholeness or his use of the concept of “lack” (Soler 1995:50) but also Eriksson’s emphasis on stability and continuity in the context of identity building (Eriksson 1968). It would also be pertinent to consider Bauman’s use of the concept of ambivalence, as well as the thoughts of Ulrik Beck and Anthony Giddens concerning the emotional impact of a rapidly changing society on identity formation, if we are to grasp the circumstances under which identity formation is currently taking place (Bauman 1991; Giddens 1991; Beck 1992)

My intention in this section is to incorporate some of the above-mentioned ideas with those of another conceptual framework, namely security. Security was a concept originally employed by scholars of International Relationship theory, and has been traditionally used to describe power relations between states, who on a general level are seeking the “protection of their
territory and governance structure from others who could cause them material harm”, as Jennifer Mitzen has explained (Mitzen 2006:341). During the 1980s and on into the 1990s an intense debate took place amongst scholars over the content of security studies, but it was during the 1990s under the influence of people like Ole Wæver (1995) and the Copenhagen school; James Der Derian (1993); and Simon Dalby (1992), amongst others, that the theoretical security discussion finally moved on from its more traditional modernist tack into a more post-modern approach, according to Jef Huysmans (Huysmans 1998:228).

In 1998 Jef Huysmans, who was following in the footsteps of the aforementioned scholars, introduced a significant new dimension to the field of security studies by raising Ferdinand Saussure’s concept of the thick signifier. The thick signifier approach was a new way of regarding and analysing questions relevant to the issue of security. Or as Huysmans explains, “A post-structurally inspired thick signifier approach [...] leads to a more sophisticated way of dealing with the concept, because it unravels how ‘security’ is embedded in a formation of rules which defines it in its specificity and explains how it organizes relations to nature, to other humans beings and to the self”. He continues by explaining that, “in a thick signifier approach the external agenda disappears, or better is folded into the question of the meaning of security. The meaning of security constitutes the agenda itself”. (Huysmans 1998:248)

What should be noted here in relation to this particular research, are the two main points underlined by Huysmans: firstly, how security impacts on our relationship to our self, as well as to other human beings; and secondly, how a focus on the meaning of security can reach a point where it becomes an agenda in and of itself. As I see it, this will be extremely useful for understanding how security frames, informs and influences the individual, as well as the group’s way of thinking and acting. And in that sense, as will be demonstrated later in this research, security can be seen as a directly motivating factor for individuals choosing to make Aliyah, and crucially can help us understand, through the context of security or by extension insecurity, why Diasporas choose or have chosen to become settlers on the West Bank.

In other words the purpose of the thick signifier approach is to help us understand how security becomes an important factor in the determination of people’s social relations. Here security “can be interpreted as a life strategy that is a cultural practice of establishing a meaningful life...” (Huysmans 1998:234) Furthermore a thick signifier approach throws light on the more contextual aspects of security, as it necessitates a focus on what can be seen as
key dimensions of the wider order of meaning, within which the framework itself is established.

**ONTOMOLOGICAL SECURITY**

But it is primarily at the individual level of what Catarina Kinnvall calls *ontological security*, which is very similar to what Anthony Giddens has referred to as *existential anxiety* (Giddens 1991), that I see an important contribution to this research, and maybe even to the general body of Diaspora theory. Ontological security refers to a “*person’s fundamental sense of safety in our world of today*” and as Catarina Kinnvall goes on to explain, “*Obtaining such trust becomes necessary in order for a person to maintain a sense of psychological well-being and avoid existential anxiety*” (Kinnvall 2004:746). As one can see, this is very similar to the ideas underpinning both Eriksson’s’ theoretical approach as well as Lacan’s concept of Lack. Zygmunt Bauman’s groundbreaking work with his central concept of ambivalence, again takes a similar point of departure as it refers to the fundamental feeling of uncertainty that, he claims, individuals and entities constantly try to bridge. This is similar to Lacan’s thoughts concerning his concept of Lack, which he views as a gap that can never be bridged.

What Kinnvall’s use of the concept of ontological security can bring to this study is a strong emphasis on the psychoanalytical approach. As she observes, “*psychoanalysis is able to [...] give emphasis to the inner life of human beings by seeing individuals as linked not only structurally but also through emotional intersubjectivity in which they continuously receive and give emotional messages that often exist at an unconscious level*” (Kinnvall 2004:752). And it is through a reading of the empirical material, and particularly the case interviews that are presented in Chapter Five and Six, that I will try to scrutinize how and to what degree the issue of security “*exists at an unconscious level [in the actors]*”. And, as we shall see from their conversations, it can also be found explicitly in the quite conscious and reflective thoughts of

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10 This in reference to Lacan’s description of “the mirror phase” where the infant recognizes the separation from the mother. This realization leaves the infant with an instant and fundamental sense of insecurity. This is in short is what Lacan’s concept of ‘lack’ or gap refers to. And it is this gap that an individual constantly tries to close or fill through life, but which is according to Lacan impossible.

11 In Bauman’s view ambivalence is basically a product or consequence of the move from the pre-modern and modern society to that of the post-modern society, with the breakdown of the structures that fundamentally shaped the individual’s life and afforded people a firm, predictable and “safe” position. Predictability and order gave security.
the actors here: as a sense of security that shapes the outlook of some Diasporas and which eventually provides a catalyst for their return to what they perceive as their country of origin.

A strong and persistent sense of insecurity could spur feelings of what Kinnvall labels *dislocation*. This sense of dislocation could be precipitated by the effects of globalization, such as “forms of marketization, privatization, structural adjustment policies and changing political structures” (Kinnvall 2002:80), as mentioned by Kinnvall, but could also be spurred by the rapid and overwhelming changes that have affected the religious Diaspora communities, including the Jewish Diaspora, where assimilation, fragmentation and polarization have turned everything upside down for them, especially over the last century. As she explains, “A common reaction to [such] dislocation is to seek reaffirmation of one’s self-identity by drawing closer to any collective that is able to reduce uncertainty and anxiety” (Kinnvall 2002:80). And in the case of Diasporas and religious groups of that sort, they will often draw closer to one another, both as a group but also with those of their kin who are located in other places such as one’s homeland, or other countries. Religious communities and individuals naturally tend to respond in the same way: by drawing boundaries, looking inwards and seeking solidarity and safety within their own group. Or as Kinnvall highlights, “Emotional aspects of belonging, or other needs for identification and bonding, are often overlooked and so is the desire for mutual recognition and community building” (Kinnvall 2002:81). In fact using the concept of ontological security as a psychoanalytical focus in relation to Nationalism and Religion gives us several important dimensions for understanding national and religious identity: “First it points to the significant emotional weight that national identity carries in everyday discourse. Second, it understands national identity as part of the individual’s larger project of establishing moorings (Caputi in Kinnvall 2002:84). Third, by emphasizing the affective and intersubjective bases of identity formation – such as fear and alienation, as well as love and pride – it is possible to comprehend national and other identity formation in terms of both negative and positive responses” (Kinnvall 2002:84).

And like Kinnvall, I would go even further and assert that Religion and Nationalism - especially in their more extreme, fundamentalist forms - “claim to monopolize the sources of self and identity, simultaneously”. Nationalism and religious Fundamentalism, and here we might also add some forms of ideologies, “may thus be ‘the most salient factor in constructing the external and feared other’, as these provide answers to existential questions of being by
supplying essentialized notions of cultural attributes based on totalities and truth. In this sense, they may serve as the most effective common denominator for decreasing ontological insecurity in times of rapid changes” (Kinnvall 2002:90).

As one can see when it comes to how communities, collective entities and groups behave Kinnvall draws on many of the same basic ideas as those of Richard Jenkins, Anthony Cohen and Zygmunt Bauman and indeed many of the other scholars referenced earlier in this chapter. The difference is that Kinnvall uses ontological security as one of the basic components for explaining these dynamics, and this is an approach that I will, at least in part, follow throughout the forthcoming analysis. But there is yet another analytical concept employed in this study, namely the concept of narratives, which I previously introduced at the beginning of this chapter. In preface to the coming section dealing with narratives: both biographical, as well as group or national narratives, I have decided to take the liberty of quoting both Anthony Giddens and Stewart Hall, as both these scholars indirectly connect the concept of security - as I have outlined it in the section above - with that of the concept of narratives:

“Self-identity consist(s) of the development of consistent feeling of biographical continuity where the individual is able to sustain a narrative about the self and answer the question about doing, acting and being.” (Kinnvall 2004:748)

“If we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or ‘narrative’ about the self about ourselves.” (Hall in Kinnvall, 2004:747)

NARRATIVES

Let me start this final section by explaining how and why I plan to use the narrative concept, and in turn how this approach will open up a whole range of important concepts crucial to understanding the analysis I will later present.

As I explained earlier, the concept of narratives plays a prominent role in this research. Individuals tell stories and so do collective entities. This applies to smaller and larger communities, peoples and nations. Even institutions and organizations tell stories, and
storytelling has become an important trend for almost everyone, in almost every context at present (Fairclough 2006). Companies have brands and brands tell stories. Today’s management gurus make money preaching to modern companies about the importance of having a unique story to tell. This even happens at a state level. For instance the Israeli government have in recent years tried to re-shape the image of their country by attempting to re-invent their narrative: where war, oppression, occupation and the relationship with the Palestinians are all de-emphasised, while other less contentious themes are brought to the fore in a fresh and more varied narrative targeted for the consumption of other nations and people outside their country (Gilboa 2006). International organizations like the United Nations and its subsidiaries like UNESCO, WHO, UNHCR, all do similar things, as do a great number of NGO’s, charity organizations, and even football teams and smaller institutions like schools and universities. All have in recent years spent millions of dollars on expensive consultancies, which have helped invent, shape or re-shape their images by creating special stories for them. Such stories are also called narratives, and every single country, organization or company understands the importance of engaging the eye of the public; they know that a good narrative means visibility, and visibility confers resources and power.

But is the use of narratives simply an artificial, commercial gimmick invented by smart business people to earn even more money? Or does the use of narratives go deeper? This research takes the point of departure that narratives are in fact a much more important feature for scrutiny, a feature deeply rooted in the human psyche. To be plain, narratives are not only important they are fundamental, and not only for individuals but also for groups, organizations and even nations.

One could say that the use of narratives is a way of framing individuals within the world, both in time and place, and in relationship to other people and the things around them. Narratives tell us who we are and who we are not, just as in the case of identity and identification. The two are in fact closely linked. Or to be more precise, identity formation and the creation of individual and collective narratives (in all their variety) are completely entangled. The first cannot be understood without the other. It is through personal and collective identities, shaped within and around perceived narratives, that we, as individuals and collective entities function and position ourselves in the world, or as Lawler explains:
"We endlessly tell stories about our lives, both to ourselves and to others; and it is through such stories that we make sense of the world, of our relationship to that world and of the relationship between ourselves and other selves... [Stories, or narratives] are interpretive devices through which people make sense of, understand and live their lives.” (Lawler 2008:13)

Furthermore, it is by telling our personal, as well as collective narratives that we link ourselves to the broader social framework. In this sense narrative can and will, in the context of this research, be used to explore the inter-relationship between the personal and the social, which forms the basis of identification for individuals as well as groups. People tell stories because stories provide the tools for understanding one’s place in the world. We tell stories because they give a coherent and cohesive meaning to the things we do and to the life we experience. And it is through our personal narratives that our identities are basically created:

"We achieve our personal identities and self-concept through the use of configuration, and make our existence into a whole by understanding it as an expression of a full single unfolding and developing story. We are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end; we constantly have to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives. Self then, is not a static thing or a substance, but a configuring of personal events into a historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be.” (Polkinghorn in Woodward 2002:28)

Again we notice similarities with the theoretical fields of identity, identification and identity formation, namely that of an ongoing and mutable process. And in the case of narrative an additional feature comes into play, as these elements are now positioned within a coherent story, which has a past, a present and a presumed future. And, as I mentioned earlier in reference to Eriksson’s understanding of identity, a feeling of coherence is important for people’s sense of security.

But what else can the concept of narrative as a theoretical and analytical tool bring to this research that other theoretical approaches already scrutinized, perhaps lack? An analysis of Phillip L Hammack’s definition of identity might afford the reader a deeper understanding of identity and its formation within the framework of narratives: "Identity is defined as ideology cognized through the individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal
narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course and scripted through social interaction and social practice". (Hammack 2008:123)

Let me try to translate the words of Hammack into the theoretical framework used in this research. Individual personal identities are essentially shaped within the framework of narratives throughout the course of an individual’s life. And the formation of identity, or identity markers as it should more correctly be referred to (see earlier in this chapter), happens within and through social interaction and social practice. There is, as Hammack points out, a close connection between identity, ideology and discourse, just as is found in Michel Foucault’s writings. So, identity is constituted in discourse and therefore one needs to pay special "attention to the social processes through which people actively manoeuvre in relations to discourse practice" (Newton in Watson 2009:431). The formation and maintenance of one’s personal narrative takes place as an ongoing process of identity work or identity formation in discourse, which means that an individual’s personal narrative is constantly influenced and shaped by what Somers calls the "public narrative" (Somers in Watson 2009:431), as well as being embedded in the meta-narratives, in close conjunction with the various other social processes one encounters in life.

Let me define here the three main concepts of narratives as used in this research. Firstly we have the personal narratives, which should be understood as those narratives “that we tell ourselves about our place in the world and about our own personal history” (Somers & Gibson 1994). Secondly we have the public narratives, which are "elaborated by and circulating among social and institutional formations larger than the individual, such as the family, religious or educational institution, the media, and the nation" (Somers & Gibson in Baker 2005). And last but not least, we have the conceptual, or disciplinary narratives, which are used by Somers & Gibson to highlight the "narrative explanations that scholars in any field elaborate for themselves and others about our object of inquiry" (Baker 2005).

As I have already spent some time scrutinizing the first category - that of the personal narrative – it would seem appropriate now to take a look at the other categories as they also play a significant part in this research. The understanding behind public narratives resembles that of the dominant discourses used in the writings of scholars like Hall and Foucault (Purvis & Hunt 1993; Hall in Braziel & Mannur 2003.). Here, discourse is essentially seen as a particular way of discussing a subject that contains meanings understood by groups of people
or by a particular culture. A discourse always contains particular ideological beliefs. In this context, dominant discourses or public narratives are created by those in power (Foucault, Michel 1976), and these narratives or discourses become a generally accepted way of perceiving, or speaking about a given subject.

As we shall see in the context of this research, there are certain discourses that assume a dominant position in the field: discourses loaded with religious, ideological and nationalist meaning and content. Such discourses are produced in every society: within organizations and institutions; in the public square and the private space; within families and peer groups, etc. Such discourses shape and are shaped by individuals through their personal narratives, which are in turn shaped and re-shaped by those same discourses.

The third category of narratives needs further explanation, as it will have a prominent role to play in the third and final analytical level of this thesis, the level where I hope to be able to draw conclusions from the various personal characteristics elicited from the biographical narratives, or case stories of this research and hence map the contours of ideal types, which will later be interpreted within the context of what Oz Almog calls “social types”. But before defining social types we need to link the concept of personal narratives to that of social identities, as these represent the meeting point of the individual with the surrounding world. And here I would like to mention Tony J. Watson who rightly points out that “individuals must look to the external aspect of human identities and to social-identities: cultural, discursive or institutional notions of whom or what any individual might be. Social identities or personas, are presented to us in the narratives that we meet (from the tales our parents tell us about their work to the characters we see in the films and read about in books and newspapers), as we move through our lives.” Watson continues by pointing out the different types of social identities that human beings are influenced by, an approach that in many ways resembles that of Weber (Weber 1946) “ideal types” or in the specific context that of social types.

**SOCIAL TYPES**

Social types should in this thesis be understood as in accordance with the views of Simmel as “a composite of certain psychological traits-as a specific personality, temperament, or mentality
formed by structural forces, human situations ...". While most personality patterns (in contrast to identity) are fixed either in infancy or in early childhood, the development of social types in contrast “takes place in later experiences and may accordingly be reconditioned in youth and maturity” (Burgess 1968:194).

The concept of social type can be divided into two categories: first, as a tool which people use on an everyday basis (like a folk notion used by layman in everyday life) or secondly - as will be used in this thesis in hand – as an analytical tool. This distinction is, as Almog rightly points out in accordance with what Pierre Bourdieu tells us, when he distinguish between "empirical individuals" and "epistemic individuals" (Bourdieu 1984).

It is important to emphasize that, when sketching up categories of social types, we naturally seek similarities within the group or category, but we do not seek total homogeneity. Social type serves only as a model for analyzing the characteristic features of a particular type of individual. And as Mitchell rightly point out, the idea that "social phenomena, in virtue of their manifold and fluid nature, can [therefore] be analyzed solely in terms of the extreme forms of their characteristics, which can never be observed in their purity" (Mitchell 1979:164).

Oz Almog talks about four types of sources from where one can draw or build Social types. The four sources mentioned are; a) Occupational type, b) Personality type, c) Cultural type and d) Mythological type.

a) The first to be mention here - but not used in the context of this research – is that of an “Occupational role type”. This social type takes it point of departure formed within the context of the formation of a particular occupational role. An occupational role type “may emerge when role-patterns "penetrate," ... the "blood stream" and become part of the personality, a phenomenon labeled by Goffman as "role embracement" (Goffman 1961: 106 in Almog 1999).

b) The second source of social type formation “The Personality type” can be found in what Almog describes as “the inborn traits and tendencies that form a typical personality”. The personality type is characterized by one or more dominant psychological traits that overshadow others minor traits and inform a person's daily behavior and
thinking. Such traits will be taken into consideration when establishing the social types of this research analysis.

c) The third social type is one in which the dominant behavior is typical of the individual's cultural heritage. In the case in hand this will be the combination of the individual's Jewishness, diasporic features as well as that of the culture of the host-land country, as described earlier in this theoretical chapter. Indeed, all social types are cultural, however, the cultural type consist mainly of elements merged from within tradition, folklore, and informal and unconscious socialization. It is partly within the framework of the Cultural type that this thesis' third level analysis will be build upon.

d) The fourth and last social type mentioned by Oz Almog is that of myth. Almog talks mainly about the new mythological type which includes people whose character has been shaped by copying a variety of sources such as fictional characters created by artists in books, films, fairytales. In this particular context characters taken from the bible and or within academic religious literature will be central to the choices taken here because religion plays a significant role amongst migrant settlers. As Almog explains when telling about people who resembles that of the mythical type; they are established "by imitating national heroes, like famous soldiers, athletes, or show business stars" and, in this context, this will naturally include that of biblical characters. And, as said before, concepts drew upon in academic religious literature.

In this thesis, I will use a combination of the last three sources of social types as together they offer a meaningful insight into the cases drawn upon within the material collected for this research. In creating and using social types one must be convinced that the specific categories of social types are not illusory and that the group or category does indeed exist in the specific reality that one wants to portray. I will furthermore use the data collecting methods known as "reflective participation," where one needs to combine the sociological method of participant observation with face-to-face in-depth interviews - or as here in this thesis, the life-story interviews of as many samples from the social type group or category that I was able to track down. I will elaborate more on this in the third chapter dealing with methodology.

One can compare the role of the sociologist adopting this kind of method to that of "a confessor" as Burgess rightly points out. Here the people who are interviewed can offload all
their inner feelings and thoughts – within a narrative that he or she chooses. Or as Almog explains “the sociologist can be likened to a detective who collects and records trivial evidence, such as eating habits, aesthetic taste and linguistic conduct. Just as in crime solving, such trivia could be highly significant clues to the full socio-historical "story" of the emergent social type”.

In creating the categories, one needs to include a socio-historical analysis. Almog explains in his writings that, “The socio-historical roots of the features of a social type can be traced by clarifying the processes by which the social type has been socialized. An understanding of the nature of the type’s socialization institutions and is very useful to this” (Almog 1999). In chapter four these social institutions and organizations will be scrutinized in depth.

This theoretical chapter has now been finalized and will subsequently be followed up by selecting and describing this thesis methodological considerations and tools.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

PRE-INTRODUCTION

From the very beginning of this research one of my chief ambitions was to be able to disseminate my findings to the broadest possible audience. I felt this necessitated a less academic tone, but I was conscious that this might expose me to some criticism within the academic environment itself. I also knew there was a risk that the examination board might be sceptical of my work and that they might criticize it for being either too journalistic or even deviant, because of its less dissertation-like format. As a matter of fact my tutors, and others from within the academic environment who have been reading some of my work along the way, have been divided on the matter. The use of Weber’s and Oz Almog’s ideal or social types in particular has raised some eyebrows, with some feeling that the analytical method is somewhat dubious and perhaps unnecessary for this research. This, one will have to judge for oneself when reading through the research material. The two main reasons for using this analytical method were (a) the communicated aspect, which I believe makes the conclusions much more understandable (some might say populist) in format, and (b) given that this research is mostly based on qualitative data, the use of theoretical and methodological groups of social types is able to yield some more generalized answers to my research questions.

Another aspect of my work which has drawn attention has been the way in which I present my life-story material: with its short, seemingly unstructured, yet crucial presentations of the various relevant organizations and institutions; its differentiated format - there are no common thematic titles across the interviews; the idea of leading the reader through a detailed storytelling account, offering a more direct experience of the intensity and intimacy that I myself felt when conducting fieldwork in the settler communities (a style that can in some ways seem quite journalistic); and also the recurrent descriptions of the process by which I became less and less insecure, as I too gradually acclimatized to the atmosphere in the territories, something most migrant settlers will be able to recognize: the slow, incremental
changes that occur inside, leading finally to the feeling of calmness and tranquillity that one experiences when contemplating the landscape surrounding the close-knit communities of the West Bank. An experience that has in many ways changed my perception in quite concrete terms, showing me how relative the feeling of insecurity can in fact be, not only for people living out there, but also for someone like me, a frequent traveller in the territories at that time. This change of perspective on security gave rise to a number of questions: questions which eventually changed the scope of this research, a fact that I will return to later in this section.

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this methodological section will be used to clarify a broad range of questions concerning how and why this research has been carried out as it has. Additionally there will be a clarification of the considerations made when choosing the background and fieldwork material that has both informed and been used directly in connection with this research.

After a short treatment that should be understood as a follow up to the theoretical chapter, this section will take a closer look at why the narrative approach – as per the last section of the theoretical chapter - was the logical choice for constructing a research that deals with the understanding of individual as well as collective processes of identity formation. Especially when these processes can, as we shall see later, lead certain types of people from the Jewish Diaspora to uproot themselves and make Aliyah to the occupied territories of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria)12.

The issues that will be addressed are as follows: the first part of this section will give a short but thorough account of those fields of inquiry that, theoretically and empirically, constitute the makeup of this thesis. This should also give the reader the possibility to look over my shoulder, so to speak, and gain not only an insight into the choices of each of the areas of inquiry, but also why they were chosen and presented in this thesis.

12 The use of the terms The West Bank, Judea and Samaria and The Occupied territories are often very ideological loaded in the literature dealing with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. In this thesis though, the different terms will be used (as possible as one are able to) without any specific political implications. As one will notice I sometime use either one or the other but such choices should mainly be understood, as what I find works best in the specific context they appear.
In closing, the final part of this section will be a more thorough reading of what could, or rather should be described as the heart of this thesis: namely, the empirical material collected during my fieldwork. This will be followed by an explanatory reading of the four case stories, chosen as those most representative of the entire body of interviews collected over the course of my fieldtrips to London, New York and the West Bank, during the period 2004-2007. Together with the material in Chapter Four (field of inquiry), as well as the background material collected for this work, these case stories will constitute the main analytical components of this work.

**A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE MAIN THEORETICAL AREAS AND HOW AND WHY THEY WILL BE USED**

Let me summarize the reasons for choosing the respective content of each section in the theoretical chapter, both as interrelated areas of inquiry as well as in connection with the forthcoming chapters. The first theoretical area dealt with was that of identity. Here I took the opportunity to give a short but necessary treatment of the impact of globalization and individualization on issues relating to identity formation in our post-modern society. Thereafter the concept of identity markers was singled out as something that could encapsulate the most important attributes preparing the ground for Diaspora Jews to settle on the West Bank. The most significant of these attributes was religion, nationalism and ideology. These three areas were identified as the most significant, firstly, because the migrant settlers interviewed for this research spontaneously volunteered them as important motivational factors for their migration; secondly, because the various religious strands within Judaism – both in the Diaspora as well as in Israel – have historically been divided over the question of Jewish nationalism; and thirdly, the different Zionist ideologies have been and still are in mutual disagreement over how to perceive the question of the occupied territories in general and the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) in particular. Chapter Four will deal with these fields in more precise detail in the context of Diaspora Jews living in the UK and the US. This will be presented in its historical as well as current context. Judith Shuval’s triangular relationship between the host society, the homeland society and the Diaspora group itself will provide the underlying structure that informs this forthcoming chapter.
The subsequent part of the section dealing with identity and identity formation contained the various elements informing this thesis and its understanding of identity and how identity formation occurs in individuals as well as communities. The question of drawing on, respectively, similarity and difference in the process of identity formation, is an important component that will be used in understanding how individual identity as well as community identity is created, and will eventually help us understand how these identities position themselves in regard to religion, nationalism and ideology. This should naturally be understood within the context of how this research uses the concept of identity markers.

The section dealing with the formation of identity in connection with life phases, in context of the psychoanalytical theoretical approach borrowed from people like Eriksson and Lacan, supplemented by the reading of people like Jenkins and Laclau, will as we shall see, help one to understand the important issues relating to that of identity formation. Namely the critical impact on an individual’s sense of self that is exerted by an early development of identity markers relating to religion, nationalism and ideology, as well as those relating to security (in Huysmans and Kinnvall’s sense of ontological security). The understanding of identity and its formation as something dynamic, flexible, changeable, and relational was an important feature highlighted thereafter. Both of these sections will be dealt with more fully in Chapter Five, where an analysis of the individual case stories will highlight the formation of identity on the individual level. But they will also be used in the subsequent analytical chapter that draws on the broader historical and structural developments and conditions that have informed the lives of people in the Jewish Diaspora of the UK and the US.

Community was another concept presented earlier in this chapter. Here I pointed firstly to the similarities between the processes that drive the collective and individual levels of identity formation. And thereafter I highlighted the ongoing process of boundary maintenance that takes place between various communities; this was described as the constant and continuous activities that define and position the religious, nationalist and ideological communities of this research. This will be one of the core elements scrutinized in the forthcoming chapter, and will be illustrated by a differentiation between various religious congregations; nationalist organizations of different ideological beliefs; and the ways Members of members of Diasporas position themselves towards the homeland, host land and towards other Jews in their own diaspora community.
It is through a more detailed understanding of the ideas, beliefs and strategies generated amongst the various sub-communities of political, religious and nationalist strands within the Jewish Diaspora of the UK and the US that this research tries to understand where the desire to move out to the territories stems from. And as highlighted earlier, it is because the actors chosen for this research all believe they belong to and actively identify themselves as members of an integrated Jewish Diaspora that the theoretical field of diaspora has been chosen. Religious, ideological and nationalist ideas and strategies employed by the specific Jewish Diaspora groups, organizations and institutions are therefore natural areas for scrutiny. These organizations and institutions will mainly be presented and analyzed within the case stories in Chapter Five, but also partly in Chapter Four.

As highlighted in the section of the theoretical chapter dealing with Long-distance Nationalism, this research will - at least to a degree - deal with a specific group of hard core diasporas, who are strongly devoted to what they perceive as their country of origin. Not only does this group decide to migrate to Israel, they go a step further by migrating to a territory lying outside Israel’s internationally recognized borders: a region plagued by violent incidents and attractive only to a very small minority of Jews making Aliyah. This naturally raises questions about what distinguishes this particular group of Jewish migrant settlers from other Jewish migrants who “only” decide to return to Israel. And here I found that even though the body of diaspora theory seems very broad in content, it was insufficient for helping me explain these differences. Diaspora Nationalism and Long-distance Nationalism, with their focus on mobilization of members of Diasporas for the home country, helped by pointing to various areas of inquiry. However, Long-distance Nationalism is basically only an extension of, or a field within general diaspora theory, and those of its areas dealing with the homeland-related organizations, where nationalism is a strong component interlinking the members of Diasporas with their perceived homelands and the strategies exerted by various groups, seem almost completely covered by the diaspora theory already used. So instead of concentrating on just these areas, I felt I needed something that would be a cross between the more sociological approach of diaspora theory and the psychological approach of identity theory, as already touched upon in the early part of the theoretical chapter on identity.

And this was where Catarina Kinnvall’s writings and her use of the concept of ontological security came into play. This new theoretical body, inspired by the works of Anthony Giddens
and here coupled with the work of Lacan, Bauman and Eriksson, helped me connect the psychoanalytical level, or the individual psychological level, with the sociological level, that of the historical, structural level of society. As we shall see, the structural and historic level of the Jewish diasporic societies in the US and the UK is primarily dealt with in Chapter Four, while Chapter Five, with its focus on the case stories, deals mostly, though not exclusively with the individual psychological level.

The concept of security is of the utmost importance in this thesis, as it informs both the individual psychological level, as just explained, and also the general, collective level. This is true both in the context of the creation of Zionism and thereby the creation of Israel as a Jewish state (in the wake of more than two thousand years of persecution), and more generally, in context of the more immediate history of Israel with its unresolved conflicts with some of its closest neighbours (a situation which has persisted now for almost sixty-five years). But it is also relevant in context of the constant awareness and anxiety amongst Jewish people, be they in Israel or the Diaspora, regarding issues such as any potential revival of anti-Semitism, an issue that still affects, or threatens to affect, Jews living in both Israel and particularly the Diaspora. Indeed many Diaspora Jews regard Israel as their ultimate insurance policy, should the ugly face of anti-Semitism one day return on the scale witnessed in earlier times. As we shall see in the next chapter, the issue of security and securitization has for that very reason its own separate section dealing primarily with the effects of insecurity, both for Diaspora Jews and also in the context of Israel’s political situation.

The subsequent and final section of the theoretical chapter deals with the theoretical as well as the methodological use of the narrative concept. As highlighted in this section, narratives should be seen as a universal activity that takes place both on an individual as well as collective level. Narratives are interpretive devices that link us to the world, and it is through telling our personal narratives that our identities are created. In Chapter Five, where the case stories are presented, we will see examples of such narratives as told by selected migrant settlers. These narratives deal primarily with the migrant settlers’ lives in the Diaspora, but they also deal with the process of making Aliyah to settlements in the West Bank. It is important to remember, when reading and considering these interviews, that they were conducted after the migrants had become settlers of the territories. It is here in Chapter Six that the various personal narratives are put forward and partly analyzed.
The *public narratives*, out of which the *personal narratives* have been created (and are indeed still being created), will be presented in both Chapter Five and Six. In Chapter Four I will present some of the religious, ideological and nationalist narratives generated historically in the diaspora society of the UK and the US, and in Chapter Six I will extend the field by exploring the narratives of some of the relevant organizations and learning institutions, including the Aliyah organizations.

The third category: *conceptual narratives* will be analyzed through a thorough reading of the case story interviews in Chapter Four, and will be examined through the prism, or *thick signifier* of security, the concept identified as the single most important reason - at least subconsciously - for most members of Diasporas making Aliyah to a settlement. Furthermore, in Chapter Six there will also be space – in the context of insecurity - to designate the various *life story strategies* within typological categories, in reference to and inspired by Oz Almog’s framework of social types.

**METHODOLOGY: FIELDWORK METHODS, INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES AND RESEARCH ACTORS**

**FIELDWORK PROCESS**

Let me now give a thorough reading of the fieldwork process, starting with the phase in which contact was established within the migrant settler environment, a phase already underway by late December 2003. After an unsuccessful search for contacts through my own Jewish network in Denmark, I decided to directly approach a number of British and North American diaspora organizations, and contacted the representatives of Jewish agencies in both countries. I sent letters to the various organizations, with a short description of the proposed content and scope of my research and a request to meet with representatives of the organizations. I had already made a detailed plan with a tight schedule proposing four fieldwork periods during 2004 and 2005 in Israel, England and the United States and I was hoping that if the organizations replied positively I would be able to carry out interviews during these trips. I did in fact receive positive responses from a number of organizations,
including the Jewish Agency, Tehilla, Betar London, Bnei Akiva and Nefesh B’Nefesh. At this early stage in my work I was mostly interested in setting up meetings with representatives that could help me establish a network of contacts within the diaspora community of Aliyah applicants currently contemplating moving to the occupied territories. The reason for this was that from the very beginning I had wanted to explore the changes in attitude (politically, religiously and nationally) that occurred amongst the migrant settlers of Anglo-Saxon origin when moving into a settlement on the West Bank. The basic assumption was that the migrant settlers would go through an intensive socialization process after leaving their safe diaspora lives and moving into communities in one of the most politically and religiously contested areas in the world. Later though, my focus would change for two very different reasons which I will explain later in this chapter. As time went on I would expand my network of contacts to include the migrant settlers who had already made Aliyah, and the only criteria used in choosing them were that they had settled in the West Bank during or after the outbreak of the Second Intifada and that they had originated from either England or the USA.

Over the next couple of months I travelled to Israel and London where I met representatives of what seemed to me to be the most interesting and relevant organizations. Most of the preliminary meetings with these organizations were informal, as I wanted to build up my network and get a broader knowledge of the field before actually formalizing my interviewees - those who would be providing background material for my research, and those who would become part of a broader network, later helping me establish contact within the diaspora community and subsequently the migrant settler environments. In addition to this organizational network, I also established contacts within the academic environment at research centres and universities etc.\textsuperscript{13} I wanted to meet and interview people who were working within the various academic fields relating to the topics I was dealing with, such as the field of the Jewish Diaspora, academics who had a thorough insight into both contemporary Zionism and historical Zionism; researchers who were engaged with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict\textsuperscript{14} in general; and last but not least, the small group of Israeli, English and American scholars who specialized in issues relating to settlers living in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza.

\textsuperscript{13} The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, University of Haifa and Ben Gurion of Negev.

\textsuperscript{14} Including academics such as; Judith Shuval, Gideon Aran, Michael Feige, Dov Waxman and many more.
During my search I discovered that the number of researchers who specifically worked with the settler community were few. I later found out that many of the researchers, who had been working within this academic field back in the 90s, had now changed to other topics in related areas. In fact I must admit I was surprised to discover that the circle of scholars whose work on the settlers tended towards the more social-psychological and/or anthropological approach, was practically non-existent. Most academic material and research written on the settlers, deals with the more highly politicized issues. Here, work regarding the negative impact of the settler enterprise on the local Palestinian population (issues of settler violence, land grab and water theft etc.), or other work describing and assessing the political damage that the settler enterprise has had on the peace process, is numerous. The same can be said of the many books dealing with what is perceived as a hidden alliance between the political establishment and the settler community: a plan to colonize the occupied territories.

Another discovery when reading most of the academic material in the field was that almost all the books and articles seem to have a highly politicized objective, with the researchers often seeming to have a very clear political agenda. The fact is that most academic material on the Middle East Conflict and particularly the material concerning the specific issues relating to the settlers and their community, seems to be polarized into either condemning or defending the settler community and their enterprise - the latter being less frequently found. Throughout my research period it was in fact very difficult to find written material dealing with issues relating to the settlers in a more sober and depoliticized way.

**INTERVIEWEES AND ACTORS CHOSEN FOR THE RESEARCH**

The number of case study interviews conducted for this research amounts to thirty-two life stories, which comprise in total forty-one migrant settlers originating from across the United States and England. These figures do not account for all the migrant settlers I spoke with during the course of this research. The fact is that in addition, I had a great number of informal conversations with migrant settlers throughout my fieldwork: conversations that of course further informed this research, but which I did not, for various reasons, turn into formalized interviews to be used directly in this thesis. Furthermore I met and spoke with many people in the Jewish Diaspora who had at some stage contemplated making Aliyah both
to Israel and also the occupied territories of the West Bank. These were people I met during my fieldwork in England and North America. In Chapter Five, I will return to the subject of my extensive fieldwork in these two countries, as those trips and especially my fieldwork in New York developed into a challenge that eventually altered somewhat the field of enquiry of this research.

For now though, I will concentrate on the sample of collected data, namely the thirty-two case story interviews, by placing them into pre-defined categories. Such categorization is an important tool for achieving a thorough understanding and insight into the collected data material and in turn the content and character of this thesis. The data will be schematized as follows: Migrant Settlers (MS) total number and gender; MS age; MS country of birth; MS marital status; MS religious strand (as defined in the previous chapter); MS religious and Zionist upbringing.

THE FIGURES ARE AS FOLLOWS

1: Migrant settlers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2: Age group (*children of the migrant settlers not included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-40</th>
<th>40-60</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3: Place of birth and upbringing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4: Marital status
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5: Religious strand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Secular</th>
<th>Classical Orthodox</th>
<th>Reform/Conservative</th>
<th>Modern Orthodox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6: Religious Upbringing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Secular/Non-Jewish</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Modern Orthodox</th>
<th>Classical Orthodox</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7: Zionist upbringing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Zionist</th>
<th>Moderate Zionist</th>
<th>Very Zionist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one can see, there is an almost equal representation of woman and men in the group of migrant settlers interviewed for this research, while there is an over-representation of the age group 25-40. The main reason for this uneven distribution in the ages of migrant settlers (and this also applies for the influx of Israeli settlers) is that most settlements do in fact have policies of preferentially recruiting young couples with children. For some settlements this combination of age group and parental status is in fact an actual prerequisite for gaining permission to stay in the settlement. An example of this will be presented in more detail in Chapter Five in the case stories, but just to mention here: the reason for such a criterion, at least according to people working for the settlement absorption centre, is that this particular demographic proves the most reliable and stable for new settlers; experience would seem to
suggest that they are the ones who in the long run tend to settle, if not for life, then at least for a very long period of time.

The figures shown in column three accounts for the number as well as distribution of migrant settlers coming from the UK and USA. It is important to emphasize that these numbers and the specific proportional distribution was not planned prior to my conducting the fieldwork. In the course of making contact with migrant settlers from the English Jewish Diaspora I discovered early on that the number of recent settlers was very low. The various organizations I contacted all told me that it was several years since they had heard of English Jews making Aliyah to settlements on the West Bank. Only one of the Zionist youth organizations could in fact help me with my request, a case I will return to later in this chapter. It was just after a visit to the West Bank and interviewing people from the settlement absorption centres that, as well as finding two families within the migrant settler community, I got the breakthrough I had hoped for. One could say that it was basically through the internal, English migrant settler community network that I found the families I later came to interview. The selection of English settlers though, was nowhere near as large as the North American selection – as shown in column three – and this of course, to some degree reflects the reality that there are more North American than English migrant settlers living in the settlements on the West Bank.

The distribution showing which Jewish religious strand the migrant settlers originate from (column five) does not necessarily reflect the distribution in real life. The fact is that even after an extensive search, I could not find any statistical survey that specified the distribution of migrant settlers according to this criterion. Indeed, as many settlements have a mixed religious demographic and lack any data regarding distribution, this statistical material could theoretically be seen as of limited relevance. Moreover such material would not distinguish between the influx of settlers originating from the Diaspora or Israel, nor would it distinguish between internal and external migration from the occupied territories. It is important to underline that the material collected for this research mainly reflects what I as a researcher have been able to personally collect through my contacts at various organizations such as the Jewish Agency, Nefesh B’Nefesh, Amana, Tehilla, UJIA Aliyah and not least the group of migrant settlers themselves, who were often very helpful in connecting me with other migrant
settlers within their community. As I visited more than thirty different settlements located all over the West Bank, of all different sizes and with varying compositions of residents (various ages, religious strands, political leaning) I am confident that I have done whatever one can do in a research like this, to capture as representative a cross-section as possible. I am confident that the sample of actors I have taken for this research, at the very least covers the variety of migrant settler voices as represented in the settlement community.

The last two categories, columns six and seven in the above table, show the distribution of migrant settlers in relation to the religious and Zionist flavour of their family upbringing. These figures are important, as both issues closely relate to the two identity markers highlighted in the previous chapters. It is important to underline here that I did not include direct questions in the interviews concerning these issues. Instead such information has been drawn from the qualitative life-story interviews conducted amongst the 41 migrant settlers of this thesis. The definitions of the various religious strands will be thoroughly scrutinized in the following chapter.

GROUNDED THEORY, IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS

The over-arching method for this study was fieldwork. The research has been informed by grounded theory and a qualitative research approach (Charmaz, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in which the goal was to generate theory from the data and to limit the number of prejudicial assumptions. This is because, as I have already explained, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems to generate such a lot of politicized literature, both within academia but also within the massive body of literature written by journalists and others in the field. The main instrument used for this qualitative research has been in-depth interviews in the form of what could be termed adapted life story interviews. The reason for using the word adapted is that the way I conducted my life story interviews did not entirely correspond with many of the more formal, well-crafted life story interview methods I read about later during my research process. This is then something of a confession, as it wasn’t until after I had finalized all of my interviews that I understood precisely what I had done. The fact is that I made several pilot interviews with migrant settlers before actually discovering both what was interesting in the

15 Just to mention some; Alon More, Ariel, Ha Gilo, Kochav Ya’acov, Kfar Etzion, Ma’ale Adomim, Ma’ale Shomron, Neve Daniel, Kedumim, Shilo, Kanei Shomron, Kochav Ha’shachar and many more
field to analyze, and also how to conduct such interviews in the way most conducive to obtaining the information that might answer the questions I had in mind. As my research progressed I noticed that the learning process of actually conducting interviews, especially in an environment like that of the settler community, is very important indeed. Conducting in-depth interviews or even semi-structured interviews in a less contentious area, one less politically inflected and with people, who have not necessarily become entangled directly in a conflict, is in itself very different to what I had to do here. The sheer suspicion; the sensitivity of the subject; the actual insecurity often surrounding the interviews; the need to comprehend the life of people who were not only politically engaged in a conflict, but who had also put their lives and those of their families at risk by moving into the conflict zone. Here I am not only thinking about the physical danger that these people might encounter, but more so the constant pressure from the outside world, most of which would rather see these people uprooted and removed from what they themselves believe to be their home: a place they regard as being not only theirs but the Jewish people's property.

The adapted life story method, as I constructed it, was employed because it was capable of delivering an insight into the “complex range of human attitudes, values and behaviour” (Amit, K & I Riss 2007) when one wanted to understand why these people were originally motivated to move to such locations, locations which are at times extremely dangerous.

I have tried to understand the life stories of forty-one individual migrant settlers (and over a hundred other migrant settlers that I have met during my research) on their own terms. I wanted to know how the interviewees remembered and interpreted their own lives within the context of making Aliyah to a settlement. I wanted to understand where their motives came from: whether it was a natural continuation of an upbringing in a family closely linked with the Jewish state; or if it had something to do with a learning environment they had experienced in school; or whether it was more likely to have been because of their participation and membership of homeland-related youth organizations; or perhaps something to do with their general standard of living in the Diaspora, economic reasons for instance; or was it more a question of their religious, cultural or political views and beliefs, which might had been influenced by friends, relatives, the local rabbi or others; or was it instead something inherent in their emotional character, their experiences of life; or finally, was it their feelings about security that led them. As one can see, there were many fields to be
explored, many questions to be answered, and the use of the life story interview, letting
people narrate their own stories over a period of two hours, seemed the most appropriate
course and so that is what I tried to carry out.

Using life story interviews, a method first introduced by the German sociologist Schulze, has
given me the opportunity to understand both the meaning that an individual gives to their life,
as well as the "social phenomena that they have experienced" (Chaitin 2004). The underlying
assumption in conducting life story interviews is that firstly, the participants give us their own
take on their unique story, and secondly, each of these unique stories is embedded in a social
and cultural context that makes the unique story relevant. This in turn can give us insight into
the particular context in which a narrator has lived his or her life. In the case of this research,
one can say that by getting the personal accounts of each of the participants, they potentially
offer a unique resource: an insight into their experience of the various organizations, their
families and schools; their understanding and interpretation of historical and political events,
some of which took place during their lives; their personal take on religious and ideological
beliefs; and their understanding of their relationship and that of others to their host land,
homeland and the diaspora community. After gathering and listening to almost a hundred
personal narratives collected through the life story interview method (this method was also
applied during most of the informal conversations) one eventually gets quite a broad insight
into the background environment of the migrant settlers: members of Diasporas who have
come from all over America\textsuperscript{16} and England (though mostly London) and who are now living in
communities scattered across most of the West Bank. The collected knowledge, which was
gathered over more than two years, gave me a rare opportunity to see and understand: (a) the
individual migrant settlers’ lives and motivation, (b) the collective patterns which are
suggested by the many individual cases and, (c) a broad historical and societal knowledge, one
generated as a natural consequence of reading all the background material to this research. Or
to put in a slightly different way, as a researcher I have tried to:

\textit{“Uncover the mediating link between social norms, family dynamics, and psychic life.
Understanding more about normative unconscious processes that are repeatedly enacted in

\textsuperscript{16} In a US context the following cities and states have been recorded; New York, Boston, San Diego, Florida, New
Jersey, in the English context; London, Manchester and Oxford.}
everyday social situations, processes that derive from social inequities and the ideologies that sustain them…” (Layton 2004:48)

And this by using the:

“Narrative and biographical research methodologies [which] are generating the kind of empirical data that can benefit from psychoanalytically informed analysis and provide fruitful sites of inquiry for those authors who are now posing the conceptual problem of linking the subjective, the social and the societal.” (Froggett and Wengraf 2004:95).

ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

So how was the material analyzed as part of my research process? Firstly, the thirty-two life story interviews were carefully read over on my return to Copenhagen. Most of the interviews had been either committed to tape recorder or taken down as handwritten notes at the time they were conducted. If the situation hadn’t permitted me to make notes during the actual interview, then immediately afterwards I would find a peaceful place to sit and make a summary of the conversation. After I finished each of my field trips I would go through all the material I had collected. This would then be archived along with notes making brief reference to which religious, ideological and nationalist beliefs each contained. The notes contained the following: the location of the settlement; where the migrant settlers had lived in the Diaspora; their age and gender; which organizations they had encountered during their upbringing; which Aliyah organization had been at their service, etc. After each of my field trips I would make a preliminary selection of any material that seemed an obvious case story candidate. At this point I already knew that I wanted to find specific cases reflecting general patterns that could illustrate a broader section of the material. And it was here the idea of using the concept of social types was born.

Those tape-recorded interviews that were selected were then sent to London and transcribed by a department specializing in academic writings. It was important that the people who
conducted the transcriptions were familiar with Jewish expressions, and in most cases this company was very helpful in this regard.

As the process continued, I compiled a list of categories and themes that seemed theoretically relevant to this particular research. The selected material was then reorganized under the headings of these themes and this data was then read and re-read in parallel with a reading of the theoretical and background material. At this point the issue of security gradually began to move more and more to the forefront of the research scope. In this way my empirical analysis and theorization became an interlinked process, where the empirical data generated the concepts and then the theory that would later be used. This overall approach has been inspired and rendered in much the same way as described by Tony J. Watson in his article “Narrative, life story and manager identity: a case study in biographical identity work” (Human Relations 2009:62,425).

When a researcher urges a specific participant to tell them his or her life story, the process of telling that story and its outcome is to be regarded as the participant’s construction of his/her life. Or as Julia Chaitin explains, “As the narrative unfolds, the individuals validate their sense of selves [...] both in themselves and in the listener – that an identity is in the process of being constructed through the vehicle of storytelling” (Chaitin 2004:4). The method of life story interview allows the researcher to let the participant tell his or her story in a manner that facilitates “a dynamic and flowing telling” (Chaitin 2004:4). But as a precondition for getting a participant to tell his or her story in a way that is more than superficially revealing, there must first have been cultivated a mutual confidence. Here it is of the utmost importance that the researcher has done adequate preliminary work, by conducting as much research into the place the participant originates from, as well as the settlement in which they now live. For me this meant familiarizing myself not only with their country of origin and its Jewish diaspora, but also the specific neighbourhood and even the particular Jewish community they may have been a part of. Naturally, this was only possible if I could obtain some information about the participants before actually meeting them, whether by email or by looking on the internet to see if there was any material there.

These days, Facebook and other networking websites can be an important reference tool. However, during the two or three years of fieldwork I conducted in 2004-2006, the number of Facebook profiles was still very low and therefore not a useful reference point. Knowing
something about a specific settlement, its history, location, and biblical references etc. was very conducive to the confidence building process. But most of all, it was the personal contact, showing a genuine interest in their private life, opinions, beliefs and story, that was fundamental. Life story and other in-depth interviews where one wants to get as close as possible to the participant’s private life, can only be done when there is at least some measure of mutual respect between the researcher and the participant. My own Jewish background; my knowledge of Jewish organizations, culture and religious life; my familiarity with the Jewish environment in general and what it is to live in a Jewish Diaspora as a minority; and also my knowledge of Israeli society, with its complex political, cultural and religious fabric, all of this helped me establish productive contacts with almost all the people I came into contact with. People like to be listened to and this is something that is almost universally true. Consequently, if people are prepared to meet with you either in their home, as was mostly the case, or in a public place like a café, a park, their workplace, or some other location of their choice, then they are usually already keen to tell their stories. Sometimes their stories were so personally revealing that I knew I would not be able to disclose some of the content in a research like this. I did in fact tell them beforehand that they could remain anonymous if they wanted, in which case I would not disclose their real names in the presentation. And some of the participants were indeed reassured by this offer, but there were many more that were entirely comfortable about getting their stories out. In fact, the seven migrant settlers used for this research all consented to my using their real names.

Let me now briefly sum up the main questions this research will be trying to find answers to over the course of the following chapters:

a) What motivates North American and British Jews to make Aliyah to the occupied territories of the West Bank?

b) What role do religious, nationalist and ideological beliefs play, when Jews from North America and Britain decide to make Aliyah to the West Bank?

c) To what extent do homeland-related organizations and institutions contribute to the motivation of North American and British Jews to make Aliyah to the West Bank?

d) To what extent (if any) does the issue of security inform the decision of North American and British Jews to make Aliyah to the West Bank?
Let me start by summing up the thoughts that preceded the selection of the case story interviews, as well as the criteria that were eventually set for choosing which cases to use. To work with qualitative data, in an academic research composed of life story interviews positioned within a framework of grounded theory, implies that one is not seeking to paint a total picture or to give a complete answer to one's research question. So if one cannot expect to gain a full and total answer, what instead should the reader anticipate here? By using cases stories I will try, as far as possible, to extract the most common and significant features from all the data collected for this research.

The first criterion was that the cases selected should be as representative as possible of the entire interview data collected, taking into account variations in gender, age, political and religious beliefs, and location in the Diaspora and the West Bank. In this way the selected case stories would at least be representative of the specific section of migrant settlers I had contacted during my fieldwork. Though, to be able to give a more comprehensive picture of the entire group of migrant settlers who had made Aliyah out to the West Bank from the US and the UK, since the outbreak of the Second Intifada, it would be necessary to (a) know the exact number of people this included, and (b) their exact distribution in terms of age and gender; religious, nationalistic or political strand; socio-economic background; origin in the Diaspora and where they had subsequently settled in the West Bank. All of this information was impossible to obtain, as there is no statistical material specifically targeting the group of migrant settlers. And I therefore had to downscale my ambitions on this matter by only being able to apply these criteria to the much smaller and more randomly collected material I was able to obtain. But what was even more important than the criterion mentioned above was that the selected life stories had in some way to represent the variation in specific patterns as witnessed across the entire collection of migrant settlers stories. These patterns would then help me to paint the broadest possible picture, as my opinion was and still is, that the forty-one life stories (collected across thirty-two interviews and supplemented by at least a further fifty informal conversations) would be enough to claim that the entire field of actors chosen for this research had been adequately scrutinized. There is though, an important exception, I was unable to get adequate access to the classical orthodox section of migrant settlers, and as
I do not even know how many individuals this specific group numbers, this field of inquiry shall have to be taken up by others at some other time.

THE CASE STORIES

The last part of this methodological section is an introduction dealing with the specific selection as well as design of the four case stories, which represent seven migrant settlers and which will be presented as the sub-chapters: Five A, B, C and D of Chapter Five.

The first selected case story is in fact one of the youngest cases I have in my entire data collection. Avi was in his early twenties when I met him in London in 2004. He had settled in the West Bank about a year earlier and he was one of the relatively few single men I met at that time in the West Bank. He represented a section of settlers called the Hilltop Youth, a particular group of young radicals who have grown in numbers in recent years. The Hilltop Youth mostly recruit their members from within the old, established settlements. In recent years though, this group of radical settlers have been exploiting the new opportunities offered by the internet to both advocate their cause and also increasingly to use it as a tool for recruiting new members to their illegal settlements. The number of illegal settlements run and led by the Hilltop Youth has grown enormously in the last ten years. And it is also this particular group of settlers that causes the most politically violent turmoil Israel has seen in recent times.

In Avi’s life story interview I have taken the opportunity to elaborate on the aims and ideology of some of the organizations and institutions that Avi and many other migrant settlers (right across this research) had been in contact with during their childhood and adolescence. The information disclosed in these sections is of the utmost importance. It is by understanding the aims and ideology of these organizations and institutions, and in turn how these have been implemented, that we can begin to understand and assess the direction and influence such organizations has on their pupils, students or members. This information will also help underpin the section in the analysis chapter dealing with the influence of homeland-related Diaspora organizations, an influence that operates on two levels: the mobilization of Diaspora Jews to support their homeland, and more specifically the mobilization of Jews to actually make Aliyah to Israel. As we will see, this is an important area for the analytical chapters.
Another field of inquiry that is dealt with in Avi’s case is the short section on how illegal settlements and hilltop communities are created. This will give the reader a more general insight into the settlement enterprise and furthermore lend an understanding of the environment and community that this section of migrant settlers has chosen to live in.

Furthermore, in Avi’s case story there will be an important introduction to two different but related strands of Zionism, namely the revisionist Zionism founded by Zev Jabotinsky and the religious strand of Zionism founded by Rabbi Kook. Both these sections will be referenced extensively throughout the research as a whole, as these strands represent the most common ideological and religious beliefs amongst the migrant settlers I examined. In addition I in the interview with Avi became sure that bringing forward issues related to his understanding of; inter-Jewish violence (Rabin murder etc), perception on Israel's borders, views on the peace process, believe in miracles etc, were issued for the first time. Such issues became obligatory themes in all the subsequent interviews, as these views in many ways both reflected the actors’ relationship with “the other” as well it gave an important insight to which kind of religious, nationalist and political ideas that informed the actor’s views.

The second, selected case story is that of Jamie and his wife Debbie. This American couple, who was both in their mid-thirties when they arrived in Israel, had a boy of four and a baby on its way. They started their Olim\[17\] life in Israel and then decided after a year to move out to the West Bank settlement of Ma’aleh Adumim, where they had been living for almost a year at the time I met them. This period between making Aliyah to Israel and then becoming migrant settlers was not uncommon, but it was still typical of less than 10% of the migrant settlers I encountered. Jamie and Debbie represented the single most frequent age group of my data material, being in their mid-thirties. Having only two children when they arrived in the settlement community however was in fact way below average for people of their age. In fact most of the families had more than three children on arrival and many had four, five or even six. These larger families were found chiefly amongst the religious section of migrant settlers, those leaning more towards the classical orthodox religious strand.

In the case of Jamie and Debbie I tend to concentrate more on Jamie’s life story. In contrast with Avi’s interview, there are not so many sections dealing with organizations and institutions here. Instead I have focused on some behavioural features that have a more

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17 Hebrew for a newly settled immigrant
general relevance for the broader data found across the interviews. The question of changing names; suspicion of the outside world; the tremendous knowledge of the history of the West Bank, as well as that of the Bible; and also the process of conversion, as Jamie and Debbie had recently discovered religion, are some of the key issues here, important not only to their case, but also to many others in my fieldwork material.

The third case story presented in Chapter Five was conducted during my first fieldtrip to Israel in the beginning of 2004 and, having experimented with different forms, is in fact the first life-story interview that I actually viewed as a success. Laura and her husband Lawrence had arrived in the settlement of Neve Daniel in the summer of 2002. They in many ways matched the average profile of a migrant settler family: age and number of children; religious and nationalist orientation; and socio-economic background. They had moved to a settlement in the settlement bloc of Gush Etzion, an area with a relatively high percentage of English speaking migrant settlers: Jews who had arrived from countries like the US, Canada, England, South Africa etc. There was however one characteristic about Laura and her husband Lawrence’s story that was atypical, namely that this couple did not originally plan to move into a settlement and when they did move to one, they did not do so for ideological or religious reasons. And indeed this characteristic of moving without ideological and/or religious motivation was more typical of settlers in earlier times, and this has become, as we shall see, a much rarer phenomenon in recent years.

In Laura and Lawrence’s case story, I have chosen to focus on the work and ideology of those Aliyah organizations that have, in the last seven or eight years, assisted most migrant settlers in their Aliyah process from North America and England to Israel, and as we shall see, to the West Bank settlements. The work of these organizations can make all the difference when choosing a specific place to live in Israel. Another focus in this case study is a presentation of the history of the Neve Daniel settlement, as well as a broader introduction to settlement policy as conducted by the various governments of Israel, since the West Bank and Gaza was occupied in 1967. This presentation is a by no means exhaustive treatment of the settlement enterprise; as such a treatment seems unnecessary here. However a short guide will help the reader to understand the various reasons for the influx of Jewish settlers to these areas.

Additionally, an important section dealt with in Laura’s case is the description of the admissions procedure for new members to settlements. This gives us an understanding of the
preferences of the settlement board when admitting new members, as well as an insight into how they screen the new arrivals and hence selects who can be members and who can’t. There will be a short section in the analysis dealing with the socialization process of the migrant settlers following their arrival in their new community and this admissions procedure is an important factor to be understood here.

The final case story, that of Shaya and Miryam, represents a more elderly couple, in their late sixties, who had originally come from Maryland in the northern part of the United States, but who had over the years been living in many other areas across the US. They had moved to the settlement of Kokhav Ya’akov, a settlement located in the Binyamina region between Jerusalem and Ramallah. The settlement was, like many others, established in the early Eighties and its members come from a broad range of countries, though most inhabitants originate from within Israel.

Although I have raised the issue of security in connection with all my case stories, I have put particular emphasis on it here. I conducted Miryam and Shaya’s interview at a late stage in the research process, by which point the significance of security had become increasingly apparent, not least because the more time I spent in the region, the more my own sense of insecurity lessened. This was something that had given me pause for thought, and so I felt it important to be able to sum up my reflections at this juncture, using their interview as a focus for exploring not only my thoughts on the matter but, more importantly, those of the many settlers I had spoken to. As will be seen, security will be comprehensively dealt with throughout the entire dissertation, and, in the summary of the case story analysis in Chapter Four there will be a specific section dealing with security in context of each case story interview. In that section I have chosen to concentrate on the five life stories of Avi, Jamie, Laura, Miryam and Shaya as they were the primary interviewees of the four case stories.

Additionally, there will be a section in this case story dealing with the most extreme anti-Arab organization in Israel, that espousing the ideology of Rabbi Kahane. This is because Shaya highlights this particular religious nationalist strand as the one that he thinks most highly of. Furthermore there will be a brief presentation of the youth organization United Synagogue Youth.

18 American-Israeli rabbi and ultra-nationalist writer and political figure
There is no common structure across the four case stories, beyond the fact that all four start with a short presentation of their family background, as this was the way in which I began all the life story interviews. The issues that naturally run through all the case stories as well as most of the other interviews obtained during my fieldwork are: religious conviction; ideological beliefs; nationalist approach; contact with homeland-related Diaspora and Aliyah organizations; and once again, security. All issues closely connected to my research question, as well as tightly connected to the analytical questions mentioned earlier.
CHAPTER 4

SETTING THE FIELD OF INQUIRY

Let me start by briefly outlining the main content of this chapter and by stating why I have selected the following areas as important fields of inquiry. I have decided to divide the chapter into three parts. In the first section I will deal with the historical as well as the contemporary conditions for the Jewish Diaspora living in their "host lands" of the UK and USA. In the second section I will scrutinize the internal relationship between the Jewish Diaspora groups of these respective countries. And in the third section I will take a closer look at the historical and current relationship between the Jewish Diaspora and Israel. The question of security will subsequently been drawn into account as this to some extend informs the Jewish Diasporas relationship with that of Israel. As one can see I am following Judith Shuval’s advice by using the triangular approach as a framework. This will inform the background for understanding the empirical field in which this thesis operates, as well as build the foundation of information on which the analysis, presented in Chapter Four, will be based.

Furthermore, I have decided to organize the content of this chapter under four main titles, namely: a) Religious Identity, b) Political and/or Nationalist (Zionist) Identity, c) Jewish Diaspora and Aliyah Organizations, and d) Security and Securitization. The first two themes should be understood as the historical conditions and structural factors that have informed and shaped the identity of the Jewish Diaspora on a general level. These two titles have to be understood in reference to the theoretical section of the previous chapter, namely the formation of basic identity markers, as a precondition for understanding how the Jewish Diaspora thinks and acts in the context of their relationship to their "country of origin".

The third field of inquiry, entitled Jewish Diaspora Organizations, will be a presentation of those institutions and organizations that directly or indirectly take part in shaping the identity of Jewish members of Members of Diasporas, in the context of their relationship with their country of origin. The last field of inquiry to be examined is the question of the Jewish Diaspora’s sense of security, mainly in connection with their perception of Israel’s

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19 In accordance with the triadic relationship proposed first by Sheffer (1986) and Safran (1991) and then later by Judith Shuval (2000).

20 This fourth theme is closely related to the section in the theoretical chapter that deals with Kinnvall’s concept of Ontological security.
international security situation, both historically as well as present day. The main reason for paying particular attention to this area is, as we shall see, that members of Diasporas sense of security vis-a-vis their perceived country of origin has a tremendous impact on their levels of attachment, and consequently levels of support, held for that country of origin. This in turn can influence certain members of Members of Diasporas to "return" to their country of origin. As seen in my previous theoretical chapter, this is in line with what several other scholars have pointed out. (See the section on Long-distance Nationalism and security.) I will return to the above mentioned themes in a short while but will first take a short detour to clarify another aspect of why Jewish people choose to return to the land of Israel, as it has played out both before, during and after the establishment of the state of Israel.

**SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE MIGRANT SETTLERS: WHO ARE THEY AND WHO WERE THEY?**

The first question that entered my mind as I started this research was if the act of migration to the West Bank and Gaza of today, was in itself as some kind of political statement on the part of the migrant settlers; this, because the migrant settlers of Anglo-Saxon origin seemed fundamentally distinct from the other Jewish immigrants who have come to Israel during the last sixty years. Jewish people had come to settle in the region long before the Israeli state was born in 1948, and most of the Jewish immigrants who had come over the years, came mainly as refugees or because they felt uneasy staying in their original homelands. For instance: the Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia, who arrived in the wake of the numerous pogroms of the late nineteen century and onwards (Laqueur 1973; Tessler 1994; Sacher 1996); the Holocaust survivors after the Second World War (Ofer 1990; Zertal 1998; Lipshitz 1998); and the Jews from the Arab countries who had fled their native lands before, during and after Israel became independent (Schulewitz 2001). More recently almost one million Soviet Jews decided to immigrate to Israel during the decade after 1989, following the downfall of the Soviet Union. In the main, these people left because of their uncertain situation and/or because they were anxious for what the future would bring in their native country. Last but not least there was the large group of Ethiopian Jews who came during the mid-80s and late-
90s, mostly because of the unbearable political and material situation of their homeland, conditions precipitated by a lengthy conflict there (Jones 1996).

What is striking about the groups mentioned here is that almost all of these Jews decided to go to Israel because they were either directly or indirectly forced away from their countries. Or, as in many cases, because they could not find another refuge. In fact most of the Jews who have come to Israel over the years didn’t come of their own free will or desire.

Another characteristic feature of the Jewish immigrants arriving after Israel’s independence is that almost all of them decided - once they had arrived - to settle inside the borders of the Jewish state and not outside the internationally recognized borders of the time. There are naturally some exceptions. A small group of the Russian Jews who arrived during the 90s do now reside on the other side of the green line (Peace Now 2005; Lochery 2006). But the general picture was always that the newcomers did not move to Israel with the express purpose of settling on land that did not belong to the Jewish state of Israel. The vast majority of Russian Jews who live on the West Bank today moved there because of the very favourable economic incentives offered by various Israeli governments during the late-80s and the beginning of the 90s. Incentives that in fact prompted more than 150,000 Israelis to leave their homes in Israel to settle in the occupied territories from 1980 up until 1997. These incentive laws had been put in place at the beginning of the 80s, following the change of power in which Likud became the dominant party in Israeli politics (B’Tselem 2002). These policies were created as a consequence of the nationalistic and ideological shift to the political right. The fact was that the vast majority of people (Israelis or migrant settlers) who decided to move to settlements during this period were mainly what can be termed economic settlers. This was mainly due to a combination of low property prices and the tremendous resources and investments allocated to the whole settlement enterprise by the state.

In contrast the migrant settlers of Anglo-Saxon origin - which we are dealing with in this research - did not make Aliyah because they had been forced out of their native countries. Nor did they move to the West Bank primarily because of favourable economic conditions. Economy can - as we will see later - play a limited role, but it is a minor factor and only for a very small percentage of these people.
RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AMONGST ANGLO-SAXON JEWS

Before describing the variety of Jewish religious movements in both England and the United States, it is important to emphasise that almost all of the migrant settlers in this research are religious. When I began my research on the migrant settlers I had assumed that the overall demographic of Jews I was about to encounter, both within the Diaspora as well as the West Bank, would in fact correspond more or less to the spread of different religious and non-religious segments within the Jewish population as a whole.

Of course common sense suggested that the majority of newcomers would have at least some sort of religious background. Firstly because the West Bank, which comprises Judea and Samaria, has a significant place in Jewish religious teachings and therefore could be expected to attract a certain segment of religious observers. Secondly because the general trends in the composition of the Jewish population in the West Bank show a much higher percentage of religious Jews, both when compared to the Jewish population in Israel, as well as with the Jewish population (Crisis Group Middle East Report 2005)\(^\text{21}\) of the Diaspora. A third and even more important reason is that, in recent years the numbers of religious members of various diaspora communities who have made Aliyah to Israel, have by far outnumbered the figures of secular Jews (Crisis Group Middle East Report 2005). I also knew beforehand that the religious segments amongst the settlement population had grown in recent years. This is in part due to the very high birth rates amongst the religious Jewish population, but also because of the favourable economic living conditions of the settler community. During the 80s and 90s, these conditions had also attracted a significant number of ultra-orthodox Jews\(^\text{22}\), whose living conditions and level of income both in the Diaspora and within Israel are much lower than the average Jewish population of both areas.

I must admit though that I was still somewhat surprised by the lack of variety amongst the migrant settlers who agreed to participate in this research. Of the 36 families interviewed, all considered themselves religious. What is more, almost all of the migrant settlers observed a religious lifestyle that can be characterised as varying from strictly orthodox to a less rigid, but still orthodox religious lifestyle. Very few (only two) migrant settlers described

\(^{21}\) According to the figures taken from this article (based on interviews with director of Peace Now settlement watch Program)

\(^{22}\) Peace Now 2005 in; The Ultra-Orthodox Jews in the West Bank - October 2005. 
themselves as being affiliated with the non-orthodox strands of Judaism. And no one perceived them self as being secular. This should not be taken to imply that all migrant settlers in this research had a religious orthodox upbringing - as we shall see later - but by the time they had seriously begun considering making Aliyah to Israel and/or the West Bank, almost all had in some sort of way become religious orthodox. This will naturally reflect the issues scrutinized here in this part of the chapter, as I will be focusing mostly on the orthodox strands within diaspora Judaism.

Let me briefly define the difference between orthodox and non-orthodox in the Jewish religious context. Orthodoxy is mainly use to mark the distinction between "Jews who keep their commitment to the Jewish tradition, and Jews like the Reform or Conservatives, who sought to make pronounced changes in religious tradition in response to the far-reaching changes in Jewish life in the wake of the emancipation of European Jewry." (Don-Yehiya in Waxman 2004:157) As professor Chaim I Waxman goes on to explain, the distinction between orthodox and non-orthodox was introduced during the twentieth century and described the new look of the religious Jewish fabric. This had evolved in reaction to those developments, which saw the rise of two new religious movements, respectively the Conservative and Reform movements. Later a third, but less significant new movement, the Reconstructionist, was added to these others. So, as Gabriel Sheffer writes, the Jewish religious fabric consists today of five different strands: "the Ultra-orthodox, the modern orthodox, the Conservatives, the Reform and the Reconstructionists" (Sheffer 2005:5)

The Jewish Conservative movement, which had basically come into being as a reaction to the Reform movement, originated in mid-eighteenth century Germany, against a backdrop of the tremendous changes brought about by the Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation. The Conservative movement, also known outside the United States and Canada as "Masorti Judaism", is characterized by a commitment to traditional Jewish laws and customs, whilst adopting a non-fundamentalist approach to teaching Jewish principles of faith. Within the Conservative strand of Judaism one can detect a positive attitude towards modern culture and an acceptance of both traditional rabbinic modes of study, and modern scholarship and critical analysis when considering Jewish religious texts. The Jewish Conservative movements in the United States comprise 31% of American Jewish households which makes it the second
largest Jewish religious strand in the USA after the Reform movement (American Jewish Committee 2007).

The Reform Movement's basic principal is that it calls for the autonomy of the individual in interpreting the Torah and Oral Law, as well as in deciding which observances one is thereby prescribed to follow. Furthermore, it highlights the applicability of textual analysis, alongside traditional rabbinic modes of study of the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature. Reform Judaism furthermore promotes the learning of Jewish principles of faith through non-religious as well as religious methods; the modern Reform movement does, to a very large extent, embrace the customs, dress, and common practices of modern culture, and also promotes complete gender equality in religious study, ritual, and observance. Last but not least the Reform movement emphasises its commitment to “tikkun olam” ("repairing the world") as the primary means of service to God.23

Let us now return to the two orthodox movements, respectively the modern orthodox and Ultra-orthodox strands, which in contrast to earlier times are now minority strands within the Jewish religious fabric, both in Israel and in the Diaspora. As Sheffer explains "These groups have a very evident presence in both [Israel and the Diaspora], and they wield a great deal of influence in Jewish entities all over the world." (Sheffer 2005:4).

By describing the broader development of the Jewish Diaspora in their host countries, as well as the religious trends of recent years within this group, I hope to offer a clear understanding of what kind of environment the migrant settlers of this research originate from. This will hopefully afford a much better understanding of the ongoing processes that have shaped their religious and political attitudes and extend also our insight into issues of motivation, in the context of their decisions to migrate to Israel. As Zlatko Skrbis writes in his book "Long-distance Nationalism", "...one needs to look at the intersecting powers of individual identities and histories, family environment, the organizational structures of the diasporas, the interactive processes between homelands and diasporas, as well as the social climate and pressures existent in the host societies" (Skrbis:184). As one will see during this thesis, this is in fact what I try to do, by combining the interview analysis of individual case studies with the broader, historical, political and religious context of the Diaspora, whilst focusing on the structural context in which we find the actors of this research.

23 The main passage of this text is re-written from the text in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on Reform Judaism.
During the last hundred years we have seen tremendous changes for the Jewish people of the Diaspora. In contrast to the late-nineteenth century, the vast majority of Jews today reside in free democratic Western states. Here they experience in many respects a safe and secure life with normal citizen’s rights. They live within societies where, to a large extent, they no longer fear for their lives or well being, as they had done in previous times. One of the most important consequences of this is that the majority of Jews living in the Diaspora no longer “regard themselves as being in the Galut (Exile)” (Sheffer 2005:4). There are however a few exceptions. Many orthodox and especially ultra-orthodox Jews, to a certain degree, still regard their situation within the framework of being in exile.

Amongst scholars researching the field of religious Judaism in the Diaspora, one finds no agreement on specific usage of categories or concepts that define the various orthodox religious strands. And due to my research questions, I will not go into an extensive and comprehensive discussion of this matter. Instead I have decided mainly to use Chaim I. Waxman’s two main categories of orthodoxy, as they seem to be the most fitting categories when applied to the religious context of the Diaspora as well as in Israel. Waxman makes a distinction between a) the Haredi orthodox movement (also called the ultra-orthodox movement) and b) the modern orthodox movement. Within these two movements one finds a significant number of sub-groups that I will not be dealing with here. Waxman explains that “there seems to be a basic agreement that they [the Ultra-orthodox and Modern orthodox] may be distinguished on the basis of three major characteristics: The first involves the Haredi [ultra-orthodox] stance toward the larger society in general and the larger Jewish community, which is essentially an attitude of isolation, as opposed to the inclusive attitude of the Modern Orthodox. The second is in reference to modernity, general scholarship and science, with the ultra-orthodox being antagonistic whilst modern Orthodoxy being far more accommodating, if not welcoming. The third entails a basic difference in perspective toward Israel and Zionism, with Modern Orthodoxy being much more receptive to and supportive of the State of Israel as having inherent Jewish significance and the Zionist goal of Israel as the spiritual centre” (Waxman 2004:3).

In this part of the chapter I will focus respectively on the isolationalist and the accommodationist approach or, as Liberman and Don-Yehiya term these two “ideal types”, the segregationist and the adaptationist approach. The segregationist approach of the Ultra-orthodoxy in the Diaspora originates almost entirely from Eastern Europe. These orthodox
Jews often lived in almost complete isolation, with no or very limited connection with the non-Jewish population of their host countries. Prior to the Second World War the majority of orthodox Jews still resided in Eastern Europe. But because of the pogroms in their country of origin they started to migrate first to the Western European countries and later to America (Glazer 1989). Their encounter with Western society did in many respects slowly alter their lives, as they could no longer maintain the same levels of segregation from the non-Jewish population of their new homelands. The consequences manifested themselves rapidly, as many second-generation ultra-orthodox immigrants simply left the orthodox fold and became either less observant or completely secular. As Waxman notes, "The leadership of Orthodox Jewry during the first half of the twentieth century was, apparently, not quite equipped to overcome the challenges of the open American [and Western European] society, and there is much evidence of widespread defection from both Orthodox observance and affiliation" (Waxman 2004:4). This tendency of defection and secularization amongst the orthodox Jews continued until the late 1970s. As the influx of orthodox Jews dramatically increased in the wake of the Holocaust - especially to America where a large number of famous Hasidic rabbis and what remained of their congregations found refuge - a stronger and more self-assertive orthodox community started to grow. This development was firstly due to the very high birth rates amongst the Orthodox segments, which made them able to sustain a large community, even when members of that community defected. But it was also because this generation of rabbis seemed to be much better prepared for life in the open American society. As Waxman explains, "...among the refugees were many members and some leaders of Hasidic sects, such as: Belz, Bobov, Chernobel, Lisk, Munkatch, Novominsk, Satmar, Skver, Stolin, Talin, Tarel, Tash, Trisk, and Zanz, to name some of the more prominent ones. The Hasidim, perhaps even more than others, were determined to retain their traditional way of life even within the modern metropolis and they were largely successful in achieving that goal" (Waxman 2005:5). Indeed, what they did manage was, to a large extent, to uphold a segregationist way of living even within the American society. One of the main components of maintaining this segregated lifestyle was and still is that the Ultra-orthodox segments live first and foremost in close-knit communities, mostly within major cities in North America. In these communities the rabbi still exerts authority, just as in previous times in the ‘shtetl’\(^\text{24}\), and this to the extent that the members of these communities seek authorization from their rabbi on almost all, important

\(^{24}\) A shtetl (from Yiddish) was typically a small town with a large Jewish population in pre-Holocaust Central and Eastern Europe.
areas in their daily life. The authorization from the rabbi includes dietary laws, as well as issues related to birth, marriage and death: in a sense, every aspect of life, as described in the Halakha.\textsuperscript{25}

Now let’s turn to the modern orthodox religious strand of Judaism, which, in common with the Ultra-orthodox, declares a commitment to the Halakha but at the same time strives to “reconcile with modern values and needs” as noted by Don-Yehiya (Don-Yehiya 2005:167). By this he means that, in their daily life and thought processes, the modern orthodox distinguish between behaviour "directed by Jewish Law and religious tradition, and other areas of life that are directed by modern values and norms". Theoretically this is an almost impossible distinction, but in a practical day-to-day sense this is in fact what all modern orthodox Jews do in modern societies, both in the Diaspora as well as in Israel. In this sense, they do to a large extent often integrate and take active part in the mainstream society in which they live. Modern orthodoxy is an ever-growing phenomenon in modern society and particularly in North America, Israel and Europe we see a growing number of Jews defining themselves within this category.

In this context it is very important to underline that the categorization of orthodoxy should not be understood as fixed, as many orthodox Jews in the Diaspora as well as in Israel seem to overlap the prescribed features mentioned above. Another important issue is how one determines who is orthodox and who is not. During the twentieth century various surveys revealed that there has been little correlation between the numbers of Jews espousing membership of orthodox congregations, and the actual number of Jews who identified with an orthodox strand. Many diaspora Jews in former days continued to maintain their membership of an orthodox congregation, sometimes due to family traditions, and at other times because an orthodox synagogue was the only congregation in the neighbourhood. But in recent years, surveys have indicated a marked change in these patterns. The general trend today is that increasing numbers of Jews not only prescribe themselves as being orthodox in terms of membership, but also, on a personal level, large numbers are becoming more and more observant of orthodox religious laws (Waxman 1998). In fact the current trend both in the United States and England, as well as the rest of the Jewish Diaspora, is that "after a long

\textsuperscript{25} Halakha (from Hebrew) is the collective corpus of Jewish religious law, including biblical law (the 613 Mitzvot) and later Talmudic and rabbinic law as well as customs and traditions. Halakha guides not only religious practices and beliefs, but numerous aspects of day-to-day life.
period of weakness and decline" (Don-Yehiya 2005:167) amongst the orthodox Jewry, there seems to have been a remarkable resurgence of the last 20-25 years (Waxman 1998). This rise does not necessarily imply that the proportion of orthodox numbers in the Jewish Diaspora has increased as such; at least this cannot be fully documented, as no survey has been made in this specific area. However, amongst many scholars there does seem to be an assumption that what we have witnessed in recent years is in fact a steady rise in both actual numbers as well as percentage (Waxman 2004; Don-Yehiya 2005).

On this matter of the proportion of the modern and the ultra-orthodox segments within the orthodox Diasporas, Professor Don-Yehiya explains that it is "extremely difficult to assess [what] the relative share of the Haredi (Ultra-orthodox) and the non-Haredi groups within American orthodoxy [this also applies in the English context], as there is no survey in which respondents were asked to identify themselves in this term" (Don-Yehiya 2005:165). But according to Professor Waxman (Waxman 2004), the modern orthodox segments now comprise up to three-quarters of the entire orthodox Jewry of today (Don-Yehiya 2005:165). This high proportion of modern orthodox Jewry has another significant impact as this group has a much more positive attitude towards Zionism and the state of Israel, as well as a more positive outlook and relationship with the non-Jewish society in which they reside (Waxman 2004; Don-Yehiya 2005; Ben-Rafael 2008).

We do know from several surveys that the orthodox segments in the Diaspora have become much more religious in recent years (Don-Yehiya 2005). And one of the main factors researchers agree on, is that during the last part of the 20th century, orthodox movements became much better organized. This applies both to the Ultra-orthodox and the modern orthodox movement. The number of yeshivas and religious orthodox day schools, both in the US and in the UK, has increased and so has the number of religious students (Waxman 2003). Naturally and as mentioned before, this also indicates that there seems to have been a general rise in the orthodox population within the Diaspora. One of the consequences of both the improved organizational structures and the remarkable growth in orthodox day schools and yeshivas is that it has underpinned the general tendency amongst certain groups of diaspora Jews to gravitate towards the process of religious resurgence. In England a rapid growth of non-orthodox religious movements has intensified the "orthodoxation" of the

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26 Yeshiva: Institute of Jewish Talmudic learning or a Jewish religious school.
orthodox movement, as it has meant that the core members of the orthodox movement now mostly only comprise "real" orthodox Jews (Don-Yehiya 2005). And in the context of the American Jewish Diaspora, Don-Yehiya notes that, "during the last quarter of the 20th century, American orthodox Jewry has become much more organized, active, assertive, and self-confident group than it had been" (Don-Yehiya 2005:187), and later in his article he continues to explain that in general, the orthodox segment has become much more committed to religious tradition. So what we can conclude here is that there is a general trend in the Jewish Diaspora, and especially within the orthodox segment, to become more and more observant and that this group's strength and influence have also risen over the last two decades.

It is interesting to note here that the general assumption amongst scholars of less than forty years ago was that secularization of the world population would be the most likely outcome of the process of modernization. But according to a number of surveys conducted during the last 15-20 years, quite the contrary has in fact happened. And this does not only apply exclusively to the Jewish population, it would also seem to reflect a more global trend. More and more people today are embracing religious movements and more and more are embracing the more radical and orthodox of these movements in particular (Marty & Appleby 1991), as also mentioned earlier in the theoretical chapter.

An additional point to make here is that the process of religious resurgence amongst the orthodox segments of the diasporic Jewish community has in fact caused many internal conflicts within the Jewish diasporic community as a whole. Especially when it comes to the American Diaspora. The non-orthodox segments that comprise the vast majority of the Jewish Diaspora, have in recent years shown a growing resentment both to the orthodox segments within their own society and to that within Israeli society. The main reason for this is that these orthodox religious segments are exerting a disproportionate influence not only on religious-related issues but also on political issues in general. What is more, there is an apparent tendency for the orthodox (modern as well as classical) to support the more rightwing, nationalistic segments within the Israeli political establishment. Historically, the vast majority of American and, to a certain extent, European Jews have seemed to share much more liberal political values than their orthodox counterparts, at least according to various
surveys. And as a consequence the broad section of diaspora Jews has taken radically different stands on various issues, when compared to the positions of the orthodox Jewish population. One important issue that is worth mentioning in this context is the debate around "Who is a Jew?" as it typifies some of the recent developments within the Jewish Diaspora. The question of who is a Jew has in fact been debated throughout Israel's history, as it is an inherently sensitive issue connected to Israel's status as a religious or secular society. The debate was reinvigorated in the 90s, during and after the tremendous influx of Russian Jews that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990-1. Originally the debate was an internal Israeli conflict between the orthodox and non-orthodox populations, and it started as a reaction to the demand from the orthodox segment to tighten the Law of Return in accordance with the law of Halakha. Shortly after, this strict religious interpretation began to be used in particular by Ultra-orthodox organizations in America, who saw the debate as a tool for extending their power within the diasporic communities, but chiefly within the Israeli political system itself. Ultra-orthodoxy in the Diaspora and Israel were united in their stand and for the very first time in Israeli history, Jewish orthodoxy in the Diaspora vigorously intervened in what could be seen as an internal Israeli debate.

The debate was extremely bitter and to some extent quite hateful in its rhetoric, and it highlighted the ever-growing polarization amongst Jews themselves, both in the Diaspora as well as within Israel. The debate showcased the religious resurgence of the orthodox communities and also revealed the growing self-assertiveness, confidence and not least power that this group has wielded for the previous two decades. Eventually the non-orthodox segments and parts of the modern orthodox movements joined together and managed to stop the changes of the Law of Return; a law which was basically an attempt by the orthodox to prevent a significant number of Russian Jews, whom they did not regard as "real" Jews by Jewish religious law, to immigrate to Israel.

What the debate reflects is in fact a growing tendency within the Jewish diaspora population to involve themselves in internal Israeli political and religious affairs. Both the orthodox and non-orthodox diaspora organizations have in recent years displayed a hitherto unprecedented interest in Israeli politics. This especially applies in the case of orthodox

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diaspora organizations that now openly support the Israeli orthodox parties and organizations, in their struggle to gain influence and power in Israeli politics. But lately there have also been signs of change amongst the non-orthodox organizations, as they experience growing fears that Israel might be in danger of losing its liberal, democratic values and of becoming more and more religious, under the growing influence of the orthodox segments. As mentioned earlier the orthodox segments within the Jewish Diaspora tend to have a more *exilic* interpretation of their situation compared to that of the non-orthodox segments. As a consequence they also sustain a less assimilative attitude to their host countries and have over the years had a much closer relationship with their religious brethren in Israel.

People within the orthodox diaspora visit Israel on a much more frequent basis than the non-orthodox (Sheffer 2005). In truth it must be said that the orthodox Members of Diasporas in general tend to display a much keener sense of solidarity towards Israel and, as we shall see, generally tend to adopt a more rightwing and hawkish stand on political issues, especially when related to the Arab Israeli conflict.

**POLITICAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY AMONGST ANGLO-SAXON JEWS**

If one takes a historical glance at the development of the relationship between the world’s various Jewish Diasporas and the Israeli state, one finds that it has undergone tremendous change. As we shall see, the changes that have played the most vital roles cover three main actors. The first to be mentioned here is the internal development within the Diaspora itself. The second is the development in the relationship between the Jewish Diaspora and the host country (in this case, the UK though more importantly the US, where by far the largest and most powerful Jewish diaspora reside). And thirdly there is the development in the relationship between the Israeli state and the Jewish Diaspora (here again this is especially the case in relation to the United States). As Judith Shuval writes, “There is a complex triadic relationship among these actors each of which is differentiated into a range of sub-groups, which may differ considerably with regard to levels of commitment, self interest, power and interest in each other. In addition to issues of cultural inter-dependence and ongoing social interaction, there has been a strong trend toward politicization of the relationships in recent years. Thus diasporas have been mobilized to influence political outcomes in real home countries and to
provide economic aide...” (Shuval 2000:46). As we shall see, these changes have to a large extent been most visible amongst those secular Jewish segments of the Diaspora, which have influenced the internal developments in Israel itself. But there have also been noticeable changes amongst the orthodox groups, especially when it comes to the modern orthodox segment of the Diaspora.

Prior to Israel’s independence, major Jewish groups in both America and some other Western European countries (most notably France) showed a very hesitant and sometimes even hostile attitude towards Jewish nationalism (Sachar 1996:717). In England this picture was somewhat different, as the overwhelming majority of the British Jewry had, at least since 1917 shown a very strong support for the Jewish national movement as well as a strong commitment in working towards the establishment of a Jewish state in the English mandate of Palestine (Laqueur 2003:394). If one takes a closer look at the Jewish Diaspora communities, in the context of who was supportive and who was hesitant or even opposed to the Zionist enterprise, one finds a very clear pattern. As mentioned earlier, the Zionist vision was a predominantly secular movement embracing almost the entire spectrum of ideological strands of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Socialism and its many interpretations were especially common ideological features represented in the movement. And it was to a large degree, these socialist (Labour) ideological trends that shaped the state-building process during the first 20 years of the Israeli state’s existence. What was striking, at least when seen through the lens of today, was that the overwhelming majority of orthodox Jews in the diaspora were very reluctant, and either completely rejected the Zionist idea or at most passively accepted the birth of Israel but mainly as a consequence of the Holocaust. A small but less influential group of religious orthodox Jews did embrace the Zionist vision at the time, but they were only very few in numbers, and in the eyes of the Orthodox mainstream community were to a large extent considered religious deviationists (Vital 1975).

Following Israel’s establishment, in the wake of the Holocaust, the overwhelming majority of the world’s Jewry did eventually come to support and indeed embrace the new Jewish state. But it took a number of years and two more wars before Israel really became the centre of interest that it is now, especially amongst the American Jewry (Kolsky 1990; Sacher 1996; N. W Cohen 2003). During the post-war period a broad section of American Jews still seemed to prioritize their own diasporic society’s integration into the American mainstream society. As a
natural consequence, Israel played a lesser role as an identification marker. One of the clearest signs of this was that the American Jewry would primarily choose to channel their financial support internally into their own Jewish diaspora institutions. "The period before 1967 was one that saw only limited involvement of American Jews with Israel" (Cohen, S 2002:9). The fact is that the American Jewish society of the post-war period adopted what Yossi Shain calls a "post-war ethnic identity" within the framework of "universalistic liberalism". Phrases that underline the tendency to adopt liberal values in the struggle for issues such as minority rights etc. Many Jewish organizations and individuals played a significant role in the formation of various organizations that took part in issues related to the protection as well as the struggle for equal rights for various minorities. The fact was and still is that the vast majority of diaspora Jews in the western hemisphere, as Gabriel Sheffer observes, “...no longer regard themselves as being in the Galut (Exile) in their host countries” (Sheffer 2005:4) and therefore the Jewish national aspiration was of secondary importance, as their main interest was directed inwards, towards their own host countries. This is in fact a trend that applies generally, that integration into the host countries is one of the more significant attributes of diaspora communities. In this respect it is not unusual that Jews residing outside Israel did not hesitate to identify as members of the Jewish Diaspora, in contrast to previous historical periods when Jews had in general identified themselves as being an integrated part of the religious Jewish nation.

It was after the Six-Day War in 1967 that the broader sections of the American Jewish Diaspora first started to seriously include Israel as an important facet of their Jewish identity. But from that point on, the Jewish state had in fact become a central identification marker for not only the American and English Jewry, but also for Jews in the rest of the world. As Yossi Shain writes, in context of the aftermath of the ‘67 war and the Diaspora’s subsequent increase of financial support for Israel, “They [the American Jews] underwent a kind of mass conversion to Zionism, and the UJA [United Jewish Appeal Inc], through Israel, evolved into ‘America’s Jewish religion’”(Shain 2005:25). Money started to pour into Israel in unprecedented amounts, and not only from the American Diaspora society, but also from all over the Jewish world. It is not an exaggeration to say that at this point in history Israel suddenly moved to centre stage for the vast majority of diaspora Jews. What is interesting to notice here, is that during times when Israel seems to be under threat of extinction (at least as perceived by many in the Jewish Diaspora) Israel moves to the centre stage of Jewish diaspora
consciousness. The Six-Day War is the most significant historical example, but similar reactions can be observed also during the Yom Kippur War in 1973, and during the Second Intifada (Shain 2005). I will return to this issue later in the chapter in connection with issues related to security and securitization.

This should not of course be interpreted as meaning Israel failed to play a significant role for diaspora Jews prior to 1967 or during times when Israel was not at war. Famous benefactors such as the Rotchilds, Montefiore and de Hirsch donated vast amounts of money to the Zionist enterprise, as did many others across America, France, England and other parts of the Jewish Diaspora. There was powerful Zionist organizations in countries like Australia, South Africa, North America and East and West Europe who contributed both financially, politically and culturally to both the establishment, as well as building up of the new state. Jews from Great Britain also played their part. By 1967 the Anglo-Jewish population in Israel exceeded 10,000. These Jews had decided to leave their countries of birth and move to the new Jewish state. They took active part in the state building process and the majority of British newcomers did in fact arrive just after the establishment of Israel in 1948. Moreover, five hundred British Jewish soldiers volunteered for the newly established Jewish army both just before and during Israel's War of Independence. In the aftermath of the war, British Jews took active part in the establishment of a number of kibbutzim, while other English Jewish immigrants established themselves as businessmen or took up occupations in the Israeli public services. Others found jobs in the banking and insurance sector (Sacher 1996).

Many British Jews came with a professional background and took jobs as teachers, doctors etc. The overwhelming majority of these Anglo-immigrants were secular Jews who identified with the secular Zionist movement and its vision of a Jewish state (Sacher 1996). As secular nationalists, many British as well as other European Jews wanted to participate in building up a secular Jewish state. It was a similar picture amongst the North American Jewish immigrants of those days too. Between 1947 and 1967, 15,000 North American Jews made Aliyah (Waxman 1989). Their members formed sixteen kibbutzim across the new country; however the majority of North American immigrants confirmed the main patterns of their English counterparts, as most simply resumed their former middle class vocations by becoming teachers, doctors, dentists, engineers, technicians etc. American Olim took jobs in the public services, just like the British newcomers, and they took up jobs in organizations such as the
Jewish Agency, Jewish National Fund etc. In the period between 1948 and the end of the Six-Day War in 1967, emigration from America and Canada averaged between seven to eight hundred Jews annually. Compared with the huge size of the Jewish diaspora population, which at that time amounted to around 5.7 million, these Aliyah figures were indeed very low. This also when compared with the British figures of those years, which averaged around four hundred annually. It is important to notice that the English Jewish population was less than 10% of the American, so proportionally the English figures for Aliyah were far higher. In the aftermath of the Six-Day War the numbers of immigrants to Israel, both from America and England increased dramatically to about one thousand, five hundred and six thousand respectively. But this increase only lasted for a short period of about five years. Since then it settled at a steady annual level of around one thousand for the English Jewish immigrants and three thousand for the North Americans.

To understand the dynamics of the American and British members of Members of Diasporas relationship with the state of Israel, one must take a closer look at the Israeli state’s attitude and relationship towards the Jewish Diaspora. For many years the overall picture regarding Israel’s attitude towards the Diaspora was that of Galut (Exile). It was a profoundly negative orientation, which "proclaimed that the continued existence of the Diaspora was abnormal and hazardous for national survival and that it was inferior to life in Israel" (Sheffer 2005:15) as Gabriel Sheffer explains. Until the 1990s this profound negation of the Jewish Diaspora was to a large extent upheld by both Israeli politicians and also a large segment of the Israeli population. Israel and its population have over the years expected, demanded even, that the Jewish Diaspora both recognize Israel as the centre of the Jewish world, as well as extend substantial solidarity and financial loyalty and support. To a large extent the Jewish Diaspora has responded positively towards these demands, at least when it comes to the Jewish segments of the Diaspora who have over the years supported the secular Zionist vision for Israel. One of the main contributions that Israel welcomed from the Diaspora was a constant influx of new immigrants, as Jewish immigration was perceived, especially from the Israeli viewpoint, as a profound way to strengthen the state’s security (Shain & Barry Bristman 2002). To a certain extent, at least on the surface, this policy was very successful, as immigration figures show that almost three million Jews have immigrated to the land of Israel.

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29 CBS: Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics; statistical abstract of Israel 2006
30 Ibid
since 1948\textsuperscript{31}. But as we touched on earlier, only a very small percentage of these new immigrants have come from Jewish centres such as America and Western Europe. Israel and the Zionist organizations across the world have over the years worked extremely hard to convince people from these Jewish centres to make Aliyah, but as we can see from the figures obtained from North America and England and other Western democratic countries this has been to marginal effect, despite Israel and the various Zionist organizations allocating huge resources, both financially and in terms of manpower to the cause of getting Jewish people to make Aliyah.

In Britain alone, the Zionist Federation, which is an umbrella organization for UK-based Zionist organizations, has registered more than a hundred and fifty different organizations throughout the UK\textsuperscript{32}. In North America the numbers are even higher. The various Zionist organizations do not only promote the importance of making Aliyah, they also work on other educational, cultural, political and financial issues, in efforts to strengthen the bonds between the Diaspora communities and Israel. "Organization and the regular operation of organizations are of critical factors in the existence of all Diasporas. In this context, the Jewish diaspora has been noted for the multiplicity, quality, and efficacy of its organizations" (Sheffer 2005:7), writes Gabriel Sheffer in his paper “Is the Jewish Diaspora Unique?” In many respects the effect of this work has been to buttress the bonds between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, as we shall see later in the chapter. But when it comes to the matter of convincing Jews in the Western democratic countries to make Aliyah, one has to say that the success has so far been limited. The fact is that neither the American, nor the English Jews feel a need today to make Aliyah. And one of the most important reasons for this is that the vast majority of Jewish Diasporas live in free, democratic societies in contrast to previous historical periods, when most Jews did in fact share the Israeli view that they lived in a state of (Galut) exile. But according to Sheffer, today "90\% of the world Jewry permanently reside in 20\% of host countries rated highest in 'human development' which is an index of quality of life" (Sheffer 2005:16), and these demographic changes seems to have had a significant influence both on the unwillingness to make Aliyah, but also on issues related to the broader identity and identification patterns within the Jewish Diaspora. Moreover the number of core members in the Jewish Diaspora is diminishing, and according to Sheffer this has to do with the high ratio

\textsuperscript{31} ibid
\textsuperscript{32} See Zionist Federations homepage: http://www.zionist.org.uk/
of intermarriage and full integration into the host society (Sheffer 2005). The general effects of such demographic changes within the Jewish Diaspora is twofold: firstly, they have a much greater self and collective legitimization, which means inevitably that they are less inclined to make serious plans concerning Aliyah; and secondly, they do not feel ashamed of pursuing their religious and cultural Jewish life in their homelands. These changes seem to have had the most significant influence on the more secular segments within the Jewish Diaspora. In research carried out amongst in particular Americans, scholars have demonstrated an ongoing process of alienation and apathy towards Israel, at least up until recent years. As Steven Cohen writes; "American Jews had become decreasingly attached to Israel" (Cohen, S 2002:12). This decline in attachment has taken a number of forms. Thus, during this period, American Jews grew less enamoured of Israelis, less interested in Israel, and less active in supporting Israel through political activism and centralized philanthropic contributions. In the last five to ten years there has been a change in this trend, but for several decades the decline of attachment between especially the American Jewry and the state of Israel has been significant. There are naturally exceptions: the more orthodox segments within the diaspora communities both in America and Britain have over the last two decades shown a higher and increasing level of attachment to the Israeli state, not least towards their religious brethren in Israeli society.

Before describing the contemporary relationship between Israel and the orthodox diaspora of the US and the UK, some important historical events, which have had a significant bearing on the overall Diaspora homeland-relationship, must be presented. The two most important developments that will be dealt with here relate, firstly, to the political-ideological development of the aftermath of the Six-Day War of 1967, and secondly, to a more recent development that has occurred in consequence of the Oslo peace deal of 1992-93.

As explained earlier, the American as well as the European Jewry did not regard Israel as their main focal point before the war in 1967. Instead their concerns and hopes to a very large degree mirrored those of their non-Jewish American and Western European counterparts. And as we have already touched on, Jews in the United States and to a large degree Western Europe had accomplished a high level of social acceptance in their societies. And not least, were experiencing a personal and collective security, something Jews had hardly ever before enjoyed. And with the Israeli victory in the Six-Day War, the American and to a large extent
the whole of the Jewish Diaspora, experienced for the first time in modern history a strong sense of pride (Sheffer 1996; Shain 2007; Moore 2008). It was as though Israel’s successful struggle and victory had come to symbolize the Jewish fate as a whole. A fate which concerned and gave pride to the Jewish nation of the entire world. This sense of pride and self-confidence was in fact shared by almost all Jewish communities in the Diaspora, but for the American Jewish Diaspora such changes were without doubt the most profound. It is important to note that both during and after the war in 1967 almost the entire Jewish population and the Israelis in particular, perceived the war in the light of the nation’s survival. The prospect of another Holocaust preyed on the minds of many Jews of those days. Some of the consequences of this, such as the rise in donations and in the numbers of new immigrants, have been mentioned earlier, but now I will turn to the more ideological and political changes, which occurred both in Israel as well as in the Jewish Diaspora of America and the UK in the aftermath of the war.

As a result of the Israeli victory in the Six-Day War, and not least its occupation of the West Bank and East-Jerusalem, a wave of national-religious resurgence occurred. This tendency was most profound in Israel, but on a much lesser scale it also hit sections within the Diaspora Jewry. In contrast with the religious-nationalist movement in Israel, which had become an integrated part of Israel’s political fabric during those early years of Zionism and its nation building process, the new generation of national-religious members took on a much more radical and militant stand in the wake of the 67 war (Lustick 1988; Silberstein 1993; Aran 1995; Don-Yehiya 2005). This could be witnessed, both in connection with issues related to the territorial conflict with the Arabs, and also more broadly on general religious matters. The growing radicalization of the national camp and also the subsequent rise of its powerbase, especially in recent times, must be seen as a gradual process which has taken place, not only as a direct consequence of the victory in the Six-Day War, but also as a result of the growing number of Zionist radical yeshivas in Israel (Don-Yehiya 2005). The growth of yeshivas over particularly the last two decades is not only a phenomenon peculiar to Israel, during the last 30 years one can in fact trace similar trends throughout the Jewish Diaspora in general. And as we have touched upon earlier, this trend is especially apparent in the British and North American Diaspora context.
What characterized the national-religious ideology of the generation that followed after 1967 was that it came as a “singular kind of response to modernization and secularization as well as to the Zionist awakening” (Don-Yehiya 2005:157). While ultra-orthodoxy and classical modern orthodoxy in Israel and the Diaspora “put its emphasis on the centrality of religion and the uncompromising stand with regard to the integrity of Jewish values and life” (Don-Yehiya 2005:170), modern Israeli orthodox yeshivas, as well as their Jewish educational sister-institutions in the Diaspora, embraced a unique, radical nationalist ideology: an ideology, originating from the political religious theory of Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook and his son rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. In contrast with the Ultra-orthodox, Rabbi Kook's religious ideology was not linked to a segregationist strategy. Indeed, quite the contrary, Rabbi Kook promoted an expansionist approach where the centrality of religion was to be "expressed in the extension of its influence to all areas of individual and social life" (Don-Yehiya 2005:170), as Professor Don-Yehiya explains. This interpretation of Judaism finds its most significant expression in the national-religious approach to questions related to the occupied territories. In his religious theory Rabbi Kook has attributed what Don-Yehiya calls a "sacred status" to Jewish nationalism and the whole Zionist vision. The rising tide of Jewish nationalism was for Rabbi Kook a clear signal of what he and his disciples interpreted as the “beginning of the redemption of the Jewish people in the messianic age” (Shahak 1995). Jewish sovereignty over the entire Land of Israel as described in the Bible was not only a hope held in context of the Messiah’s return, but also a religious commandment instigated by God that his chosen people, the Jews should actively engage in the building of the ancient "Jewish land" in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Rabbi Kook founded his first yeshiva in Jerusalem in 1924, what later became known as the Merkaz Harav, and his son Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook became the head of the yeshiva after his father’s death in 1935. In contrast to his father, Zvi Yehuda Kook took a very activist stand, and his followers in the movement Gush Emunim made this religious “ideology of activism” their main political approach (Lustick 1988; Friedman 1990; Aran 1995; Sandler 1996; Don-Yehiya 2005).

One of the key reasons why Rabbi Kook’s religious nationalist ideology has been unable to fully take root in the Jewish Diaspora is his strongly negative approach to the Jewish Diaspora itself. As Don-Yehiya writes, "To a large extent this relates to the existential condition of the Diaspora Jews [...] as it by its very nature, involves the demand for an immediate immigration of all Jews to Israel and the rejection of Diaspora Jewish life" (Don-Yehiya 2005:172). In fact the
negation of the Galut is deeply profound within the national-religious movement, as their entire ideology stresses making Aliyah as an absolutely vital component of the redemption process of the Jewish people. There is however signs that Rabbi Kook’s nationalist-religious ideology and theory are slowly but steadily gaining influence amongst some American and English diaspora segments (Don-Yehiya 2005). And during my fieldwork I also met quite a number of French, Argentinean and Scandinavian Jewish youngsters who had embraced the more radical nationalistic strand of Rabbi Kook’s religious Zionism. This development should partly be seen in the context of more and more yeshiva students from the Diaspora enlisting in one of the many yeshiva programs offered to foreigners; programs, which often last for one to two years with students typically both living and studying in the yeshiva they attend. Many of these yeshivas have in recent years become increasingly more religious nationalistic in their worldview.

The fact is that the Israeli modern orthodoxy has to a large extent (and particularly over the last fifteen years or so) shown a growing influence on the modern orthodox Diaspora community. As Chaim Waxman writes, “It was not until the 1990s that modern orthodoxy began to recoup some of its position with Orthodoxy [in America]. To some extent, it has been strengthened by developments in Modern Orthodoxy in Israel. As the late Charles Liebman observed, ‘contrary to all expectations, a new Modern Orthodox elite has emerged in the past few years’. The close connections between the American Modern Orthodox and their counterparts in Israel have been documented” (Waxman 2004:8).

The close and bourgeoning connection between the orthodox diaspora and their brethren in Israel seems to have had some interesting side effects particularly in regard to immigration to Israel. As Sheffer noted, “…even [if] they [orthodox diaspora Jews] do not rush to ‘return’ to Israel” (Sheffer 2005:5), we have still in fact witnessed a small but steady rise in Aliyah over the last three years. And this has been especially so amongst the Orthodox segments from Western countries like France, the UK and America. Some scholars claim that this specific rise should be seen as interconnected with the significant growth in anti-Semitism of those areas, especially Europe. And in the case of France this would certainly seem most plausible. But in the case of the rising figures emerging from the UK and North America other factors should

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33 According to figures on Jewish Agency homepage: http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/About/Press+Room/Aliyah+Statistics/nov30.htm
also be considered. Indeed, in my opinion, crucial among these factors is the growing influence of the orthodox Israeli sector on the orthodox communities in the Diaspora; and this is a pattern born out quite strikingly in the profiles of some of the new immigrants to Israel.

Some of the recent patterns of UK immigrants to Israel in fact demonstrate that over 50% of British Jews who made Aliyah described themselves as orthodox, and over 10% as ultra-orthodox. Only 25% described themselves as traditional or secular. And when we examine the figures of North-American Jews making Aliyah, we see the same patterns occurring. As Michael Landsberg of the Jewish Aliyah Centre in New York notes, “…Aliyah has increased during the two and half years since the beginning of the Second Intifada. Jews who self-identify as Orthodox make up 56% of the North American Olim. Jews who self-identify as Conservative comprise 22% (up from 11% three or four years ago). About 5% identify as Reform. The remaining 17% report themselves to be unaffiliated.” As we can see, orthodox Jews comprise well over 50% of the new immigrants from the Anglo-Saxon Diaspora Jewry and if we look at the migrant-settlers this percentage are even higher.

JEWISH DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS, LEARNING INSTITUTIONS, YOUTH AND ALIYAH ORGANIZATIONS

As mentioned earlier, the third theme to be explored in this chapter will be that of the influence of the diaspora organizations and Jewish educational institutions, and their impact on the maintenance, promotion and reinforcement of the relationship between the Jewish Diaspora and Israel. As a consequence of their direct (and indirect) influence, these institutions in effect act as promoters for making Aliyah. In the context of this research, both entities (institutions and organizations) should be understood as one unit, as both take upon themselves the role of building and shaping diaspora identity. From now on I will refer to these as “Diaspora-homeland related institutions”.

In a historically well-established, state-linked classical diaspora (Sheffer 2006) like the Jewish Diaspora in North America and Great Britain there is an extensive network of organizations as

35 ibid
37 There are however no surveys that document this.
well as a wide range of educational institutions designed for people of both genders, all ages and across a whole spectrum of cultural, religious and political orientation. In this case offering an environment in which Jews of all kinds can cultivate their own religious, cultural, Zionist and/or political orientation. These institutions are designed by their leaders to actively shape key elements of what constitutes Jewish diaspora identity. And in the case of most of the migrant settlers represented in this research, these institutions can be seen (alongside people’s individual family upbringing) to have been largely instrumental in Aliyah eventually becoming a viable opportunity for the individual diaspora Jew. Of course this should not be understood as representing a direct link between an individual choice to move into a settlement in the West Bank, or just simply make Aliyah, and that individual’s organizational and/or educational affiliations within the Diaspora. However there is no doubt that for a great number of Diasporas, involvement with these institutions has posed a significant influence on both the American, British as well as other Jewish people who eventually decide to make Aliyah. A finding that will become apparent to the reader when reading the case-story chapters. As an important addition to this section, I will take a small detour by including two further institutions: a) Aliyah organizations, and b) the settlements.

The Aliyah organizations are singled out as an important focal point because in many cases they are not only what one can describe as a neutral tool in people’s Aliyah process, but also because some of them become deliberately involved in the mental process of an individual’s choice to make Aliyah, specifically in relation to settlements in the occupied territories. As we shall see later, in at least one of the case studies that represent the broader section of my empirical material, some of these Aliyah organizations sometimes become the most influential actor in the individual migrant’s choice of community.

It is also important to include a focus on the settlements, as these communities are especially effective at promoting themselves as viable alternatives to other towns and communities in Israel. Their extensive and highly professional outreach work, in addition to their effective and successful integration procedures, is widely known in the Aliyah sector. They are regarded as offering some of the best integration centres for newcomers and consequently become both directly and indirectly involved in the migrant settler’s choice of community, as well as becoming important agents in shaping the individual migrant settler’s socialization processes.
I will try to explain in brief the more general rationality behind why such institutions and organizations are created, as well as why former members of Diasporas, who have since become Israelis, often decide to join or sometimes even take charge of these organizations. Moreover I will specify what kind of organizations I am dealing with. Finally, I hope to provide a thorough insight into the strategies employed by these organizations when trying to mobilize people for their main cause of supporting and influencing people to make Aliyah to Israel.

Diaspora-homeland related institutions are established primarily for two reasons. Firstly to fulfil the task of maintaining ethno-national identities for members (Sheffer 2003:27), a commitment that is shared with diaspora organizations in general. Secondly, and in this context more importantly, because certain actors (both core members within the Diaspora, as well as in the homeland itself) feel such institutions should prioritise a strong commitment to maintaining and strengthening the contact between members of the Diaspora and their homeland. Diaspora-homeland related organizations are mostly populated and run by core members of the Diaspora. As Yossi Shain and Ahron Barth summarize, "Core members are the organizing elites, intensively active in diasporic affairs and in a position to appeal for mobilization of the larger diaspora." (Shain, Y & A Barth 2003:452) It is not the purpose of this chapter to deal with specific institutions, leaders or members, as this will to some extent be covered in both the case-story chapter and the subsequent analysis chapter. But there is a vast array of reasons why certain core members of the Diaspora undertake this kind of work and assume responsibility for the formation, maintenance and financing of Diaspora-homeland related organizations. Let me simply list some of the more important or obvious reasons for this engagement: family tradition; family bonds with Israel; emotional connectedness to the state and its people; recognition within the diaspora community; influence within the diaspora community; financial incentives etc. Indeed the list could go on much longer as these motives are often rooted in complex psychological drives on the part of the individual. The motives mentioned here should not be seen as separate or distinct from each other, or indeed hierarchically positioned; each motive is in fact often entangled with other motives, which over time are subject to further change as well.

In general, Diaspora-homeland related organizations are created by actors wishing to mobilize people from the broader section of the Diaspora to rally behind an agenda, that of
what they believe to be their land of origin. In the case of Jewish institutions, this objective has a long and rich history, as it stretches all the way back to the Babylonian exile (R Cohen 1997; Sheffer 2003). Thus, historical references to organizations from such early periods of Jewish history are irrelevant to the case in hand. Instead references to contemporary Diaspora-homeland related organizations will be used in the next chapter. Naturally, in this context one has to mention the strong links between the various Zionist diaspora organizations formed prior to the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948, as many of these organizations are still operational in the Diaspora of today (Rosenthal 2002; Shain 2003; Sheffer 2006).

But let me outline exactly what we are talking about in the context of Jewish Diaspora-homeland related institutions, as the field is very broad indeed. First of all, it is important to emphasise that what will be focused on here are those institutions that in one way or another assume the role of strengthening the relationship between the Diaspora and the Jewish state, sometimes to the extent of directly or indirectly promoting Aliyah. In America and Great Britain such institutions are numerous, but in general one can distinguish between two different types: Jewish educational institutions and Zionist organizations.

Of course Jewish educational institutions in general are not exclusively dedicated to homeland-related issues, as by their very nature they work within a much broader curriculum. However in many Jewish schools, strengthening ties with Israel and learning about Zionism is an explicit part of their aims and ethos. Israeli national holidays are often celebrated to underline shared values and goals, and Zionism and the history of Israel are often significant parts of the curriculum. Research shows that intensive learning environments that commence at an early age do have a significant impact on people’s general outlook. In recent years and after several surveys, the North American and European Jewry have realised that, if they want to halt the ongoing assimilation process that has so dramatically diminished the numbers of the Diaspora Jewry over the last thirty to forty years they must prioritize education amongst the diaspora population as this is the single most effective tool for slowing assimilation. Jewish education, they have realized, is the best tool for revitalizing Jewish identity amongst kinsmen. The same acknowledgment can also be detected within Zionist circles, both in the Diaspora and amongst other Israeli decision makers, as they too have been demonstrating a much greater willingness to allocate
increasing resources to educational programs in the Diaspora and especially for students wishing to participate in educational programs in Israel itself.

One of the major initiatives of recent years has been the Taglit-Birthright Israel project. Here young members of the Diaspora who have never been to Israel are offered a free 10-day tour of the country. This massive project is co-sponsored by the Israeli government, The American Jewish Federation and other private philanthropists. Again, such initiatives are taken in order to strengthen ties between the members of Diasporas and the homeland, thus providing a sense of connectedness with other Jews and the Israeli state for young people, who might otherwise have only a loose connection with their kinfolk in the Diaspora.

Jewish religious educational institutions are another important organization to be considered, though not necessarily because of their emphasis on the strong connection between the Jewish people and the ancient Jewish homeland. Given this emphasis, many would assume these institutions to have been a direct (or indirect) driving force for promoting the Aliyah agenda. But this is in fact far from the case, as most historical religious educational Jewish diaspora environments like the yeshivas are, and always have been, strictly orthodox. And due to their religious theological beliefs, the promotion of migration to Israel has historically never been on their agenda. It has in fact been only recently that a limited number of religious educational institutions have started to promote Aliyah in anything resembling a direct manner. And this, as was mentioned earlier, has been more to do with the growing influence of their orthodox brethren in Israel.

Jewish Diaspora-homeland related organizations such as youth or women's groups, or other Zionist organizations, constitute the other entities important to the case in hand. Members enrol in these organizations either out of free will, or, as in the case of children or youngsters, because their parents have decided for them. Most Diaspora-homeland related institutions and organisations are member-paid organizations, and the services provided by these organizations often include a wide range of things such as religious, cultural and in certain cases political, informal education. Activities such as camps, tours to Israel and scout ventures are used as vehicles to foster both a sense of closeness amongst the participating members, as well as maintaining and strengthening members’ ties to the homeland. In certain organizations, activities like political activism on Jewish and Israeli issues are common. As we shall see later, organizing demonstrations, handing out leaflets and participating in public
debates are all potential activities that members of these organisations might deal with, though only in certain cases. Formal and informal exchanges with sister organizations in other parts of the Diaspora, as well as in Israel are made on a regular basis and member participation in conventions, seminars and workshops is encouraged and used to exchange, inspire, and educate those involved. Some organizations offer further activities, which on the surface have nothing to do with their main endeavour: for instance creative workshops, self-defence courses, etc. But these side-activities are often used to attract and mobilize new members to the organization.

Even though it is not in the remit of this research, we must also consider the great amount of Diaspora-homeland related organizations that are founded mainly just to collect financial resources for Israel. In America, homeland-related organizations lobbying on behalf of Israeli and Jewish interests are a crucial part of the picture. But the core aim of Diaspora-homeland related organizations are, as Daniel Rose writes, "Zionism and Aliyah [...] and towards the fulfilment of this nationalist agenda" (Rose 2005) However in practice the picture is much more blurred as many of these organizations have a double agenda, as has been previously stated. In short, Diaspora-homeland related organizations have in common a nationalist agenda, as they all strongly support the Zionist enterprise. At the same time, these organizations and their general members do not see the Jewish Diaspora as a population living in exile, and therefore do not necessarily promote the main objective of mobilizing Jews to migrate to Israel. Instead they provide the glue with which the Diaspora and the homeland can maintain their strong attachment. Therefore the homeland can always expect a strong support, whether that be financial, political or cultural from these organizations. Though naturally there are exceptions, as we shall see later when some of these organizations take a much stronger stand by trying to mobilize Jews for migration.

Due to the differences in their attitudes and goals, Diaspora-homeland related organizations employ varying strategies. As outlined in my theoretical chapter where I borrowed the seven categories of strategy from Gabriel Sheffer’s book Diaspora Politics, Jewish Diasporas and Diaspora-homeland related organizations mainly undertake what Sheffer describes as the communalist strategy (in the North American case) and the corporatist strategy (in the British case). Both strategies are "aimed to achieve a reasonable degree of ‘absorption’ of diasporas into the host society, but not full integration, which might lead to assimilation - all the while
maintaining continuous and unwavering relations with the homeland. To a great extent, implementation of that strategy depends on the creation of elaborate diaspora organizations and trans-state networks to connect the diaspora to its homeland and to other dispersed segments of the same nation” (Sheffer 2003:164). And this is pretty much what most of the organizations here are trying to achieve, though there are some exceptions: namely those organizations drawn to a more separatist strategy, where it is “intended to establish an independent state in a Diaspora’s former historical homeland and facilitate the return of all or most segments of its ethnic nation” (Sheffer 2003:170). Concrete examples of such organizations, their ideology and how they operate in practice will be elaborated on in the subsequent case-analysis chapter.

Let us now turn to the Aliyah organizations, as they are the most obvious example of organizations adopting the separatist strategy. Aliyah organizations come in various types. Firstly you have the professional organizations that are run by the Israeli government or by bodies affiliated with the government. These organizations offer assistance and a wide range of services, including: financial support; help with creating networks in Israel; assistance on issues related to location and employment; and also general advice on Israeli culture etc. Such organizations frequently employ former members of Diasporas who now reside in Israel, who tend also to show a great deal of enthusiasm for helping and assisting diaspora Jews in their migration to Israel.

Other organizations in the field represent various political groups, movements, or parties. And some of these even work closely with the professional government organizations. Such organizations usually operate at a grassroots level, and are run mostly by lay people and only rarely by professionals. Aliyah organizations operate all over the world, wherever there are Jews. In North America and Britain they have offices in all the major cities and they often coordinate their work with other diaspora and homeland institutions and organizations. They promote the idea of Aliyah through Zionist organizations, but also through religious congregation; Jewish Universities and schools; and Jewish media such as magazines, radio, television, and increasingly the internet. In recent years some of these organizations have obtained very good results, especially in North America where growing numbers of diaspora Jews make Aliyah. Though as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the figures are still very low.
The success of these organizations can also be measured by the declining number of Aliyah returnees, as more and more people make a successful transition to Israel.

The process of Aliyah often takes a long time: years, rather than months or days. People prepare by building up savings, doing research into housing, taking language courses, exploring job opportunities, maybe even travelling to the country to search for a community in which to reside, not to mention tackling all the paperwork that is required before making Aliyah. Some organizations provide services across all these areas, and this inevitably means that the organizations and their employees come into very close contact with the applicants, which in turn means they potentially have a tremendous influence on the specific choices made by the individual migrant settler. As we shall see later in the case analysis section, this can have a tremendous effect not least on where the migrant eventually decides to settle.

Last but not least here, I will raise some of the more pertinent questions to be analyzed and answered in the coming chapters, such as: to what extent is the agenda of promoting Aliyah, on the part of the Diaspora-homeland related organizations, a primary factor in influencing and shaping diaspora identity, to the extent that individuals eventually choose to migrate to a settlement in the occupied territory. A second question is: what role do Aliyah organizations play in the choice of the migrant to move into the occupied territories? Before we turn to the issues in regard to theme concerning security I like to schematically line up the most important organisations dealt with in this thesis.

JEWSH ALIYAH ORGANISATIONS

NEFESH B’NEFESH

Nefesh B’Nefesh is a Jerusalem-based non-profit organization that promotes, encourages and facilitates Aliyah from the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom.

TEHILLA

Tehilla is a non-political voluntary union whose purpose is to encourage and support religious Aliyah.
**JEWISH AGENCY**\(^{39}\)

Facilitating Aliyah for Jews worldwide who choose to make Israel their home.

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**JEWISH DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS**

**BNEI AKIVA**

Bnei Akiva is the largest Religious Zionist Youth Movement worldwide. The organisation encourages Aliyah for its members.

**BETAR TAGAR**

Betar Tagar is the UK branch of the Betar organisations which again is the Revisionist Zionist youth movement.

*There will be other Zionist youth organisations as well as other Zionist movements mentioned in this research but the ones presented here is the most important ones scrutinized in this thesis.

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**SECURITY**

Let’s now turn to the last issue that of security and securitization, as this theme seems to sit right at the heart of the nascent migrant settlers’ motivation, both for making Aliyah and for moving to the occupied territories. As we shall see later in the case studies, the migrant settlers perceive security on three levels. These three levels are in many ways interrelated.

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\(^{39}\) Jewish Agency has a even broader mandate as they;

- Forging strong connections to Israel through a sequence of Israel experiences for teens and young adults – from Birthright's short visit to Israel, to Masa's live-and-learn experience from 5 months to a year.
- Facilitating aliyah for those who choose to make Israel their home.
- Engaging young Jews from Israel and around the world in social activism, infusing them with Jewish purpose and connecting them to one another, while addressing the needs of vulnerable populations in Israel.
- Reconnecting Jews from the former Soviet Union to their Jewish roots from which they were forcibly separated over 70 years of communist rule.
- Rescueing Jews from countries of distress and re-settling them in Israel.
- Serving as first responder to crises in Israel and around the Jewish world.

See: http://www.jafi.org.il/JewishAgency/English/Home
The first relates directly to the migrant settler’s personal security. By this I mean the actual or perceived threat to them individually or to their family, or indeed the community in which they have resided since making Aliyah, as described by the actors themselves. Regarding this level of personal security we must distinguish between the two stages of the Aliyah process: the period prior to making Aliyah, and the period that follows once they have settled within a specific community in the West Bank. The second level of security relates to the migrant settler’s perception of the overall security situation, as pertaining to a) the Jewish people and b) the state of Israel. The history of the Jewish people seems to play a vital role here, as many of the migrant settlers link the history of Jewish persecution explicitly with the present security situation of Israel, and also with instances of anti-Semitism in the Diaspora. Finally, the third level encompasses issues originating from the global developments in terrorism: a theme that seems not only to have shaped the migrant settler’s security perceptions on a personal level, but also (in what may seem counter-intuitive) to have provided a prime motivation for moving to a settlement. But this matter is also informed by their perception of the security of the state of Israel not to mention the present and future security of the Jewish people in general. The concept of ontological security will as we shall see in the forthcoming analytical chapters very much feed into all of the three above mentioned levels of security.

For now, I will avoid the issues relating directly to the individual migrant settlers, as they will be dealt with in both the case study interviews and their respective chapters of specific analysis. Instead I will continue on a more general track by describing security as seen in connection with the framework of Diaspora-homeland relationship. As noted earlier, this will be to provide a background for understanding what motivates Jews from the Jewish Diaspora to move into a settlement in the occupied territories. An additional topic concerning the settlements will be included at the end of this chapter in a bid to comprehend what happens during the process of socialization that a new migrant settler undergoes once they have settled in their new home. An understanding of these issues is closely linked to the development in the relationship between the Diaspora and Israel, as seen from within the context of Israel’s security situation, and also, to how that security situation is perceived by the Jewish Diaspora in general as well as by the individual migrant settler. As touched upon earlier, the dramatic changes in attitude towards Israel amongst the American Jewry both during and after the Six-Day War, is one of the clearest examples of how the issue of security influences the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora.
In recent years there have been important new developments on the Israeli security front and, as we saw in the case of the Six-Day War, such issues are influential in shaping the Diaspora-homeland relationship. These new security developments have come at a time when other issues are exerting a significant influence on the Diaspora-homeland relationship. It is important to mention here the ongoing and bourgeoning Israeli 'Kulturkanpf', which the Jewish Diaspora at large, and particularly the American Jewry, has been an important partaker in, especially in recent years. Before scrutinizing the issues surrounding the topic of security we need to look at the key elements of this so called Kulturkampf, as this will help us construct a clear picture of the current relationship between Israel and parts of the Jewish Diaspora. Moreover, this debate will in many ways serve to illustrate some of the basic differences between the values of various religious Jewish segments in both the Diaspora and Israel. And last but not least, it will encapsulate the general struggle for what many have called "the future of Israel's soul", a struggle in which the migrant settlers are integrated and active players, as we will see later.

In recent years there has been what Yossi Shain describes as a "growing fluidity and diversity of Jewishness" amongst Jews both in the Diaspora as well as Israel. The source of this fluidity can be traced in the growing religious detachment of large segments within Jewish societies across the world. And as stated previously, this comes at a time when the religious Jews are becoming more religiously observant. During the 1990s the conservative and reform movements in America started a large campaign, calling on secular Israelis to join a struggle for Jewish pluralism. This was mainly, though not exclusively, a reaction to growing pressure from the orthodox society regarding changes to the aforementioned Law of Return: a crucial issue for Jews living in the Diaspora and especially for people who had converted to Judaism through reform or conservative congregations. The effect of the proposed stricter laws, were they to be implemented, would have been to prohibit converted Jews of reform or even some conservative congregations, from making Aliyah to Israel.

Another more general question raised during the same campaign was the level of animosity within the reform, conservative and secular elements of the Jewish Diaspora as well as the Israeli Jewish population. This was, broadly speaking, in response to what is perceived as the general rise in power and influence of the orthodox segments within Israeli society. Many Jews in the Diaspora and Israel felt (and indeed continue to feel) that the power of orthodoxy
is not only influencing domestic policy, which inevitably impacts on non-orthodox Israelis as well as orthodox, but also that it could eventually undermine the entire Israeli liberal democratic state itself, if it is not resisted. All non-orthodox segments in both the Diaspora and Israel found a common platform on these issues. There were two opposing fronts that characterized the Israeli debate; it was, so to speak, a struggle between what has been termed 'Israeliness' and 'Jewishness'. This term reflects a quite new trend within Israeli society, where a growing sector of secular Israeli Jews, who do not identify with religion, are starting to react against what they see as the growing orthodoxization of Israeli society. As cultural Jews living in a mainly secular Israeli society, these groups have in recent years become more and more willing to defend the secularity of their democratic society. Despite the many issues and values over which the secular Israelis and the reform and conservative religious Jewish Diaspora disagree, during most of the 1990s they all found common ground in the fight against orthodoxy.

Interestingly, an additional consequence of the heated debates was that the orthodox diaspora movement quickly became actively engaged, and inevitably their contribution was that of strong support for their orthodox brethren in Israel. It is important to note here, that even after the heyday of the debate, which as mentioned earlier were during the Nineties, these issues have continued to crop up both in the Israeli and Jewish Diaspora media. A lasting consequence has been a general increase in diaspora involvement in both Israeli politics and religious debates.

What eventually moved the agenda away from these very important issues, essentially the future of Jewish identity, were the breakdown of the Oslo peace talks and the subsequent outbreak of the Second Intifada. Once again security was brought back to the headlines both in Israel and in the Diaspora. As Yossi Shain so concisely notes, "when security is threatened debates over identity recede." (Shain 2002:5). But maybe Yossi Shain is not entirely correct in phrasing it in this way, as security issues seem to be intimately interwoven with expressions of Jewish identity. It is my contention that the question of security does in fact inform and shape both Jewish identity and the debate surrounding it. To be fair, this is in fact what Shain deals with in much of his writing, and what I suspect he means here is that when the question of Israel's security arises, the identity debate tends to take on new and different forms. Put in a different way, one could say that new kinds of identity themes start to crop up in the
debates: themes which perhaps deal with the more fundamental, existential questions, but which are naturally interlinked with broader identity issues. As we shall see, all actors: ultra-orthodox, modern orthodox, reform and conservative, secular Israeli, as well as a sizeable portion of the remaining Jewish Diaspora, in one way or another (however complex) either use or are informed by issues of security when viewed in the context of the Israeli state. What I mean is that it is precisely when the overall security situation of Israel comes to the forefront of the agenda, that the question of identity also takes centre stage. It is true though, as Shain also notes, that when "perceptions of acute insecurity are evident, they may rapidly create a sense of kinship of solidarity." (Shain 2002:5). But solidarity far from means a change in basic values on the part of the actors involved. Nor does it change their basic assessment of how to deal with the security of the state of Israel in the long run. It is certainly true that for a short period of time all the actors seem to pull together and unite around common short-term strategies: strategies which they deem necessary in times of severe crisis, as concluded by Yossi Shain and Barry Bristman in their article "Diaspora, Kinship and Loyalty" (Shani & Bristman 2002). But if one takes a closer look at the more long-term effects of an immediate threat, it is also apparent that almost all the actors eventually fall back into their previous positions. What we have witnessed over the years is in fact a polarization of these positions, both on the political, religious and cultural front, and amongst not only Israelis but also diaspora Jews, and in particular the Jewish American Diaspora.

Some commentators have in fact predicted that this growing cultural clash could eventually turn into a civil war⁴⁰, but such predictions are in my assessment exaggerated and for a number of reasons. Firstly, because of the tremendous differences characterizing the basic values within the group orthodoxy: most notably the divide between modern and ultra-orthodoxy on issues such as their relationship with Zionism and the modern state. Secondly, because the vast majority of violent incidents, occurring in recent years, have been perpetrated by the ultra-orthodox youth, and have been limited in scale, rare and always without the use of firearms. Most ultra-orthodox people do not tend to carry firearms, as they do not enlist in the Israeli army. The most violent incidences, occurring in recent times, have been carried out by radical nationalist orthodox extremists, for instance the assassination of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Several unrelated surveys have been conducted

⁴⁰ See Uri Avnery; “Israel on the road to civil war” 2004.
http://www.redress.btinternet.co.uk/uavnery103.htm
amongst groups in this section of Israeli society, in particular the settler polls carried out by the Israeli Peace Now movement and also the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR). Despite being unrelated to the specific question of cultural clashes, these do shed light on some related issues. The questions in both surveys concern future disengagement from the occupied territories, and the people polled were settlers who invariably had families that would be evicted from their homes should Israel decide to withdraw entirely from the occupied territories. According to these surveys, which were carried out between 1995 and 2005, only a very small fraction (between 1 to 3 percent of the settler population) says they would consider violent resistance. Such a small figure in no way indicates that Israel is standing on the brink of a civil war.

Let’s return to the theme of security and in particular how it affects Jewish Diaspora identity markers and specifically what impact it has on religious Diasporas. While the ultra-orthodox segments of the Jewish Diaspora have historically been very hesitant about the Zionist enterprise, their connection with their brethren in Israel has over time engendered a growing attachment to the Jewish state. In general one can say that in times of crisis, especially during the Arab-Israeli wars and the First and Second Intifada, the sense of connection and solidarity with Israel has grown steadily amongst all groups of Diaspora Jews. And this also goes for the majority of the ultra-orthodox community. It is true however that quite a few ultra-orthodox rabbis have over the years interpreted Israel's difficulties, especially when related to security, as God's punishment of secular Israel. With this in mind, ultra-orthodox expressions of solidarity with Israel should be regarded as solidarity with the Jewish people in general rather than Israel per se. In the Talmud there is a maxim that calls upon Jews to be responsible for all Jews (Shani & Bristman 2002:79) and, consequently, expressions of solidarity have been practised by religious communities throughout Jewish history. Today we see quite an extensive financial contribution being made by ultra-orthodox diaspora communities and individuals, and directed especially towards ultra-orthodox congregations and organizations in Israel. If one compares philanthropic contributions to Israel it is striking how much ultra-orthodox contributions are targeted towards their own brethren compared with the general patterns. In that sense it would not be wrong to say that in general ultra-orthodox members of Diasporas care less for Israel as a state, yet because of their religiously-rooted solidarity for

41 Taken from Peace Now survey year 2002, 2003 & 2005
other Jews they nonetheless share a concern for Israel’s security as this is the land where most of the world’s Jewry live today. But there are also signs that Israel now plays a more significant role for the ultra-orthodox society, than it had done previously. One significant indication is their growing involvement in internal Israeli debates, especially when related to peace negotiations and land concessions in exchange for peace. While the ultra-orthodox members of Diasporas of former days either played a very neutral role or seemed to be generally indifferent to these issues, they now show a much more active and indeed hawkish attitude, by frequently opposing land concessions to the Palestinians. This is particularly the case with places they regard as holy and in that sense they have adopted some of the values that earlier belonged to religious Zionists. But as Yossi Shain notes, these patterns seem to have more to do with issues perceived as potentially compromising not just for the general security of the Israeli state, but more specifically the world Jewry as a whole. The orthodox Chabad movement’s generally right wing, nationalistic, political religious stand is a clear example of the tendency highlighted by Sheffer. Another aspect of such changes can be detected in the steadily growing rise in scepticism and implacability towards both the Arab neighbouring states and the Palestinians. Because of the intensified conflict between Israel and the Arabs over the past years, the general atmosphere within Israel and in the Jewish Diaspora worldwide is now one of anxiety and fear. This atmosphere inevitably worsened as the incidence of terror attacks rose during the Oslo negotiations between Israel and the PLO; it particularly intensified after the breakdown of the peace negotiations in 2000 and the subsequent outbreak of the Second Intifada; and last but not least, was exacerbated further by the outcome of the Second Lebanon war, the war in Gaza and Iran’s hostile stance towards Israel in the midst of its nuclear development program. All these factors have contributed to the more hawkish political profile of the ultra-orthodox Jewish Diaspora of recent years.

When it comes to the modern orthodox Jewish Diaspora, we can identify some features shared in common with the ultra-orthodox. In the face of increasing uncertainty over the security of Israel, the modern orthodox reaction has always been to rally behind the Jewish state of Israel. This particular religious Jewish segment has always had a very close relationship with the Jewish state, but in recent years this attachment has become even firmer as members of these communities visit Israel more frequently (either to see family and friends, or simply to travel the country as a tourist). We have also witnessed a recent trend of more and more
diaspora Jews visiting Israel for the express purpose of showing solidarity with the country (Brin 2006)

Another trend amongst young, modern orthodox American and Europeans Jews is their involvement in religious educational programs as has been previously mentioned in this chapter. This is something they do irrespective of the growing tension in the region: a factor that in former days kept most diaspora Jews, especially Americans, away from Israel. It is interesting to note that these close encounters between the Diaspora and homeland seem to have a tremendous impact on how modern orthodox members of Diasporas perceive Israel, as well as a pivotal role in shaping their religious outlook. One feature, which is of upmost importance to this research, is that modern diaspora orthodoxy seems to be increasingly influenced by philanthropists like Rabbi Kook and others in the Gush Emunim movement. Today we see more and more diaspora Jews adopting radical nationalist ideologies, even when it seems to contradict their diasporic life. And it is therefore not a surprise that we find the highest figures for Jews wanting to make Aliyah within this modern orthodox group, not to mention the highest numbers of those successfully doing so. Young couples with small children have been particularly represented amongst the Aliyah applicants of recent years. However this trend does not only apply to the young diaspora of modern orthodoxy, as according to statistics it extends to almost all age groups. In fact a growing number of rabbis in the Diaspora, from ultra-orthodox but mostly modern orthodox congregations, have in the aftermath of the Second Intifada, and again following the 9/11 terror attack in New York, promoted Aliyah more actively; with some rabbis even immigrating to Israel themselves. As we shall see in the case analysis there is in fact a strong correlation between the factual or perceived insecurity of Israel and the growing motivation for some members of Diasporas to make Aliyah. This trend can be seen as a particular driving force for the modern orthodox segments. In general one can say that in times of insecurity, Diaspora Jews tend to be divided in their approach. Some adopt more radical positions and rally behind the extreme, hawkish ideologies of the more radical, religious Israelis, while others adhere to their moderate views and rally behind political ideas very much in line with what mainstream Israelis believe. Support for the political solutions of Kadima, the Labour party and other centre-leftwing parties, and their proposals of land concessions for peace with the Arabs, is shared by many secular members of Diasporas. Surveys show that there is a tendency for more orthodox

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42 CBS, Statistical Abstract Of Israel 2009:
religious Jews both in Israel and the Diaspora to take a more conservative rightwing and hawkish nationalist position. Though in the case of diaspora Jews this tendency is far less apparent (Wald & Martinez 2001:387).

With the conservative and reform diaspora Jewry, which I will not be dedicating much space to here as they are only marginally represented in this research, we again find some of the same patterns mentioned above. In times of crisis and insecurity for Israel, their immediate reaction is to stand firm and rally behind the Israeli state and whichever Israeli government is in charge at the particular time. Financial contributions, for instance to victims of terror, have seen an increase in recent years, and expressions of political support for Israel in general have intensified. The latter is especially apparent amongst the American Jewish Diaspora. The conservative and reform groups are in many ways heterogeneous and represent all spectrums of political life. People who are more conservative and hawkish in their political attitude, for instance the members of AIPAC or other similar organizations, tend to become more rigid in their attitude when Israel is in danger. Others though, do not change their attitude at all. In general though, one can say there has been a slow drift amongst the world Jewry towards becoming more actively involved and more outspoken in their support for Israel. And this tendency should be seen as a direct reflection of what can be perceived as an uncertain and dangerous time for Israel, given the complex procession of events which span the collapse of the Oslo peace negotiations; global Islamist terrorism; instability in the Middle East, with America’s involvement in Iraq; Iran’s nuclear program; the Second Intifada; and finally the election of Hamas in the Palestinian territories (Shain 2002).

In the forthcoming chapter the four exemplary case stories will be presented and the chapter just presented should therefore be seen as the “field of inquiry” or the “socio-historical background material” informing these coming exemplary case stories that are based on the interviews conducted for this research. The first case story selected in chapter Five will be an interview with Laura as this particular case story introduces and scrutinizes some of the vital Aliyah organisations as well as shortly sets the scene of the start of the settlement enterprise, conducted shortly after Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip in succession to the Six Day war in 1967.
It was a warm, sunny Monday morning and I was driving on the road from Rehovot to Jerusalem. In a couple of hours, I would be visiting the settlement of Neve Daniel. I had arranged a meeting with Laura Ben David, an American born Jewish settler who had kindly agreed to let me conduct an interview with her in her home. The settlement, or Yesha, of Neve Daniel is located in the West Bank, on the main road between Jerusalem and Hebron. Neve Daniel is part of the settlement block of Gush Etzion, one of the oldest settlement blocks in Israel. The place has a long and rich history stretching back to the years before the state of Israel was established, and, to be able to understand the people and culture there, one has to know something of that history.

Gush Etzion consists of a block of communities situated in the southern area of Jerusalem. The first community was established in 1927 and was given the name Migdal Eden (Morrison 2004). The harsh physical conditions of the area forced the first settlers to abandon this settlement only two years after it had been established. In 1935, new groups of settlers began to build the village of Kfar Etzion, but this attempt also failed, this time due to hostilities from the local Arab population, and the village was evacuated in 1937. The third attempt came in 1943, when different groups of settlers established four distinct settlements with a total population of 450 adults. The Jewish National Fund had bought the land in 1942 and the four settlements that came into existence were Kfar Etzion, Masuot Yitzchak, Ein Tzurim, and Revadim. In 1948, during the war of Israel’s independence, all four settlements were destroyed and 240 men and women killed, with another 260 being taken into captivity. In the following years, no attempt was made to re-establish the settlements. The area now fell under Jordanian occupation, under the terms of the ceasefire agreement signed by Jordan and Israel after 1949 (Sacher 2003).
During the war in June 1967, better known as the Six-Day War, Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan; the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt; and also the Golan Heights from Syria (Gilbert 1998, Sacher 2003). In the following, abridged account of the history of the Israeli settlement activities and policies post-1967, the focus will be on issues solely related to the occupied territories in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and in this context, more specifically, the settlement block of Gush Etzion, where Neve Daniel is located.

In the initial, post-war period of 1967 Israel immediately annexed East Jerusalem and any surrounding areas of the city, while the other territories remained under Israeli military occupation. The occupation of these territories left large Arab populations under Israeli authority. More than a million Palestinians in the West Bank came under Israeli occupation (Oren 2002).

During the first decade after the war in 1967 the Labour-led Israeli government established relatively few settlements in the West Bank. Prior to the Six-Day War, the majority of Israeli leaders had believed that the building of civilian settlements in the land of Israel was one of the most important routes to improving the security of the state. All Israeli governments had contributed to the expansion and development of settlements ever since the state of Israel had first been established in 1948. However, following the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 the Labour-led government did not have any clear policies regarding the occupied territories (Morris 2010). Most members of the government held to the notion that these territories would be a good bargaining chip in future negotiations with neighbouring Arab states. And many in Israel were hoping that the military gains achieved during the Six-Day War could be translated into a comprehensive and permanent peace, through offers to return most of the territories to the Arab states during the negotiations that were to follow (Gorenberg 2006). However, instead of negotiations, the Arab leaders in Khartoum passed a resolution in August 1967 that shattered all hopes of peace for the foreseeable future. The key passage of the resolution was as follows: "No peace with Israel, No recognition of Israel and no negotiations with it" (Morris 2001:346).

The following year a movement of ideologically nationalist Israelis (for the most part religious), including many immigrants from the United States, led the movement to establish a
permanent Jewish presence in all of the occupied territories. Their primary goal was to prevent Israel giving up control of the newly conquered territories. The victory of the Six-Day War had inspired a reawakening amongst religious Zionists all over the country and the ideology supporting their campaign rested on three main arguments:

a) Security - The new territories provide a vital strategic buffer between Israel and Jordan, and the settlements are Israel’s main key to consolidating its hold on these territories and along the new borders.

b) Religious Zionism - The settlement of the territories, particularly those areas of Biblical significance to Jews, is the fulfilment of a divine right of the Jewish people to settle all of the Biblical land of Israel.

c) Historical justice - The Jews have a right to return to areas where there had been Jewish communities prior to 1948. Specific mention was made of the community in Hebron and the Gush Etzion block (located between Bethlehem and Hebron) both communities having been removed during the war in 1948 (Gush Etzion homepage43).

The first settlement to be established in the West Bank after the Six-Day War of September 1967 became Kfar Etzion. This community was established due to massive pressure from a group of people, including former residents and relatives of former residents of the Gush Etzion block (Morrison 2004). The settlement of Neve Daniel where Laura Ben David and her family were now living was established in 1982. This settlement is one of twenty communities in the Gush Etzion block; it is a religious, nationalist, Zionist, rural village and the orientation of the community is to promote "living in a Torah-oriented religious community, with emphasis on education" (Gush Etzion homepage). During the weeks running up to my meeting with Laura I had studied the historical background of the settlement and, in the last few days, had spoken to the Gush Etzion Regional Council representative Sara Weinreb. Sara Weinreb gave me an insight into the historical background of the settlement block of Gush Etzion and she also helped me establish contacts with some recent migrant settlers from USA and England now living in some of the different Gush Etzion settlements.

It was 9 am and I was waiting to catch a bus from the new central bus station in Jerusalem, but

43 http://www.gush-etzion.org.il/
my mind was already there in the West Bank. During the last couple of days, I had tried to focus on this important interview with a settler and my thoughts were now circling the many questions I wanted to put to Laura Ben David. I was unsure what to expect from this interview, but hoped that our first encounter would be a success. Ideally, I hoped to be able to convince Laura to share her Aliyah story with me so that I might gain an insight into the thoughts and motives of former Diaspora Jews who have chosen to move into settlements in the occupied territories. During earlier trips to Israel I had visited the West Bank many times, but I had not been there since the outbreak of the Second Intifada. During this session of fieldwork in Israel, which had now lasted for two months, a few violent incidences had erupted in the area, and so I had decided not to drive into the territories in a hire car. Instead, I had chosen to take one of the armoured buses that regularly drive people from Jerusalem into the West Bank. Some of the West Bank settlements are located close to the Green Line, while others are situated much deeper inside the occupied territories. However, the public bus service, which runs from all the major towns inside Israel out to the various settlements in the territories, is more than adequate.

After arriving in Jerusalem, and leaving my car close to the central bus station, I had to pass an extensive security check just outside the station. Security had just been heavily upgraded, as two suicide bombers had recently blown themselves up: killing four civilians, and injuring a dozen other people in the town of Ashdod. This incident had happened only a few days earlier. Outside the bus station, anyone wanting to enter the station had to go through an extensive body and luggage check. As I approached the bus on the second floor of the terminus, I took a quick glance at my fellow passengers and from the look of them, it appeared that half were soldiers and the rest either settlers on their way home, or Israelis with other business in the settlements. I could not see any Palestinians in the bus station and later found out that Palestinians did not have permission to travel on these buses. The first thing that struck me during our journey was that the bus stops at least ten times in the city of Jerusalem before entering the West Bank. After the extensive security-check at the bus station, I was wondering what the purpose of that sole, previous check had been. It was obvious that if a terrorist wanted to infiltrate the bus and set off a bomb, he might do so at any one of these other stops and no one would be able to prevent it. At the beginning of my bus journey, I felt rather alert: not nervous, but certainly very aware. I realized that every time we stopped and new
passengers joined the bus, I could not help staring at their faces and clothes. I was constantly thinking about what would happen if one of them were a terrorist. I felt a little embarrassed; it seemed as though I had caught something of the fear and anxiety that so many people in Israel suffer from. However, as time passed and nothing happened I started to relax. Thinking back though, I cannot help but wonder about the long-term impact of this state of constant anxiety. And I think I now understand how it feels to live in a permanent state of alert and how that can shape one's outlook on the world.

The landscape surrounding Jerusalem is very beautiful. As the bus moved, I could see the stony hilltops on the horizon, a typical sight in the outskirts of the city. On top of some of these hills I could see houses decorated with the red roof tiles typical of the settlements, and could see other hills too, which were completely bare. The bus drive took nearly a whole hour, along paved and well-constructed roads. Normally it would take just twenty minutes to drive to Neve Daniel, but since the start of the last Intifada, the route from Jerusalem to the settlement block of Gush Etzion had been changed so it avoided going through or passing any of the Palestinian villages between Jerusalem and the settlement block. Compared with my previous visits to the West Bank, I could see that the number of roads in this part of the West Bank had been increased tremendously as had the actual condition of the roads. As we entered the main gate of Neve Daniel, I noticed from the window of the bus that the first few people I saw were Palestinian building workers preparing the foundations for new houses in the settlement. I made a note to ask Laura why the Palestinians on the West Bank were prohibited from travelling on the buses (or rather the roads going out to the settlement), but that working inside the settlements was ok. However, as this was an issue I would go on to explore later with other settlers, I will return to it in a separate, analytical chapter.

A fence surrounds Neve Daniel and there are armed guards stationed at the gate. As the bus passed through the gate that day, I was stunned by how impressive the settlement and its surroundings were; there is a fantastic view from the hill, and on a clear day one can see most of the Jordan Valley to the West and nearly all the way to the Mediterranean Sea in the East. The surrounding nature is beautiful and the houses are big and modern with blooming gardens. The cleanliness of the streets and the surrounding areas is also quite an extraordinary sight. When I compared the overall environment to other places I had visited
during my trips around the country, Neve Daniel really seemed remarkable. In many other places you find that people throw their garbage on the side of the road, but there everything looked neat and clean and the pavement appeared as if swept just a moment ago. They even had recycling bins everywhere. I could not help thinking that it really reminded me of Denmark, where environmental concerns and civic hygiene are high on the agenda, unlike most places in the Middle East where such issues are often secondary. Another significant observation I made on entering the settlement was the extraordinary number of kids everywhere you looked. Most of these children were unaccompanied by adults. Even the very young ones were either alone or playing in small groups without parental supervision.

Close to the stop where I was to leave the bus, I could see a mini-van running idle. I had called Laura Ben David on my mobile phone back at the central bus station in Jerusalem, so that she would know exactly what time I would arrive. Now I could see from the window of the bus that she was waiting in the van to pick me up. My first impression of Laura Ben David was of a pleasant and healthy looking young woman. Her baby was sitting in a baby chair in the back. The child could not have been more than a year old and was sleeping as I got into the van. Laura greeted me warmly and a few moments later, we were driving to her house. Their family home was not far from where she picked me up, and as we went through the door I immediately assumed that there had to be more than one child living there. Everywhere I looked I could see toys: on the furniture and on the floor. On the table in the living room there were used cups and plates, and all manner of kid’s things were scattered all around the place. It had the feel of a real family home. Like my own in fact, back in Copenhagen. Laura asked me to take a seat while she prepared some coffee, and a few minutes later we were sitting and talking at her kitchen table. I already felt quite relaxed in Laura’s company; however our conversation was still somewhat formal. As the minutes passed though, the atmosphere began to loosen up a bit. As a way of getting my interview started, I told Laura about my research and she in turn asked me about my professional and personal background. The fact that I am Jewish seemed to have a very positive impact on our conversation and her attitude towards me slowly seemed to warm. I gave Laura a short account of my family background and told her that I grew up in a traditional Jewish family and had attended the Jewish school in Copenhagen. Then I continued by explaining why I felt it relevant to conduct research on the subject of Jewish Diasporas becoming settlers and her reaction was very positive. I could
sense that the initially, formal tone of our conversation had now been replaced by a more informal and familiar one. The atmosphere between us felt right and so I asked if we could start our interview. Laura replied that she was ready and when I asked her if it was ok to record our conversation, she gave her consent.

As I began the interview, Laura briefed me on some basic facts about her and her family: she had been married to Lawrence Ben David for fifteen years; she was born and had grown up in New York, in a modern orthodox Jewish family; when she was young, she had attended a Jewish orthodox private school. Laura pointed out that her primary school had not been Zionist as such, but that she had later attended a Jewish high school that was indeed a “Zionist school”, as she herself expressed it. Here the pupils had been taught modern Israeli history and had celebrated Israel's Independence Day etc. As a child she had never become a member of one of the many Zionist youth organizations located in the area where she lived, but many of her friends in her neighbourhood had been members of either Bnei Akiva or some other youth organization. Of course, she knew about the Jewish youth organizations, but nobody in her family encouraged her to become a member; it was not a tradition in her family. I could sense from this introduction to our conversation that Laura and her family were more classical orthodox than modern Zionist orthodox, as was the congregation that she and her family were members of.

Laura informed me that she had three younger sisters and an older brother, and that her father was an accountant and her mother a social worker. All her family lived and worked in New York. However, all four kids in her family had each been to Israel after finishing high school. Laura assured me that they had all had a very good time during their year there. During her stay in Israel, Laura had lived and studied in a very religious, anti-Zionist yeshiva in Jerusalem. She had only been seventeen and it was the first time in her life that she had been separated from her family. Laura told me that from a very young age she had always felt a special relationship with Israel. However, during her year in the yeshiva, which was located in Jerusalem, she had felt severely homesick: missing her parents, her sisters and brother, and not least, her friends. After a year, she decided to return to New York. Making Aliyah had not been on the agenda at that time, she explained.
Laura told me that she already knew from when she was very young (10 or 11 years old), that she one day wanted to move and settle in Israel. In fact she expected most of her family would also, one day soon choose to immigrate to Israel. She felt this was especially true of her younger sister and parents, who had expressed a strong desire to come. I asked if she could clarify why she had always felt such a strong connection to Israel and if she could explain in detail where this close attachment to the Jewish state might have originated. Laura paused for a few thoughtful seconds before answering my question. Then she said, “Israel has always been close to my heart [...] I think that it was the way I was brought up, even my parents wanted to live here when they were younger. They also wanted to make Aliyah”. Then she continued by explaining her belief that deep inside every Jew, each one knew that Israel was the right place to live. Laura added that this was of course what the Bible tells us and that in that respect she saw it as an obligation for every Jew to live in the “Land of Israel”.

I asked Laura if she could remember when she had actually taken the decision to make Aliyah. She answered that it had been during the First Intifada when she finally realized she had to leave the US and settle in Israel. When I asked her in what way this decision had been related to the Intifada, she replied, “Because all the rabbis said so [...] Israel was in the newspapers all the time and Israel was on everybody's lips [...] I think that that was why we came to think about moving to Israel again”. At the same time though, Laura explained that she and her husband Lawrence had always wanted to live in a religious society, alongside other Jewish people, in Israel.

After returning to New York, Laura started taking classes at the university. She wanted to become a nurse and after four years she finally graduated from the nursing school in New York. While studying, Laura met Lawrence Ben David and in 1986 they decided to get married. Laura subsequently gave birth to two girls while still a student. Then, following her graduation, Laura found a job as a nurse: a job she really enjoyed. However in those days, looking after two small kids and having a very demanding workload as a nurse, Laura found her life quite hard and stressful. From the very beginning of their marriage, Laura and Lawrence had frequently talked about making Aliyah and both were very sure that their future life would (and indeed should) be in Israel. Now they began to think in earnest about making that a reality.
Lawrence’s family background “differs in many ways from my own background” Laura told me, “He does not come from a religious family. In his home, they did not even observe the big holidays or kept the kosher rules.” At the age of 10 or 11 Lawrence was experiencing many problems in school and in the end, after quite a painful process, his mother decided to find another school for him in the local area. Eventually his mother found a small, private, Jewish school. Laura continued, “But she (Lawrence’s mother) was not aware at the time, that this particular school (that she had chosen for Lawrence and later for his younger sister) was a very religious orthodox school”. All the Jewish religious rules were adhered to very strictly, and soon after he started at the Jewish school the school’s rabbi took Lawrence under his wing, Laura explained. She added that the rabbi had given him a thorough religious education. The result of this was that within a year Lawrence and his parents started to have conflicts concerning religious issues. Lawrence wanted his family to observe the strict kosher rules he had learned at school. However, Lawrence’s family had their own ideas, and they did not have any intention of becoming religious. Lawrence began eating only non-meat products in his home; and then, after a few years, he decided to move into the orthodox school. It was then that Lawrence’s religious life at last began to flourish, Laura explained. Lawrence became very orthodox and since then has kept all the Jewish rules very strictly. This religious lifestyle is something that he and Laura have pursued all through their marriage.

After seven years, Laura and Lawrence were still living in New York. But in 1993 they started to talk again about making Aliyah, only this time they made what Laura described as “one of the hardest, but most important decision in our life”. However, before leaving for Israel, they wanted to move to Florida for a while so their kids could spend some time together with their grandparents on Lawrence’s side. Lawrence was born in Florida and his family were still living there. Laura and Lawrence’s plan was to spend two years in Florida and after that they would begin the process of making Aliyah. Consequently Laura, Lawrence and the two children all settled in Florida and after a few years, they had a third child. Laura explained that they felt very comfortable in their new life in Florida. They bought a house; both of them had good and well-paid jobs; and slowly the idea of moving to Israel seemed further and further away. Lawrence was working for a computer company and things went well for the first couple of years. By 1999 though, both Lawrence and Laura had become aware that something
was lacking in their lives. Again, she and Lawrence revisited the many hours spent talking about their desire to move to Israel. It took them seven years after moving to Florida, before they finally decided to fulfil their dreams and start the Aliyah process, in order that they could at last move to Israel.

Their decision to move caused a lot of resistance and hard questioning from their close families and friends in both Florida and New York. People kept asking them why they wanted to move to a place where bombs were going off time and time again, Laura recalled. The whole security question was at the forefront of people's worries, but there were also economic issues: being away from family and friends, and how they would find good jobs and be able to maintain the American lifestyle they were accustomed to. Laura and Lawrence had of course discussed and worried over all these issues and more, before making their final decision. However, the dream of having a life in “the Holy Land” was so important to them that eventually nothing could hold them back. One of the most difficult obstacles was convincing the kids, Laura remembered. It took the family more than a year before they eventually settled in Israel. This was after three separate trips to the country that took them all around the region: to different places, towns and settlements: meetings with organizations and people: Shabbat meals in various communities and much more. In the end, they found Neve Daniel in the settlement block of Gush Etzion and eventually decided to settle there.

I asked Laura why she and Lawrence had decided to move into a settlement in the West Bank. Laura explained that they had found Neve Daniel through a religious Aliyah organization called Tehilla. This group organizes pilot trips for people who are contemplating making Aliyah from countries such as the US, Canada, France etc. From the very beginning of their search for a suitable place to live in Israel, they had never thought about living in Samaria or Judea. “We just wanted to live in Israel”, Laura told me. In that sense, Laura and Lawrence never made a conscious and deliberate decision to move to a Jewish settlement and on many occasions during our interview Laura pointed out that the reason for moving to this particular settlement, Neve Daniel, was that they really liked the community and they loved the surroundings, the schools and the community lifestyle. It was during Lawrence’s second pilot trip with the Tehilla organization that they were introduced to a settlement situated on the other side of the Green Line. “But when he eventually came here”, Laura explained, “He
immediately knew that this was a perfect place for the family to live [...] He called me on the phone and told me that he was sure that he had found the right place”. Later Laura also visited the settlement and she liked what she saw. During the long period before finally setting up home in Neve Daniel, Laura and Lawrence tried to establish contacts with people in the settlement, by sending emails, writing letters and speaking on the phone with some of the residents whom they had met during their two visits. In this period, they also established contact with another Aliyah organization called Nefesh B’Nefesh. This organization was established shortly after Laura and Lawrence decided to make their Aliyah. The main objective of the Aliyah organizations is to assist the Diaspora Jews by helping them through the whole Aliyah process, offering guidance and support on issues like job seeking, finding the right community for the family and helping out on all practical matters before, during and after arrival in the communities.

The two Aliyah organizations that Laura and her family had been involved with, both before and after their arrival in Israel were, as I have already mentioned, Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh. Both organizations operate in North America but while Nefesh B’ Nefesh works exclusively with Jewish people of North American origin, the Tehilla organization also has branches in France, Brazil, England, South Africa, South America and Eastern Europe.

Tehilla is a voluntary Aliyah movement, founded in 1982. Its goal is to "stimulate Aliyah within the Jewish Communities, to accompany the individual in the process of his/her Aliyah and Absorption” as the movement itself states in its mission statement. The movement has assisted some 12,000 persons making Aliyah from East Europe and has organized 91 pilot trips for Jewish people contemplating making Aliyah from countries all over the world. Moreover, it provides practical assistance in areas of housing, education, employment, rights and Aliyah preparation etc. The movement’s primary mission is to assist what they themselves identify as religious Aliyah. More than 3,000 people in Israel work on a voluntary basis for the organization and an additional 3,000 volunteers form the basis of the movement abroad. The Tehilla movement has extensive cooperation from the Israeli government authorities as well as a widespread network within the settler community.

44 See Tehilla’s homepage: http://tehilla.com/
The organization, Nefesh B’Nefesh, was founded in 2001 in Florida. In the organization’s Inspiration and Mission Statement it says that its aim is to support “a revitalized and steady wave of North American Aliyah” so it can ”create a much needed and perpetual human bond between North America and Israel”. Nefesh B’Nefesh wants to provide assistance to what it believes are “hundreds and thousands of Jews yearning, dreaming, and willing to make Aliyah”. It claims that the reason for the relatively small number of North Americans actively wanting to make Aliyah at present is that these people need ”assistance and help in making that dream a reality”. The organization says that its mission is to increase the number of Jews making Aliyah by ”removing the financial, professional, and logistical obstacles that prevent many would-be Olim (newcomers) from fulfilling their dream”. Nefesh B’Nefesh provides applicants and newcomers with financial grants, employment opportunities, social services etc. The financial foundation of the organization is from fund-raising, as organized by the Orthodox Union (an American religious Jewish organization who coordinate fund-raising efforts across the United States and Canada through their synagogue base), and also some $2 million in funds rose by the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews in 2002. Today, Nefesh is one of the largest and most successful Aliyah organizations in North America. The organization receives extensive cooperation from the Israeli state and a number of prominent Israelis actively support their work. People such as Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the Israeli President Moshe Katzav and Shimon Peres the leader of the Labour Party, have all written letters of endorsement in which they praise the work of Nefesh B’Nefesh. The financial grants and loans given by the organization to an applicant can amount to anything up to $18,000, and in 2002 alone the organization brought more than five hundred North American Jews to Israel. In 2003, this number rose to about a thousand. This accounts for nearly half the annual total of immigrants from North America to Israel. Since its founding in 2002, the organisation has brought over 26,000 Olim (new immigrants) from the USA, Canada and the UK.

Both Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh provide help and assistance for members of the Jewish Diaspora who are considering making Aliyah to Israel. However, as we have already seen, neither organization distinguishes between those areas that the international community has recognized as being part of the Israeli state and those that it has not; whether it be the borders drawn up before the war in 1948 (as recognized by the UN in the partition plan of

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45 See Nefesh B’Nefesh homepage: http://www.nbn.org.il/
46 See: http://www.nbn.org.il/about/statistics.html
1947), or the land Israel gained after the War of Independence in 1948-49 (not recognized by any international bodies), or even the areas that were occupied after the 1967 war (over the West Bank, Gaza and Golan heights). This position naturally reflects something of the political attitude of both Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh with regard to the settlements. However it does not mean that one can assume these organizations are a straight reflection of government policy, though their actions and services do clearly underpin (however indirectly) the Israeli government’s policy of settlement expansion.

I will argue that Aliyah organizations such as Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh, amongst others, have an influence on the patterns of migration within the Israeli state. Moreover, by exercising this influence these organisations actively contribute to the distribution of immigrants not only within the Israeli borders, but also the settlements of the occupied territories. Both Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh provide services that effectively sustain the steady influx of people to the settlements, particularly by including some of the settlements of Samaria and Judea in their pilot trips. In addition, Nefesh B’Nefesh also provides financial assistance to all Aliyah candidates regardless of where they settle, and this applies also to people who decide to become settlers within the Yesha communities. Both organizations arrange pilot trips for would-be newcomers and the settlements of the territories are a significant part of this repertoire. The Tehilla organization also offers a program called Kesher Ishi where families from Israel correspond with families in the Diaspora on issues related to Aliyah. Again, this “family’s adoption” scheme also includes families from various settlements in the occupied territories. The Tehilla movement homepage is linked to most of the settlement movement homepages on the internet and vice versa. Another Aliyah organization that was closely related to the Jewish settlements was the Aliya Ben Simcha organisation. This organization was founded in 1999 by a group of settlers. The primary goal of Aliya Ben Simcha was to recruit Israelis, as well as Diaspora Jews, to prepare the ground for expanding the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza. This organization also used some of the services that Tehilla provided. Tehilla has now taken over all the Aliyah service from the Aliya Ben Simcha organisation.

Laura, Lawrence and their four children arrived at Ben Gurion airport in a Nefesh B’Nefesh
airplane from New York, in the summer of 2002. On the plane with them were a further 400 passengers, all keen to start new lives in Israel, almost all of them arriving with their immediate families, having left friends, homes, jobs and safe and secure lives behind.

Five of these families were picked up by a member of the settlement of Neve Daniel, and arrived in their new homes two hours later. What these families then experienced, as they were driven into their new community, still stands as one of the strongest and warmest moments of their entire lives. People from the whole community were chanting and singing as the bus entered the gate and when the five families came to their new homes they found them fully equipped, newly decorated and with a warm letter of welcome greetings plastered on the front door. When Laura thinks back on that day and the days that followed, it still fills her heart with warmth and her eyes with tears, as she told me during our interview. The house that Laura and her family had moved into when they first arrived was rented; recently though, they had bought their own house, which they would soon be moving into once complete. The new house was bigger than the one they currently lived in, as was the garden. They were really looking forward to moving into their new home. Laura told me that the house they had owned back in Florida had also been very beautiful. They had sold it on leaving for Israel and the money from the sale of their old house would be financing this new one.

I asked Laura if looking back, she could tell me why she and her husband had decided to move to a settlement like Neve Daniel, given that it was in occupied territory, and also if she could elaborate on the ways in which she felt they had benefited from this choice. First, she mentioned the good opportunities for a smooth and successful integration into Israeli society. Then she went on to tell me that the price of the house they had purchased, was very reasonable and that they were very lucky to have such a large garden. Their relatively low outgoings, out here in the settlement also meant that she did not need to work. Moreover, to be at home with her newborn baby was something she really enjoyed. A further advantage of living here was that the internal buses were free of charge and all the kids’ activities and schools were also free and situated within a very short distance from their house. "I do not even have to go out of my house", she said. "All my children can find their own way to whatever they need to attend". Laura also identified the close proximity to Jerusalem as another advantage, and went on to stress as well the strength they drew from living in the specific
atmosphere of a religious community, not least the way people treated one another. "People here are very helpful and caring", she noted.

A number of times during our conversation, Laura pointed out that she and Lawrence had not moved out here for ideological reasons. "We did not say to each other that we wanted to move to the other side of the Green Line, but now we are here, we will stay because of ideological reasons", Laura explained. It seemed that it never crossed her mind that Judea, Samaria and Gaza might not be a part of Israel. "I do not care about if they call it the green, the yellow, grey or the pink line, everything is Israel, and Israel is Israel [...] and that is why we decided to live here". Laura was clearly quite unequivocal about this issue. She had then gone on to add that their decision had also had a lot to do with their children and the fact that Gush Etzion has very good schools. I somehow had the feeling that Laura was a little annoyed by my question. It was as if she felt she had to defend herself for living out here in the West Bank, but I decided not to dwell on the subject. After a short moment of silence, Laura continued, "Now we are here, we as a family really have learned to love this place, and to love all of Gush Etzion [...] It is a very special place both in modern Israeli history as well as in the past, all the way back to the times of Abraham. We love this place and it is a very special place for us". I grew curious about the way she was expressing herself, it seemed as though it was of great importance to Laura that she convince me of just how much she loved this place and I was unsure why or where this need was coming from. However, before I got the opportunity to ask her, she continued, "This is not a special place for the Arabs [...] they do not have a special relationship to places like Gush Etzion. This is just earth to them. I will never go anyplace else".

After arriving in Israel and moving into Neve Daniel, Laura assumed full responsibility for bringing up their kids. Laura was now a housewife and really loved being together with her kids and taking care of the household. She regarded her new life as a housewife with great satisfaction and saw it as a privilege to be able to take care of her own children. At the same time though, it also felt like a huge responsibility. Her husband Lawrence had found a job in a computer firm not long after their arrival and his income was enough to support the whole family. Before the family made Aliyah, they had needed an income from both Laura and Lawrence in order to support themselves. Back in Florida, Lawrence had worked for a large computer company, but as the whole computer crisis had worsened towards the end of the
Nineties, he lost his job. Later he started his own computer business and after two years, this business was up and running, and doing well. Laura still had her job as a nurse: a job she really enjoyed, but which she also found quite exhausting. When they finally left for Israel, Lawrence had to close his computer business down and, because the business was still quite young, he was unable to sell it or extract any money from it. He got his job in Israel through a young American computer company whose employment policy was to provide jobs for new Olim (people from abroad who have recently moved to Israel). The company was located in Jerusalem, so Lawrence commuted on a daily basis between the settlement and the town.

During my interview with Laura, I asked her if she would describe the differences between their life in Florida and their new life in the settlement. The first thing she mentioned was that she used to participate in many, varied community and charity schemes, and that she regarded herself as a very active and sociable person who could not keep still. In America, she was always involved in many different kinds of activities. She sat on her kid’s school board: participated in religious community work, etc. However, this had changed a lot since moving into Neve Daniel. The main reason she offered for this was her lack of Hebrew language skills. In the first stage after their move, she had felt inadequate because she was unable to fully understand the conversations of other members of the community. Lately though, it had become much easier as her Hebrew had improved. However, she also felt that her children needed her and that they were her priority. This had also limited her ability to participate in the various committees and working groups that existed within the community. Besides looking after the kids and taking care of the household, she was also writing a journal, a kind of a diary that she hoped would one day be published. Laura had been writing this journal since before the time when they first came to live in Neve Daniel. This diary has in fact now been published in the form of a newsletter and is distributed to people who are tempted by the prospect of making Aliyah. The idea of making a newsletter that other people can read came from an employee working for the Aliyah organization Nefesh B’Nefesh. Currently, Laura’s mailing list includes almost 150 people who all receive her newsletter by email. The content of the newsletter offers a thorough insight into Laura and her family’s life. It describes life in the community and how she and her family have experienced the whole Aliyah process. Laura told me that she was willing to give me a copy if I was interested and I accepted her generous offer.
I then asked Laura if she could give me a thorough account of how the community procedure works when a person, or family want to move into the settlement. Her account was twofold: firstly, she described her own family’s experience of moving to Neve Daniel; and secondly, she told me how the procedure worked in general, not only within Neve Daniel, but also within all the settlements of Gush Etzion. As Laura had already mentioned, their first encounter with Neve Daniel had been when her husband Lawrence had visited the community whilst on a pilot trip organized by the Tehilla organization. Here he had established his first contacts with some of the members, during a Sabbath meal arranged by the community. Like other West Bank settlements, Neve Daniel often arranges meetings for people who are contemplating moving to the territories; Jews from all over the Jewish Diaspora, as well as people within Israel, are invited to these meetings. These gatherings are just some of a variety of events that settlers and the settlement movement stage when looking for new members for their outposts out in the occupied territories.

Also, the settler community regularly arranges introductory meetings within Israel itself: the main purpose of these is again, to convince Israelis to move into the West Bank and become members of the communities there, or to at least actively support the occupation of those territories. These gatherings are held for the broader public in all the major cities in Israel.

By coincidence, during his visit to Neve Daniel, Lawrence met a resident who knew Laura’s family from New York; when Lawrence returned to Florida, the family kept in contact. When Laura, Lawrence and the children eventually came to Neve Daniel in the summer of 2002 they were interviewed by members of a committee, whose responsibility it was to oversee the absorption of new families. Laura described this interview as pleasant and informal, and said they later had to take a psychometric test: a procedure that all prospective members have to undergo when applying for membership of the community. I asked Laura if she knew why the community held such interviews and tests. Her explanation was that the committee wanted to be sure any new members were not lunatics or extremists who might endanger the whole community. She explained that the tests and interviews should be seen as an important tool (maybe a relic of earlier days, she said, when the settlers and especially those in more isolated regions, were at high risk of danger): a tool that could offer the settlement some reassurance
that new members could be trusted, that they wouldn't be likely to go out and do something crazy (in the manner of Baruch Goldstein). The reason why Laura regarded the procedure as harking back to an earlier time was that today hardly anyone who wanted to move into the community was refused. "They just want to know if we are nice and normal people", she told me. Laura pointed out that she and Lawrence had actually enjoyed the interview, "The members of the committee were nice and open". She did not understand why people were afraid or nervous about the interview, or the subsequent vote that takes place after one year. The voting procedure is the last step before one becomes a full member of the community. The committee announces the names of the upcoming members in the community newsletter, which is then distributed to all the permanent members. If nobody has any objections to the people applying for membership, then these people are accepted and henceforth regarded as full members of the community. Laura, Lawrence and their four children were accepted approximately one year after their arrival.

During the first year, Laura and Lawrence had decided to keep an open mind in case they might find an alternative to the community of Neve Daniel. They were not entirely sure at the beginning whether Neve Daniel would be their final destination, but after a year, they decided to stop looking at other places. Today they feel extremely happy in the community and they cannot imagine living anywhere else. Laura told me that she really liked the other members of the community and she repeatedly praised the high standards of the schools in Gush Etzion. This did not mean however, that they felt they had already adapted completely to their new life. As Laura pointed out, "all of us sometime miss our old life back home in Florida and this especially goes for the kids". Laura told me that their life had become much easier over the last couple of months though, as each of them had now established closer friendships with other members. Moreover, Laura was confident that their quality of life would continue to improve as they developed still closer friendships within the community. "The main key to a good integration is through good social contacts", Laura explained. She was very confident that her kids would soon feel at home, particularly because they attended a whole range of different community activities, in school as well as during free-time activities such as sport and music. "One of the biggest struggles we as a family had after moving into the community was our lack of Hebrew skills", Laura said, "but this has become less and less of a problem."
Laura talked a lot about her kids during our conversation. Their wellbeing and how successfully they will eventually integrate are crucial issues for Laura and very much at the forefront of her thoughts. Repeatedly she pointed to the importance of the schools in the community, which she praised not only for their high educational standards, but also for being the most important institutions with respect to her children’s integration. Another important issue that she highlighted during our conversation was the freedom and responsibility that her kids had gained since moving into Neve Daniel. Laura pointed to the good neighbourhood that afforded her, as a parent, a sense of safety when it came to her children’s wellbeing. Each and every parent looks after all the kids there not just their own, and that in turn gives Laura’s children themselves a lot of freedom compared to when they lived in Florida. “They are not so dependent on us as parents, because there are always other adults around” she explained. “Here in our neighbourhood everyone helps each other”.

We had to take a break in our conversation at this point, because Laura had to feed her baby. Over the next few minutes, I had time to reflect on what Laura had told me so far, during the first forty-five minutes of this interview. To my mind, the most striking thing was that Laura had only told me positive stories about life in the community. At the same time, I had the feeling during our conversation, that life was not always so easy, and sensed there were areas within community life that Laura saw in a more critical light. I was unsure why I had this feeling, but I think it may have had something to do with the way she glorified everything when talking about their new life in Neve Daniel. I determined to ask Laura to compare her life in Florida with the life in her new community in a more thorough way, hoping that this might prompt a more accurate picture of how she perceived life there. It took another quarter of an hour, before Laura actually started to reveal what she saw as some of the less positive aspects of life in the community. Her critical remarks began to emerge once we started talking about the cultural and religious differences between the Jewish communities of Florida and New York and that of Neve Daniel. “Here (in Neve Daniel) people all the time put people into different boxes, whether it’s ones political, religious or national orientation”, she explained. “In America, things were very different because, over there people live in mixed communities. In America it plays no difference if you are religious or not, or if you are a Republican or Democrat, and this applies whether you are Jewish or non-Jewish”. Laura gave me several examples, “In Florida, the kid’s school and our family life was much more religious than here [...] Nobody
thought less of us as people". From Laura’s account, it seemed that Neve Daniel was a very homogeneous society and people there were very much alike. This seemed to apply especially to religious orientation. Laura said that everyone in the community was Modern Orthodox and that people tended to spend time together with people who originated from the same country. The Anglo-Saxons apparently had their own networks. She also observed that strong and close friendships tended to be established between people of the same general orientation. In that sense the general homogeneity within the community was not quite as distinct as it at first seemed on the surface. "The community has grown tremendously the last couple of years, and we do not know everybody here", she added. Moreover, she went on to explain, she anticipated things becoming harder in the future as even more people would continue to join the community. It was clear that Laura did not feel very comfortable with the prospect of a more city-like atmosphere that would only continue to intensify as the community continued to swell.

Another criticism that Laura raised was in relation to what she described as the very closed and one-tracked school system. She was somewhat concerned that her kids would not be exposed to the variety of opinions and orientations that different people outside the community have, and this was with respect to all different aspects of life. Laura has tried to counterbalance this narrow-mindedness by encouraging her children to be tolerant and open-minded, but she pointed out that it was not easy in the kind of environment they now lived in. She added that Lawrence also shared her concern regarding these issues. Given Laura’s earlier account of why the family had decided to move to Neve Daniel, I started to become a little confused. Previously Laura had stressed that the family had chosen this particular settlement because they felt they had so much in common with the people here, and this covered their religious, ideological and worldview positions. However, according to these last remarks, it seemed there was something of a contradiction; on the one hand, she was saying that it was important to live in a community alongside people with a common outlook on life, and on the other, she was highlighting the importance of being in a place where plurality was represented. Laura tried to close the gap between these two contradictory positions by explaining that, while conscious of both her pluralistic background and her new reality, she had tried to re-program herself to accept that things were simply different here in Neve Daniel compared to the life they had lived in Florida and New York. Laura emphasized that
there were principals she absolutely would not compromise on, such as keeping the Torah fully, and that she and Lawrence were both convinced that the settlement life in Neve Daniel afforded their family a much better opportunity to live in accordance with such principals. Then I asked Laura to give me an example from her daily life where she had needed to reprogram herself. The example she gave is related to the upbringing of her children. “In the Jewish society, where we lived in America, the gender aspect played a crucial role. Girls and boys always made sport activities separately while here in Neve Daniel they are mixed [...] I thought it was strange in the beginning but anyhow I have to accept it [...] I do not want my children not to fit in by insisting that they are not allowed to participate in such activities”, she explained. Slowly Laura has begun to acclimatise to these new ideas. There are though certain ideas of particular importance to her that she seems to maintain from her earlier life. Again, this is something related to the upbringing of her own kids. Laura said that it was very important for both her and her husband Lawrence that their kids became tolerant and open, “not only to other people, but also to respect other political and religious orientations and views that other people can have”. This was in stark contrast to what she had experienced within the community of Neve Daniel. Here, many people (and the community as a whole) are very resistant to alternative ideas. This goes for both political and religious orientations. On balance though, Laura and her family were very happy to live in their new community; she was particularly glad that everybody in the community kept the Torah. She added, “Of course the rabbis in the community differ in their interpretations of the Jewish rules compared to my own rabbi in America”, but in general Laura seemed to accept these discrepancies of interpretation.

I decided that I would return to the question of the rabbis later in the interview. Now seemed the right moment to ask Laura instead about the security of the community and also the current political situation, given that Sharon had now decided to dismantle all the communities in Gaza as well as four other settlements in the West Bank. However, for the moment we had to take a short break so Laura could attend to her baby. In the meantime, I had a look back over my interview notes to see if I had been through all the questions I had prepared before our meeting. At the same time, I found myself thinking about how strange and unpredictable life can be. If Laura and her family had not come into contact with the two organizations, Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh, and therefore not decided to go on one of their
pilot trips, they would probably not have been living in the West Bank today. It occurred to me that I should explore more deeply the precise role of these organizations regarding the inflow of Diaspora Jews to the settlements here in Judea and Samaria. Did these organizations really have as influential a role as did indeed appear to be the case, or was their impact purely coincidental?

It was ten minutes before Laura was able to continue, and by then I was ready to introduce the issues of security and safety. I had known in advance, from other people working on settler-related research that people here tended to have an unwritten code that they did not express their fears or anxieties. This was certainly confirmed by Laura's reaction to my questions. Her first response was to point out what she considered as a fact: that, particularly post-9/11, everybody, especially the Jews, were exposed to danger wherever they were. "I am more afraid when I travel to Jerusalem", she told me. "Out here I never think about the danger, and nobody in our community talks about being afraid [...] Of course we were a little bit anxious when we just arrived here, but now I really feel safe [...] When people ask if I feel safe, I say that everything is relative." Laura continued to explain, "After 9/11 feelings of safety is something you either have or do not have, basically I do not think that it has anything to do with one's own safety, my favourite reply is: are these emotions based on things that have happened or what is going to happen. I do not know if it will happen, but if it happens, it happens. I really hope that it is safe here".

I asked Laura to describe how she had felt just after their arrival and she said that in the beginning she would only take the bus or taxi, when travelling to or from Neve Daniel. "The first couple of times I drove by myself in my own car, I constantly felt nervous, I think it was because people had told me that it could be dangerous [...] Ok, I admit that I was afraid in the beginning, but now I feel safe". This last comment somehow confirmed what I had already guessed: it was ok to express one's fears if it concerned something in the past, but admitting to being afraid now was unacceptable. "As I got used to the journey, driving in my own car, my anxieties slowly disappeared", Laura explained. She also added that people who lived within the Green Line would sometimes avoid coming here. "But it is just sad for them" she observed ironically.
At that point I decided to change the subject as I felt we had dwelt enough on the issue of security, feeling also that Laura had told me everything she could. And so, I asked her what she thought about the current political situation and specifically Ariel Sharon’s proposal of giving back Gaza and dismantling all the settlements there as well as the four other settlements in the north of the West Bank. Her abrupt reaction came immediately and took me by surprise. She said, “I think he must have lost his mind. Really, it is very difficult for us to understand […] Ok when Peres talks about something like that, we already know that he lost his mind long time ago […] I do not say that every person who thinks like this need to have lost his mind, but a person who has fought in so many wars, I simply do not understand it”. Laura tried to explain that she simply did not understand how the Prime Minister could change his views as radically as she and many other settlers felt he had done, and then added that she found the whole thing harrowing. She continued, “Of course I support the human rights a hundred percent and I think that the Arabs should have the same rights to live in freedom as we have, but I do not understand why Jordan cannot let all of them come. They can live there. All of them are Jordanians, you know from before the country was divided back in 1948”.

It seemed Laura’s historical knowledge and understanding of the Palestinian/Israeli history was in full accord with that of some of the more right-wing segments of Israeli society. I asked Laura if she was unaware that many of the Palestinians living on the West Bank had in fact been there for generations. She disagreed, saying, “only a few Arabs resided in Judea and Samaria and those Arabs only lived here for a few generations […] But I do not mind them living here, they live all over Israel. My problem is that in Israel Arabs and Jews can live together. In Israel, nobody would throw out the Arabs, but this does not apply on this side of the Green Line, here Arabs and Jews are not allowed to live together. Why can only Arabs live here?” Laura’s question was rhetorical, and she promptly continued by talking about ethnic cleansing. “Why should Jews be thrown out of Israel? This is like in Europe under the Second World War, just like in Spain”. Sensing some misinformation, I decided not to ask Laura what she meant when she spoke about Spain in connection to the Second World War. Instead, I continued to pose questions about how she would feel if, or when, a Palestinian state were to be established on the West Bank. Laura replied that if a Palestinian state were to be created one day, it would be tantamount to committing suicide. “Why should we give them a state?” she asked me before continuing in the same vein, “Why should we give them the possibility for creating death and
destruction for everybody who are not like them? It would for sure mean anarchy. When you see how they have acted since Oslo [...] they are not able to rule themselves”. My hypothetical question seemed to have had a tremendous effect on Laura. At first, she seemed confused by my suggestion, and then her replies had become angry. Her sentences never acquired any coherent meaning because she did not finished one before starting the next. However, it was clear that just the thought of her and her family living in a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria or Gaza scared her in a profound way. In the end, she completely dismissed such a proposal. I then asked her what she would suggest as an alternative, adding that it was surely the case that, if Israel were to annex all the Palestinian territories, it would be unable to maintain its democratic status. If, on the other hand, Israel had to give all the Palestinians equal rights of citizenship (including the vote), wouldn’t Israel in the end lose its Jewish nature? Laura conceded that this would indeed pose a problem. “It’s a very big problem,” she said, “and I do not have any solutions, but there are different solutions out there (Laura gestured with her finger) circulating, but I agree that it’s a real and dangerous problem”.

At this point Laura started to mumble, her sentences were halting and incoherent and I had difficulty understanding what she was trying to say. “The Arab states keeps us hostage, they have cold borders, they are even afraid when we build our security fence [...] It is really terrible, but the Palestinians are Jordanians, half their families live there”. I could see that Laura was unhappy with the direction our conversation had taken, but I did not want to let her off the hook. I really felt I could obtain some vital insight if I continued with this line of questioning. I mentioned to Laura that the Palestinians thought of themselves as Palestinians and not Jordanians, as she had instead argued. “I do not care what they say, they can claim to be whoever they desire, but Palestinians are Arabs. Palestinian Arabs does not exist”. I felt our conversation had now stalled; Laura was just repeating herself again and again.

I decided to take another approach by using our common background as a point of reference. I phrased my question carefully, so that Laura would not misunderstand me, “Laura, you and your family are all but one born in the US and you used to consider yourself as an American. I was born in Denmark and I definitely see myself as being a Danish Jew. The most Palestinians are born in this area and they have been living here for generations. What do you say to that?” Laura answered that she agreed a hundred percent and that that she would support a “democratic
and normal Palestinian state that was not hostile towards Israel and its own citizens”. The reason she offered for not rejecting such a state was, “not because I feel it is right, but because my desire for peace is very strong”. She then added, “But what have they (the Palestinians) ever done to convince me, even a two month long halt of terror would not convince me”. Laura explained that she did not believe the cycle of hate from the Arabs towards the Jews would ever stop because, “they bring up their children hating all the Jews, in the school and at home [...] they feed them with hate and it will take generations before they stop hating us”. Laura was convinced that the Palestinian leadership would not be satisfied simply with having their own separate state. In her view, their ambition was to destroy Israel and get rid of all the Jews. “It is Arafat that sends out all the terrorists”, she told me. I asked her if she felt she could differentiate between moderate and radical Palestinians, but she refused to accept that one could find moderates within the Palestinian leadership. Such a conviction is something Laura shares with a lot of other Israelis, and it is also a common view among the Israeli political establishment, including the Prime Minister as well as many others in the government. Since 1993, when the Oslo agreement was signed, the vast majority of right-wing politicians in Israel have expressed similar views. To substantiate her thoughts, Laura started to talk about how the Palestinians were happy to kill any of their own people who were in opposition to what she saw as the dominant view among Palestinians. She continued, “It is not because all Palestinians are bad or evil and I do not say that all of them wants to kill Jews, but [...] this is what they teach them. And we cannot do anything about it”.

I then asked Laura if she knew any Palestinians personally. She told me that the only Arabs she had been in contact with were the Israeli-Arabs she had gone to Ulpan with in Jerusalem, shortly after arriving in Israel. She said they had seemed nice and friendly, and then tried to explain that because she is a nice and open-minded person, she did not normally have any problems getting along with others. The Arabs she had studied with back then had gone on trips with her and had often travelled with her in her car. “I try not to judge people”, Laura said.

The next question I addressed to Laura concerned what she thought about the suffering of many Palestinian people and how she thought this suffering might be related to the settlement policies of the Israeli government. She looked like she simply did not understand
my question and then replied with a question of her own, "What do you mean when you say that the Palestinians suffer because of the building of settlements? We do not build the houses here, it’s the Palestinians who have built more that 70% of all the houses here in Neve Daniel [...] We provide jobs for them, and by the way, if you travel around in the territories you see that the Arabs have the biggest and most fantastic houses in the best areas". Laura had continued, "If the Arabs are suffering, and I agree that some do, we are not to blame. It is their leaders who cause their suffering". Laura was convinced that autonomy for the Palestinians would be the best solution, not only for Israel, but also for the Palestinians themselves. She was also convinced that it was the will of the Palestinian leadership to suppress and cause the suffering of their people. Laura explained, "People who suffer are angry people [...] if they, instead of suppressing people, would let them develop, I am sure that their society would blossom [...] and then we would not have any problems here". Laura assured me that all the money the Palestinian authorities received from the Israelis was used for financing terrorism, and she then went on to put the blame on the Arab states. It was clear that Laura thought there was some kind of conspiracy going on. The aim of this conspiracy was to undermine the Israeli state and then dispose of all the Jews. Laura genuinely felt that her presence, and that of all the other settlers in the occupied territories was justified, mainly because “all of the Holy Land is Jewish", as she put it a number of times during our conversation. What I could not understand was how, on the one hand, Laura would express views that were indistinguishable from what people on the radical right were saying, but on the other, she would keep highlighting her claim that their reasons for moving out to the West Bank had not been ideological.

As we slowly moved towards the end of our interview, Laura began to articulate more and more radical views, with statements such as, "Why did we give back the Temple Mount?" and "The reason we live out here is because G-d told us". I decided to ask Laura what the concept of Eretz Israel meant to her, thinking perhaps this might give me some answers. For Laura, the dream of Eretz Israel included Gaza, Judea and Samaria. She elaborated further, “Also a part of Jordan. Something, I am sad to say, we do not posses today - but maybe when the Messiah comes". She told me that, at least for the moment, she was not prepared to go to war against Jordan to take the land that she saw as belonging to the Jewish people. I found what she was now telling me really quite shocking. For the most part of our conversation, Laura had seemed quite moderate in at least some of her views, so I decided to point out that what she was
saying was identical to the views expressed by Gush Emunim and many of the radical rabbis in the Yesha. Did she therefore, like the Gush Emunim, see the settlers as the advance guard of the coming Messiah? Laura’s answer to this was convoluted, but also very interesting. “I do not know. I am not brought up to think like that. What we talk about is a split philosophy [...] Some people say yes, others say no [...] There is nothing we can do about it, and as I said this is not what I was brought up to believe [...] I really do not have any background to say things like that, I do not have any opinions, but now when you ask me I would tend to say yes, but I am not sure [...] It could be that he (the Messiah) is coming [...] I would like to believe so”. Laura had then added, “Here we are waiting and ready”, and then after a short moment of silence, “Actually the first time I was introduced to this philosophy was after I moved out here [...] This is really new for me but it sounds right [...] I do not know. We (Laura and Lawrence) do not express our view like that and we are not strong spokespersons for these ideas [...] Basically we do not have a thorough understanding of this philosophy”. Shortly after this last remark, the doorbell rang and Laura’s other children arrived home.

The interview was over. I thanked Laura for her patience, and for the very interesting and enlightening interview. I turned off my Dictaphone, though our talk continued for a while. All her children took a seat and soon we were all at the table. Laura served us the lunch she had been preparing throughout our conversation and then, after an hour, I finally left their house. Instead of taking the bus immediately, I decided to take a walk around the settlement. I wanted to digest what I had experienced and to see more of the surroundings. The place was beautiful and calm. It was very peaceful out there and the only sounds that reached my ears were what nature brought. It was hard to imagine that this serene and delightful location was at the heart of one of the most complicated and intractable conflicts in the world. As I headed for the gate and the bus stop, I met two Frenchmen who asked me if I would like a lift to Jerusalem; and two hours later I was back in Kibbutz Brenner, where my family and I were staying whilst in Israel.

CHAPTER 5B - AVI HYMAN MAY 2004 (LONDON)

When I began this PhD research, I took the decision to make contact with various Jewish organizations in London and New York. I imagined that these organizations would be able to help me establish contacts with people in the Jewish community who were either
contemplating, or had already made Aliyah to the West Bank. I had also assumed that I would be able to rely on some of my pre-existing connections within the Danish Jewish community: a community which has extensive international contacts through its sister organizations in both the US and England. However, on this occasion the people and organizations in the Danish Jewish community did not have much to offer. Instead, I decided to make direct contact with two youth organizations in London - Bnei Akiva and Betar/Tagar – both organizations with an agenda of promoting the idea of Aliyah. After just two phone calls, I found myself in the position of already having two very promising appointments, as well as an email address for a young man called Avi Hyman. Avi was one of Betar London’s former leading members and had recently made Aliyah to the occupied territories. This was barely two weeks into starting my research.

Before writing an email to Avi Hyman, I thought I would see if I could find any interesting references to him on the internet. I felt that if there was any information available it might be useful to get it before contacting him. I goggled the name ‘Avi Hyman’ and received around four hundred hits. Apparently his name was not too common and, feeling encouraged, I continued to refine my search. Within a short space of time, I had found plenty of interesting material. I was confident that it was the same Avi Hyman as there were also references to the Betar organization in London. After reading through the first couple of articles, I found a very interesting piece, which dealt with an incident where two of Ariel Sharon’s security guards had apparently thrown an Avi Hyman to the ground. It seemed that Avi had been one of a group of protesters at a public meeting where Sharon had been the main speaker. The incident had occurred the previous year. According to the article, the protesters had wanted to show their support for the Jewish American scientist Jonathan Pollard. I was astonished to think that the first person I was going to contact might be this same Avi Hyman, ‘a migrant settler activist’ of British origin. I took up my fieldwork notebook and turned to the first page. Here I wrote the following, “Avi Hyman: You have to be courteous Danny. Don’t get too judgmental before meeting and talking with this guy” (Field Diary 1). I knew instantly that, as with many other researchers before me, my research could easily become coloured by my own political views and specifically any negative preconceptions of the settlers. So from the

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48 Jonathan Pollard is a Jewish American scientist jailed in the United States with a conviction of spying for Israel.
very start, I made the conscious decision to try and achieve as much distance from the field of inquiry as would enable me to deal with it in a fair and balanced way. And throughout the ensuing years, I have repeatedly made similar notes to myself as reminders of the importance of maintaining an open and unbiased perspective.

That first day, after reading about Avi Hyman on the internet, I sent him an email. I explained what my research was about and asked him if he would be willing to meet me for an interview. I had already planned to make a field trip to Israel and the West Bank for three months starting January 2004 and I was hoping to be able to conduct the interview during this trip. A few days later Avi responded with a short email. He asked me for further information on my research, adding that he wanted to know more about my personal background, as well as my motives for conducting this sort of study. Finally, he asked for more information on the actual research institute who were supporting and funding the project. It was clear from Avi’s questions that he felt a little cagey and was rather suspicious of my enquiries; and indeed, later on in my research I would meet other migrant settlers who had similar reservations. I wrote a long and comprehensive reply, answering in detail all the questions he had asked. Apparently, Avi was satisfied with this response as he subsequently agreed to meet in Israel later that year. Unfortunately, this meeting never took place. Avi had to return to London during my trip to Israel, to get treatment for severe arthritis. When we did finally meet later on in London, Avi told me that his arthritis was hereditary and that throughout his childhood he had been in and out of hospitals for treatment of the condition.

In the end it took us more than half a year before we had the chance to meet. This opportunity came during a field trip to London in May 2004. We had arranged our meeting through an acquaintance of Avi’s, Simon Waldman, a senior member of the Betar organization. I had already interviewed Simon not long after starting my research. The purpose of that interview had been to gain information on the Betar organization, and as I returned to the Betar office building for my meeting with Avi, Simon greeted me warmly and offered me a cup of coffee. For the next ten minutes, we sat waiting and talking and eventually Avi entered the room. He was a short, black-haired young man with brown eyes. Simon made a brief introduction and
then Avi announced that our interview would take place in an empty office further down the hallway. He told me to take a seat and wait, as he needed a few minutes to send a couple of emails. As I watched Avi working, I remember thinking that his approach and attitude towards me was very different to that of almost everyone else I had met during this first stage of my research. I had just returned from a three-month field trip to Israel and the West Bank; here I had met and interviewed a significant number of people. I had spoken with journalists; academics; people from various Olim and settlement organizations; and of course many migrant settlers from all over the West Bank. During all of these encounters, and particularly with the migrant settlers, people had been very open and more than willing to contribute to my research. Their approach towards me, both on a personal level as well as regarding my research, was consistently marked by enthusiasm and warmth. I often felt treated like a family member or close friend. With Avi Hyman though the reception was rather different. His attitude was very formal and businesslike. He had clearly been interviewed many times before and he gave me the impression that I was just another interviewer he felt obliged to share his political thoughts with. After a long wait, we went into an empty office and he told me to start the tape recorder. Avi Hyman was finally ready to begin the interview.

At that particular moment, I must admit that I felt quite uncomfortable about the whole situation. The atmosphere did not seem right. So instead of turning on the tape, I decided to start off with a more informal chat. I told him about my own Jewish background, why I felt that my research was important and what I hoped from his contribution. As time passed, Avi started to relax in my company, as did I in his. Then ten minutes later, I decided to start the tape recorder and I asked Avi to give a short biographical account of his life. During my field trip to Israel, I had conducted a number of pilot interviews with migrant settlers, with the express purpose of establishing a productive interview structure. The outcome of these interviews suggested that the best way of getting people started was to give them an opportunity to speak about their present situation before getting into their past experiences.

Avi started by telling me his full name and age and then mentioned for the first time the name of his hilltop and the neighbouring settlement. During our email correspondence Avi had for
some reason chosen not to disclose the name or the location of the place where he lived. His only reference in his emails had been to “the hill”. When he finally mentioned the name of his hilltop, Maale Shlomo, it really did not ring a bell. Even the name of the neighbouring settlement was unknown to me. I knew I had been in that area during my last field trip to the West Bank but apparently I had not noticed this particular settlement. Avi started to describe his community; the people he was living with, what year the settlement was built and eventually how he had actually found the place. But before discussing these things, I wanted to talk about Avi’s family history, his own religious affiliations, his cultural and social background, and not least, his political ideas. All issues that would have had a significant influence on the life he now lives, and his reasons for choosing this path in life.

Avi told me that he had a very mixed family background. His grandfather on his mother’s side was born and raised in Egypt. A family member had written a book about the family’s ancestry, tracing it back five hundred years. I was fascinated because this was the first time that I had met a young Jewish person who could give an account of his or her family that stretched all the way back to the time of the Middle Ages. However, as Avi explained, this long and rich family history in Egypt ended just after the Suez war in 1956, when Egypt expelled 25,000 Jews from its borders. A proclamation issued in November 1956, stating that all Jews were Zionists and enemies of the Egyptian state, had prompted thousands of Jews to flee the country. Most were forced to sign declarations before leaving and all their private properties were confiscated. The majority of the Egyptian Jews (almost 25,000 people) went to Israel, but a significant number ended up in countries like Brazil, France, the US and Argentina (Barda 2006)49. I had once read an article on the Egyptian Jewry but had never heard about groups of Jews fleeing to England. Avi explained, “Basically my [family story], it’s quite a complicated story. My [...] great-grandfather worked in India on my grandma’s side [...]. They had British passports. So when the whole Suez Canal thing went off [the Suez War 1956] and they threw out all British nationals and French nationals to their respective countries, my grandma was thrown out of Egypt with five kids and heavily pregnant. And with whatever she could carry and she came to England. And then only a good six months later did my grandfather come here.” Avi’s father’s family originated from an East European country, but Avi did not

know much about their background beyond the fact that they had been in Scotland for about a hundred years. On his mother’s side, it seemed the family had been very religious. When I asked Avi to describe what sort of background his father’s family had, he replied, “Pretty assimilated European family”. At the time I did not think much to his description but later I discovered that being ‘an assimilated Jewish family’ was not a flattering portrait when painted by Avi.

Avi’s parents had met each other in a small town in Scotland where his mother’s family lived. His father and mother had attended a bar mitzvah celebration at the home of a relative on his mother’s side. Shortly after his parents were married, they decided to move from Scotland to London. I asked Avi if he knew why his parents had decided to settle in London and Avi told me, “They moved to London so that we could have a Jewish education. So that we wouldn’t [marry out] like so many people they saw around them.” Avi has two sisters and a younger brother. His father is a dentist and his mother used to be a housewife, who stayed at home to look after the children. Avi and his siblings grew up in a typical middle-class home in Hendon, a suburb of North London. Avi described his family as strictly orthodox (modern). His father had adopted his wife’s religious traditions after they got married, and it was a priority for both of them that the children be raised in a traditional family with orthodox Jewish values. Their home was strictly kosher and they regularly attended synagogue and observed all the Jewish rituals. As children, Avi and his siblings went to the local Jewish schools, as well as attending Hebrew classes and extra Torah lessons. Living a religious life and being part of a Jewish environment was a very high priority for the family. By keeping the family within a strictly Jewish environment, his parents hoped to preserve the integrity of their religious and cultural life, not only for their own generation but also for the generations to come. Hence, as Avi explained, a key issue for his parents had been that their children marry Jewish partners.

Another defining element in Avi’s home life was his mother’s strong sense of connection to the land of Israel. Avi highlighted this by saying, “Zionism was very much bread and butter in my family. My, my grandfather was a Betar in Egypt. And so it was passed along the line.” His grandfather had been an activist in the Betar organization from a very young age and later he
even went to live in Israel where he attended a yeshiva for a year. All this took place in the late forties. Avi also told me that the ideology of Jabotinsky had been a continual source of inspiration in his family home. On their bookshelves had been books both of and about Jabotinsky, all of which were accorded a special place, Avi explained. This impressed upon me that, from a very young age, Avi had been not only familiar with the entire history of Zionism but also the content of the various Zionist ideologies and particularly the revisionist strand.

I wanted Avi to tell me more about the Jewish school he attended as a child. I was hoping to get a more thorough insight into his educational background as well as a picture of his relationships with other children of his own age. I suspected that this information might be invaluable for my research. At this point in the interview, I felt the origins of Avi’s profound attachment to Israel and Judaism were already clear. The foundations were definitely located in his family background and it was clear that what would later become his ideological and political ideas also had its origin in his upbringing; through both parental inspiration and also the pivotal influence of his grandfather. As Avi himself told me later during our conversation, the idea of him one day making Aliyah also seemed to have been nurtured in his family home.

However, whereas choosing to make Aliyah was to a certain extent understandable (in the light of the information Avi had already given me), by contrast the decision to move into a settlement in the West Bank and furthermore, becoming a part of the extreme Hilltop Youth movement, that was still an enigma. I knew that I needed much more information to reach a thorough understanding of these decisions. Why, for instance had Avi eventually decided to become a Hilltop Youth? What other inspirational factors had determined such a dramatic choice? The answers to these questions and others like them were as yet elusive.

Avi attended Rosh Pina from the age of nine. Rosh Pina is a Jewish primary school based in Edgware (North London). Describing itself as a 2-form entry school, it accepts children between the ages of three and eleven. Avi described it as a Jewish Zionist school. On the home page of the school’s website it states in the introductory remarks, “The centrality of Judaism
and Israel has always been the guiding light behind the existence of our school. The very foundations of our teaching and learning are embedded in the warmth of Jewish custom and tradition." I wanted Avi to explain what Rosh Pina’s being a Zionist Jewish school had really meant in practice. How had this manifested itself on a daily basis, and what sort of thoughts came to mind when thinking back to his attendance there? Avi replied, “There [...] was a fair emphasis (on Zionism) although it didn’t, I didn’t catch onto it enough, of Hebrew. [...] Zionist history was taught. And Israel Independence Day was celebrated. When I say Zionist, I’d say more pro-Israel for me Zionist that is something else. But the concept of Israel as the Jewish state was, was pushed you know in a fair, fair way. And also a lot of teachers that had come over from Israel which also were pushing that”. Avi’s distinction between pro-Israel and Zionism was quite interesting. However at this point in our conversation, I felt that Avi’s analysis of the school’s pro-Israel, as opposed to Zionist, ideology was informed more by hindsight. In my notebook, I wrote, “a nine year old kid can’t have sufficient amount knowledge to distinguish between the different ideologies within Zionism” (Field Diary 1). Yet later in our conversation I would have cause to reassess this notion: this being when Avi later went on to explain why he had decided to part ways with the Jewish Youth organization, Bnei Akiva. I will return to this issue later, at the point when Avi eventually told me the full story; however, for now I think it is fair to say that the Jewish primary school of Rosh Pina definitely added blocks to that Jewish and Zionist foundation Avi already had by virtue of his childhood upbringing (at least in the extent to which Israel was a central part of his school’s curriculum). On the school’s homepage again, it says,

“- Our Jewish Studies staff teaches our pupils the values of Orthodox Judaism, together with the religious observances according to the Halakha. Our children understand and gain insight into the heart of Israel and its meaning for the Jewish people.

- When teaching Hebrew we aim to develop linguistic skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The children learn Ivrit as an everyday living language.

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50 See http://www.rpps.org.uk/
Our pupils reach a high standard of Jewish knowledge, Ivrit and Limmudei Kodesh through reading and understanding the Siddur, Chumash, Rashi, Mishna and Jewish History, all of which merge to instil a love and understanding of Israel and its culture.\(^5\)

Avi recalled his years at the primary school as a good and happy time. From what he told me, there was no doubt that the school had been an important part of his educational, religious and cultural background, and further it was also clear that the institution had made a significant impact on Avi’s ideological development as well as his strong attachment to Israel.

After finishing primary school in Edgware, Avi was sent to Hasmonean High School, which was located close to his home in Hendon. While Rosh Pina primary school had been a mixed gender school, Hasmonean High School had separate sections for boys and girls. I asked Avi to give me a brief account of Hasmonean High School. He told me that it presented itself as a Jewish, Orthodox, Zionist high school. The school’s self-image was that it promoted high educational standards with a strong emphasis on Jewish religious values.\(^6\) As Avi continued talking about the school, the rosy and nostalgic tone in his voice suddenly changed. I had just asked him to tell me what he thought of the learning environment there and to describe what the teachers had been like. As soon as I mentioned his teachers, it became very clear that his relationship with at least some of them had been highly problematic. This was what he said, "It unfortunately, in my opinion, doesn’t live up to its name much. On the contrary, it wasn’t a Zionist school, it was mixed. I mean the majority of teachers; especially the religious teachers were anti-Zionist. [...] in those days Israel Independence Day was a big controversial thing. We did celebrate it, we did make a lot of noise but it was looked down upon by some teachers and some teachers actively tried to stop it. So that was an incredible experience, why is that? Because from some warped type of Judaism, they believe it’s not a good thing.” His dissatisfaction with the high school’s position on Zionism was interesting. It seemed Avi strongly disagreed with the school’s policy of having a mix of teachers who apparently perceived Judaism and Zionism in many different ways. Avi was very blunt about the teachers he disagreed with, calling them anti-Zionists. My interpretation of the way in which he described his teachers was that he appeared to lack respect for people who did not share his:

\(^5\) See http://www.rpps.org.uk/

\(^6\) See http://www.hasmonean.co.uk/
own interpretation of Judaism and Zionism. His body language revealed revulsion for the classic Orthodox Jews who could not accept Israel as the Jewish land until the return of the messiah. In my field diary, I made a note of both his body language and the tone of his voice, “showing signs of anger by shaking his head and raising his voice – he is angry” (Field Diary 1). I commented on his views of the teachers by observing that their interpretation of the Bible seemed to be a very common, classical orthodox interpretation when it came to issues related to Israel, Avi replied, “I mean, yeah. I don’t know what their deal is. I mean I don’t understand their concept. I mean I’ve read their books. I understand what they’re saying but I don’t hear it. They believe that, you know the classical thing that the Messiah will come and [...] from the sky and we can just sit back until that happens”. Apparently, sitting back and waiting for the Messiah to come was not remotely in tune with Avi’s own mentality and ideals. It seemed from his reaction that it was in fact a complete negation of his own faith. As a fierce and true member of Betar, and given his fondness for Vladimir Jabotinsky ideology, Avi seemed truly disgusted by even the idea that Jews could sit back and wait.

I asked Avi if he could give me a concrete example that would perhaps illustrate the behaviour of what he understood to be an anti-Zionist teacher. I felt that this approach would give me a better understanding of Avi’s own ideological take on Zionism and that it might also provide me with a better understanding of the more general mentality of the man I was now interviewing. It seemed likely that I would gain more psychological insight in this way, as Avi seemed much more at ease when talking on a concrete level. Unlike many other migrant settlers I have interviewed, Avi seemed a very private and introverted person. He did not reveal anything of his emotions if my questions were at all phrased in general terms. Avi gave me this example in answer to my question, “Basically I use Yom Haatzmaut as an example [...] in the morning there would be gathering [...] And then there would be a breakfast and dancing and this would go up to about 10.30, 11. And if you didn’t come to that there was no school [...] The apathetic Zionists stayed in bed, the anti-Zionists [...] stayed at home. And the extreme anti-Zionist came to the one class that was going on anyway, because one of the really anti-Zionist teachers [...] came into our party and screamed at us and let us know that he was taking a class cos it was a normal day. [...] so that was that was the [...] spectrum. And whatever, as high school kids we plastered his car with Israeli flags, that was one of the traditions. And, you know,
danced outside his window, his office window and all that kind of thing." I asked Avi if this specific teacher was Hassidic and Avi replied, "He was very into the European ghetto-type Judaism. He actually moved [...] to Russia to help out the community there, to strengthen the community there because he believes in a concept of there is some kind of thought, I haven’t actually seen a source for it, that the Messiah will only come when there’s Jews everywhere in the world and there’s strong communities over there. That’s his way of thinking. I personally think the opposite but that’s what he’s doing". Avi told me that in his opinion it was the responsibility of every single Jew in the world - individually as well as collectively - to participate in what he saw as the building of ‘greater Israel’. Avi later added that in his view this had to be on both sides of the Jordan River. However, I will return to the ideology and theology of Rabbi Kook, as Avi and I touched on that issue later in the interview.

Then Avi suddenly decided that, in speaking only of his dissatisfaction with some of his high school teachers, he had given me an unbalanced account of his time there. He said, "But it’s, I mean I’ve painted a bit of a, you know, Zionist picture or whatever on a day-to-day basis, you’re not learning about Zionism anyway that’s, that’s a thing for the youth movements. But everything else there is pretty sound". When Avi mentioned participation in the youth movement it seemed like an opportune moment to explore this particular theme and its potential impact. I had learned through my previous interviews with other migrant settlers that Jewish diaspora organizations often had a very important role in shaping the political as well as cultural understanding of the Jewish Diaspora. However, before completely leaving the issue of his school years, I wanted to ask Avi one more question. The question dealt with friendship and, more specifically, his relationship with his classmates. For some reason I had a notion that Avi might have been quite lonely as a child; and if he had indeed felt lonely or isolated, it might explain, at least to a certain extent, why his devotion to the Betar organization had been so wholehearted. However, Avi explained that overall he felt he had had some very good friendships at school. This had been particularly so during primary and also his first year of high school, when he had felt a strong connection with his classmates. Later though, during the last years of high school, he explained, this had begun to change. My assumption was partly confirmed, but partly refuted as Avi told me the following, "[...] once I started getting involved in Betar, and became a leader in Betar, I was seen as different because I
was doing things that average apathetic Jewish youth weren't doing. I was leading demonstrations and led to campaigns in all different things for Israel, and encouraging them to do so. So I was seen as the Betar guy, in fact some people [who] didn't know my name would call me 'Betar'.” The connection between Avi’s political engagement in the youth organization Betar and the weakening of his friendships with his schoolmates was clear, though it could not completely confirm my assumption, as Avi was unable to clarify whether the weakening of his friendships became apparent before or after his engagement in the organization. What was certain though were that his attitude towards his former classmates had changed. His engagement in the political, educational and cultural activities of the organization had definitely influenced his attitude towards many of his former friends. Labelling his classmates as “average, apathetic, Jewish youth” clearly showed in what light Avi now saw his former classmates.

The gradual isolation from his classmates was countered-balanced by a growing involvement in the Betar organization. When Avi eventually joined Betar at the age of sixteen, it was as if he had at last found a home, not to mention a base for the sort of political activities to which he had become attracted. Avi explained he had not felt that way since leaving Bnei Akiva at the age of ten. Revealing that he had once been a member of Bnei Akiva took me by surprise. Previously in our conversation, he had only mentioned an involvement in Betar and this omission made me curious. The main reason for my curiosity was that as a child I too had been a member of Bnei Akiva. I had also left the organization, though probably for very different reasons. Thinking back, I must have been around fourteen when I decided to leave the organization, on grounds that it simply felt too orthodox and right wing. So I asked Avi if he could elaborate further on his involvement and relationship with the organization. Avi joined Bnei Akiva when he was ten, but his involvement with this organization had been very brief. “When they started talking about politics, I drifted” Avi told me. I did not understand at first why Avi, a man who was so overtly political, would drift away because of politics, so I asked him to explain. “We were in a meeting, I was 10 years old. They started talking about the history […] of Israel, the history of Zionist Israel, modern day […]. But at the time I heard this name Menachem Begin which I wasn’t too familiar with, but I’d heard something about him, I
heard something about the Irgun\textsuperscript{53} home. And they started saying [...] something] about what was going on in Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah, and [they] tried to make connections [...] I didn’t know what I believed at the time but it was time for me to, to move away from that movement.” Avi’s explanation took me by surprise. What was he actually implying? Was Bnei Akiva in his view too left wing or was he just bored of the meetings and wanting to enjoy his childhood? For a moment I considered letting the subject go, however I had the feeling it could be of some importance to know exactly what Avi meant. So I asked him directly if he thought that Bnei Akiva was too politically leftist, and furthermore, whether he had been aware that it was former members of Bnei Akiva who, towards the end of the sixties, had founded the Gush Emunim movement. Gush Emunim is one of the most important settler movements in Israel, and they are renowned for their radical messianic beliefs and right wing extremist ideology. Avi was very aware of the organization’s history and its connection to the radical right. He explained, “Bnei Akiva as a world movement is different in different countries. Like Betar [...] Betar in Australia is a lot more leftwing than say in France or England or wherever else. So in England I believe that the, the movement (Bnei Akiva), I mean the movement takes an official policy of being apolitical. Apolitical, I don’t know what that means or how that helps. I mean in my opinion, [...] if you sit on the fence you fall, if you stand in the middle of the road you get knocked down. So that’s not my way of thinking. So at 10 years old I didn’t quite understand what they were saying. I didn’t know who Menachem Begin really was, but I wanted to learn more about him before I started making equations with Arab terrorists that I definitely knew were evil shall we say.” Avi had made his point in a very direct and clear way, and I felt I now understood how Avi had been thinking at the time of his departure from Bnei Akiva. It was not because Bnei Akiva was too political; no it was quite the contrary. For Avi, everything was (and had to be) political but it also had to be in tune with not only his own political views but also his activist aspirations. And it seemed that for Avi, Bnei Akiva just weren’t committed or passionate enough.

It took Avi more than five years to find exactly the right kind of organization: one providing him with a platform for both his activist temperament and his political views, and his frequent references, made throughout the entire interview, to the Betar organization, proved a key to

\textsuperscript{53} Irgun was one of the Jewish underground Movements prior to Israel’s independence in 1948
understanding his present relationship with Israel, as well as his knowledge of its history. His involvement with Betar had certainly helped shape his understanding and interpretation of Zionist ideology, as the next part of this interview will hopefully illustrate.

As Avi mentioned earlier in our conversation, it was through his family that he had learnt of the existence of the Betar organization. By the age of 15 or 16, he was eager to find an arena for his zeal and political enthusiasm and Betar proved the perfect environment for him. At the time when Avi enrolled in the organization (this would have been during the late nineties), the organization was somewhat small and insignificant. Avi explained, "Basically in my time Betar, I mean Betar has its ups and downs for good reasons. But what often happens is the, the crème de la crème of Betar make Aliyah so often the movement goes from a high to a low. And so when I was, you know, 15, 16, I was looking for a youth movement and Betar didn't really exist [...]. I mean they, they had some activities but they didn’t really exist. So I was looking for them cos I knew about Betar from my family. And I saw, I met up with them and, with the, the worker of the time who had a small movement to work with, I worked with him to make it bigger". The fact that the Betar was at that time small and weak gave Avi an opportunity to significantly influence the organization’s political platform as well as help develop its strategy, right from the very beginning of his relationship with them. Together with its former head, he started to rearrange the whole organization. Avi’s wholehearted commitment meant that, within a very short while, he had become a prominent member of the organization. The leadership saw Avi as a potential leader and therefore decided to give him a ‘proper’ education. This decision saw Avi participating in various conferences and seminars from the early age of sixteen. He also gained control of meetings and educational classes for members who were frequently much older than he was. Gradually Avi started to organize various demonstrations, tours and other activities. His engagement was so profound and enthusiastic that when he left school at the age of sixteen, he became a full time volunteer for the organization.

Eighteen months later Avi had become the youngest ever head of Betar. It was clear that Avi felt very proud of his promotion. "I came here and volunteered until I was 17 which is when the guy that originally recruited me, who was then the head of Betar, made Aliyah. And appointed me the head which was quite, I wouldn’t say controversial, for want of a better word, but it was a new thing to the British community that a 17 year old was. [...] leading a movement. Right. So I
mean they actually did a write up ‘the youngest head of the youth movement’ and all this kind of thing. And it was a bit strange cos I was working with a lot of people that were older than me and I was their leader. So it was an interesting concept”. Becoming head of the organization gave Avi a huge responsibility and influence. It was also very clear from what he said that Avi really enjoyed being at the centre of everyone’s attention. As Betar expanded, Avi’s role in the organization grew and grew.

I wanted Avi to give me a more precise account of the work he was doing in Betar, so I asked him if he could describe in detail the Betar ideology, as well as the sort of work he had been doing as head of the organization. Avi’s answer was surprisingly formal. It was as if he was citing from an official manual. “So the purpose of the organisation is threefold. (a) the love of the entire Land of Israel, as Jabotinsky said, on both sides of the Jordan. (b) is like Jewish nobility and pride. Um, Jabotinsky said that every Jew wherever he is the son of a prince. He is a prince, a son of a king. And the third prince was activism again, Jabotinsky said [...] that silence is despicable you can’t stand idly and like the Torah says we can’t stand idly by while our brothers burn. So we have to be active, stay active and do whatever has to be done for the Jewish people. That’s Betar in a nutshell. What did I do actively on a day-to-day basis was everything from organising weekly meetings, weekly educational meetings which were held in different people’s houses”. Listening to the content of what he was saying, as well the actual way in which he expressed himself made me think of “a well trained soldier heading for the battleground” (Field Diary 1). This was the exact phrase I later wrote in my field diary after the interview on the bus home.

I must admit that I felt very ambiguous towards Avi, both during and after our conversation. To a certain extent I could recognize a part of my younger self in him. Being a member of a non-violent political peace movement during the eighties, I too used to be strongly involved in all sorts of political activities. I could easily recall the feeling of being absolutely sure and right about everything, especially politics. And to a certain extent it was fascinating to meet a young man with such dedication and enthusiasm. On the other hand, I felt terrified by Avi’s blinkered views and intolerance towards people who did not share his opinions. I could not help
thinking that I was sitting in front of a young man who could potentially use whatever means
he felt necessary to accomplish his political goals. All these thoughts went through my mind as
I listened to his speech. I wanted to ask Avi, just how far he would be prepared go if his hilltop
was to be dismantled by the Israeli government. However, for the moment I decided to
encourage him to continue about his specific role and work in the organization. Avi explained,
“I spoke in a [...] number of schools be it Jewish schools, non-Jewish schools on different occasions
on different subjects educating [...] education on Israel and the Jewish people and the history etc.
And I mean sometimes we recruited [...] doing stalls and whatnot on the streets [...] another
good recruiting [place...] was demonstrations, [I] organised a lot of demonstrations in my time.
Everything from the missing in action Israel soldiers to Jonathan Pollard [...] Jewish control for
Jewish cemeteries which was a campaign to try to get Jewish control of the concentration camps
in Poland. ... In Betar demonstrations aren’t just a political thing seen as something that older
politically minded people do, it’s an educational thing in which the youth not only learn about
the cause but connect to it and strengthen their Jewish pride through actually demonstrating.”
Half a year before I met Avi, I had been in London, and at that time had conducted several
informant interviews with people from various Jewish diaspora organizations. I also had the
privilege then to meet and interview some of the present leading members of Betar. These
interviews had not only given me knowledge of the work and ideology of Betar but had also
given me a deep insight into the type of people working for the organization. Therefore, it did
not come as a surprise when Avi talked about the centrality of recruitment and activism.
However, what was interesting and also surprising was that Avi, unlike other leading
members, seemed to have entirely adopted the complete revisionist Zionist ideological
package. For Avi, his membership and engagement with Betar had certainly become the most
important thing in his life at that time. One could even say that for him this had become a
complete lifestyle. Avi identified with being a Betari (a term used by the organization itself).
To understand what it means to be a Betari I will offer a few quotations from the ideology of
Vladimir Jabotinsky, taken from Betar/Tagar’s own homepage: “Jewish youth must [...] devote
itself completely to this sole task [the creation of the Jewish state]; all other ideas, though they be
beautiful and humane, should influence us only in so far as they do not hinder the rebuilding of a
Jewish state. When one of these ideas becomes, even if indirectly, an obstacle on the road to a
Jewish state, it must be mercilessly sacrificed in favour of the one ideal. One should remember
that one may have many ideas and respect them highly, but one can only have one ideal. To this
ideal all other ideas must bow, and near it there should not and cannot exist a second ideal, for
two ideals are as absurd as two gods; one can worship only one G-d and only one ideal.
Everything else one may like is, and must, remain secondary importance.” Avi’s approach
dovetailed perfectly with the framework described by Vladimir Jabotinsky. The centrality and
importance of defending and building the Jewish state was a sacred task for Avi and already
from the age of seventeen, he had solemnly decided to devote his life towards this specific
goal. However, it was not only Avi’s devotion which stood out as a defining feature of his
character, he also had a type of determination that was rare, even amongst other migrant
settlers whom I had already met or would later come to meet.

Reading through the ideology of Vladimir Jabotinsky I found the exact description that I think
characterizes Avi’s personality, “The building of Betar is founded upon the principles of
discipline. Our aim is to make Betar such a world organism, which, at a sign from the center, will
be able simultaneously to move tens of thousands of hands in the cities of all countries. Our
adversaries say that it is ‘unworthy of free men’, that it means being made into a machine. I
propose that we should not be ashamed to reply, and proudly to boot: ‘Yes—a-machine’. For it is
the highest achievement of a mass of free men, if they are capable to act in unison, with the
absolute precision of a machine.” It was in fact devotion and discipline as advocated by
Jabotinsky that I thought best able to describe the young man sitting in front of me. Avi was
the kind of person who was so convinced by his own ideological ideas, as well as the means by
which they should be achieved, that it was hard to comprehend. At that point in my research I
had yet to meet anyone with such a strong determination, and consequently thought that Avi’s
story would prove so unique (and therefore insufficiently representative) that his interview
would never become one of my case histories. Later on however, once I had met and
interviewed other young Hilltop settlers, I would have to reassess this conclusion. In fact, as I
later found, quite a number of young Jewish males had similar character traits.

Avi and I continued talking about his time in Betar. I asked him if he could tell me what he
thought were the most important activities he had undertaken while working for them. He
replied, “as far as I’m concerned, it was the tours to Israel in which we spent two weeks touring

54 See Betar/Tagar UK homepage: http://www.betar.co.uk/
55 Ibid
the whole Land of Israel [...] Then one week [we were] based in Kedumim touring around Judea and Samaria.” At first, I could not believe what Avi just had disclosed. I had not previously been aware that Betar organised tours to the occupied territories, nor did I know that the organization had any connection to the settlement movement or their activities. As Avi had since become a Hilltop settler, I knew at once that this piece of information could prove to be very important. He went on to explain that every year Betar would arrange a tour for its members to visit the settlement Kedumim. Apparently this visit was a key event in the Betar calendar and its purpose was to simulate both the occupation of a hilltop and the establishment of a camp (much in the way a new hilltop might be taken by young hilltop activists in real life). Avi explained, “My personal experience was originally through Betar as a 16, 17 year old. Going on Betar tours [...] in particular. Where we worked on one of the hilltops there [...] And we we took it from, I mean we’re still sending trips there, we took it from one caravan and hardly anything there, to now we haven’t been there for a while but pretty sure there’s there’s about 15 caravans, grass, trees, flowers etc. So that, that was my first experience of the hilltops, through Betar.” I could not help thinking that Avi’s experiences as a youngster, touring Judea and Samaria, participating in role-plays at being an activist Hilltop settler, must have planted the seed which eventually caused him to become a part of the actual Hilltop Youth movement. This combined with the educational atmosphere of Betar, where he had first learnt to cherish the history of Lechi and Irgun, must surely have had a huge impact on Avi’s ideological development, and have been a deciding factor in him becoming an activist within a revisionist, hardcore Jewish Zionist organization. At least that was what I was thinking after the interview in spring 2004.

During our conversation about Avi’s time in Betar, there was one question that really puzzled me, and my thoughts kept returning to it throughout our interview. Avi was a Modern Orthodox Jew with very strong religious roots. His upbringing had been religious and later, as we shall hear, he became a yeshiva student in a particularly religious yeshiva in Jerusalem. However I also knew that the Betar organization, as well as being built on revisionist ideology, was also based on a secular Zionist foundation. Jabotinsky frequent references to God and the

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56 Kedumin Israeli settlement and a town located in the Samarian hills of the West Bank
57 Lehi also called the Stern Group or Stern Gang was a militant Zionist group founded during the British Mandate period prior to Israel’s independence
Bible might give one the impression that the organization was religious. However this would not be an accurate picture as, as is the case with various other Zionist ideologies (including the socialist Zionist ones), their references to God and the Bible should be taken more as concepts, used to describe the cultural glue connecting Jewish people into one nation, than in the actual religious sense. I asked Avi if he could explain why an orthodox religious person, like him had decided to join a secular Zionist organization like Betar. Avi replied in this way, “Ultimately it comes from, I mean, to me I have my own personal ideology. My personal ideology comprises of the Torah as a religious Jew. And Betar fits in there. Cos as far as I’m concerned, I mean I take what’s good from the Betar ideology and I leave what needs working on”. Avi’s answer somehow challenged my initial impression of him as a person who had absorbed all of the Betar ideology as one complete, non-negotiable package. Here at least Avi was displaying some objectivity towards the organization and its ideology. This apparent rift in Avi’s own ideological terrain invited further examination, so I asked him to clarify what he thought of the ideology of Jabotinsky, as it had been Jabotinsky’s ideology that had provided the foundation for Betar. “I mean Jabotinsky had some very great ideas. His ideas on say the social structure of the state, I don’t think that that’s the best way to go necessarily. To the extent that I haven’t really spent a huge amount of time learning it, I understand his basic principles and that’s not for me. But personally for me Betar is Aliyah. Betar is Aliyah from the Diaspora. Once we get to Israel we can talk about how the state’s gonna be etc. When Betar was established, its main focus was establishment of a state on both sides of the Jordan. And Jabotinsky said particularly on both sides of the Jordan after the British hit, had chopped up then Trans-Palestine, given made this trans-Jordan etc. So, so basically I mean Betar for me, like I said, is about Aliyah and you can’t have Aliyah without education. People need to know why they should make Aliyah to connect to the land and the people before. So that’s Betar.” But how could Avi on the one hand reduce the Betarian ideology to the notion simply of Aliyah, and yet on the other highlight the educational factor (the teaching of a secular ideology) as the most important aspect of the organization’s work? If the content of the Betarian ideology contradicted his own religious and ideological beliefs, how had he managed to bridge the two? Avi replied, “But, in my opinion, getting people back to, you know, to connect to their people is a very religious thing. It’s a very Jewish thing [...] I believe that the secular Zionist movement was, was a very religious thing. Be it, if they knew it or they were against it (Judaism) or whatever it
was, but the concept of the Jewish people united as one and coming back to their land is a very Jewish concept. In fact, it’s a messianic concept. Yeah I can say that.”

By introducing the messianic concept, I felt that Avi had revealed the very core of his religious-ideological thinking. However, if the source of Avi’s religious thinking was not to be found in the Betar organization, where, besides his family upbringing, could it be found? From what I had learned so far in talking to Avi, his determination and revisionist, Zionist ideas could certainly be traced back to Betarian ideology, and this was also the case when it came to his activist approach, but when it came to the subject of Avi’s messianic beliefs I still felt in the dark. I decided to leave the topic of Betar and continue instead by asking Avi about his first and closest encounter with the Jewish state; this was something he had already made reference to earlier in our conversation when he mentioned leaving for Israel to become a yeshiva student in Jerusalem at the age of nineteen. At that time, Avi had already spent four and a half years in the Betar organization and he now felt that he wanted to follow his predecessor as head of Betar, and use a yeshiva as a stepping-stone to making Aliyah.

I asked Avi when the idea of going to a Yeshiva first entered his mind and he replied, “So I decided to go to Yeshiva from a very young age. I mean from a very young age, say, I mean definitely from at least 10, 10 years old decided that I wanted to go, make Aliyah to Israel and to go to Yeshiva. And also to go to the army. So I’ve done two of those”. Avi’s reference to the Israeli army and his desire to be a part of it is something I will return to later. At this point, I was more interested to hear about Avi’s time in the yeshiva as I thought it might help me understand where the inspiration for his religious-nationalist ideology had originated. Avi explained that, shortly after his arrival in Israel in the year 2000, he moved into a non-Zionist yeshiva in Jerusalem. He stayed there for a few months but eventually decided to find another yeshiva: one more in line with his own Zionist ideas. The yeshiva Machon Meir, which has an English department, proved to be the right place for Avi and he spent the next three years studying and living there. Avi told me his reason for choosing a Zionist yeshiva, “[…] I mean there was a chance to get a Torah perspective to a lot of things I believed in and to understand the Torah sources behind it. I knew they were there. But my teachers in Hasmonean (Avi’s
former high school) weren’t too keen on pushing that kind of thing”. At Machon Meir, Avi felt he had at last found the right place to continue his religious education, a search which had begun back at Hasmonean High school and continued later as a member and then head of Betar. For Avi, being a yeshiva student at Machon Meir was a dream come true. One of the things that particularly inspired him was the international atmosphere within the yeshiva. His new friends there came from all parts of the world, and furthermore everyone shared the same passion and devotion to Judaism. In Avi’s own words, “What was also nice is that Aliyah came together with my, with friends from Betar from the across the globe in Machon Meir. People that hadn’t been religious before and decided to try it out. People that were religious, you know, from Cleveland, from Australia. I met people from all across the world from Israel as well that were in Betar and then came to Machon Meir. And I learned, thank God, for a good two, two and a half years in the yeshiva with some very, very close friends. And on a personal level it was a very interesting thing. I mean coming from a Jewish community in London to go and, you know, my first experience was moving into a room with two Germans and an Austrian. And at least one of which who wasn’t actually Jewish, he was converting. So that was a very different concept to, you know, life in Edgware or Golders Green. So it really opened me up to a lot of things and it was very, a very good experience”.

I asked Avi if he would tell me more about the life and educational framework in Mechon Meir. As students in the yeshiva, what were they learning and how were they taught? Avi replied, “So I mean generally we were learning everything from [...] Talmud and Kabala on a day-to-day basis in the morning. But also they taught Tanach in a very different style. They’d open up the Book of Joshua whatever it was, with a map and they’d teach from the map and relate it to today and what’s going on in that place today etc. They, which was something I’d never seen. I’d never seen a map used which was a bit bizarre cos it’s all based in Israel to connect to the land.” I had met other yeshiva students before Avi and their stories had been very similar. The active use of maps in the learning process gave the students an extraordinary sense of connectedness to the land. The stories from the Bible became an

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58 Talmud is a central text of mainstream Judaism, in the form of a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history. Kabala is a set of esoteric teachings meant to explain the relationship between an eternal and mysterious Creator and the mortal and finite universe. Tanakh is a name used in Judaism for the canon of the Hebrew Bible
integrated part of the students’ understanding of their religious as well as cultural heritage. But as Avi continued I began to realize that this way of learning had not been confined to just those two areas, it had also been highly politicized. One could say that his yeshiva (and others like it) had in many ways become active participants in the ongoing political fight. This was especially apparent when it came to the issue of defining two of the key contested political areas of Israeli society: the issue of borders and the issue of democracy versus theocracy. Avi gave me some examples, “[The teachers] also [took us to] different Tiolim (Hebrew for trips) they take us on trips to the cinema, to the settlements to see, it was a new concept to me like the religious activists that I hadn’t seen necessarily in England at all. That a terror attack would take place, please God they’ll be no more, but they used to take place in a certain settlement. And Mahon Meir would announce, this weekend, this Shabbat, drop your plans, the whole of Mahon Meir is going to that settlement. The whole of yeshiva, 200 guys would go and spend Shabbat on sometimes a small hilltop to strengthen that community to let them know that we were connected with them. And we support them. Just like, for instance, now I mean I wasn’t in Israel for the whole of Mahon Meir when [unclear] went down to Gush Kativ to strengthen them. So that was another new concept.” Avi continued in the same vein by adding, “Also, my rabbis, some of them, you know, some of the fathers of Gush Emunim, people that didn’t talk about the settlements, they gave first account, you know, first account tales of what actually happened to them. How it was to live in Kedumim, the first real Hilltop basically. Which was the first settlement in the Shomron. And accounts like this, it was all very, it was a very new concept of Judaism that I hadn’t really appreciated it in England. And being there, it’s a pretty well known yeshiva a lot of the people that actually write the religious Zionist books in English about Rav Kook and whatever, the top people were teaching in the yeshiva. So it was a very good experience.” Avi was extremely proud to have been under the wings of people he really admired: the Gush Emunim leaders and the rabbis who had been fiercely fighting the peace process as well as the disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank.

For many years, it had been obvious that elements of the yeshiva milieu had been at the forefront of the struggle against concessions to the Palestinians. However, it was the first time

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59 Gush Kativ was a bloc of 17 Israeli settlements in the southern Gaza strip. It was abolished in 2005
60 Shomron is a term used for the mountainous region in the northern part of the West Bank. Shomron is also the name for Samaria in Hebrew.
during my research that a former yeshiva student had openly admitted that he and his yeshiva comrades had been tools in the hands of their teachers and leaders, in the fight against the government’s policy: a policy supported by a majority of the Israeli population through democratic election. One of the key ingredients of Rabbi Kook’s Zionist ideology is that he sees the settlers and the settlements as crucial components in the fight for the redemption of the Jewish people. The religious philosophy of Rabbi Abraham Kook and his son Zvi Yehuda Kook, who is regarded by many as his father’s successor, has been the main source of inspiration for the orthodox, nationalist and religious factions within Israeli society. Amongst these groups, there is a strong belief that our present time is the pre-phase to the messianic era. In fact, some settlers and their supporters (including students and former students of various yeshivas) believe they are the advance guard for the coming of the Messiah. I was eager to hear Avi’s thoughts on this specific issue but first asked him if he could tell me what religious ideology Mahon Meir subscribed to. Avi replied, “[...] Mahon Meir yeshiva, which is a Jewish, Zionist yeshiva connected to Rabbi Kook. They were very much down the Rabbi Kook way of thinking, which is very much about like what I just spoke about, the secular Zionist being in the beginning of redemption.” I continued by asking Avi if he saw himself as an advance guard for the Messiah, “I wouldn’t wanna go that far. Me personally cos I’m not, you know, my ego isn’t big enough. But I see, I think the Jewish people have a responsibility to one another which is a very Jewish concept, and there’s many sources for that in Judaism. And we also have an obligation in the Torah to live in Israel. And as the, as my [teacher] says ‘that’s for all times’. So that’s my personal level so how much more on a national level do we have to [...] I believe personally that for the, I mean the messiah is is a person that’ll do what he has to do, there’s certain things he has to do which is bring the Jewish people home, fight the wars of Israel, and build a temple. That’s three of the main things he has to do.” Avi continued by explaining how he saw his role as a religious, orthodox Jew living in Israel, “So I don’t believe in a concept of some, maybe [...] a saying we’ve got from other places that this day of awe when the temple comes crashing down and everything’s rosy. I don’t believe in that. I believe that we have to do our part and so I’m a cog in the machine of Judaism, a cog in the nation and I’m doing my small part which I think isn’t very much [...] So I don’t put myself on any higher ranking than anyone else. I believe that everyone else is doing their part just like the secular Zionists did their part in the past and are still doing their part in a huge way in Israel. And I don’t see much of the part that the Diaspora Jewry unfortunately. I mean I’d really like to see them as Israelis. But, yeah”.
It was clear that Avi still carried many of the thoughts and ideas he had absorbed at Betar. Being a cog in the machine of Judaism was a paraphrasing of what Vladimir Jabotinsky had written in some of his famous articles and books.

One of the interesting and divergent elements of Avi’s interpretation of his own role here, when compared for example, with those of his fellow migrant settlers, was that Avi repeatedly pointed to the fact that he was part of a collective whole. Most of the American migrant settlers I had talked to saw themselves instead as unique individuals, at ease with the idea of being the avant-garde - the chosen ones – individuals who had seen the light while other non-believers were still in the dark. The hallmark of Avi’s opinions on the role of the Jews in the world was his outspoken contempt for the Jewish Diaspora. His dissociation of himself from the Diaspora Jews was incidentally something he had in common with many of the other migrant settlers I met during my research.

However, I still felt that Avi had avoided giving me a straight answer to my question: do you think that we live in the messianic era? And so I decided to confront him with the question again but in a very direct manner. Avi’s answer was short and precise, “I think we definitely do”. Furnished with this unequivocal response, I felt that we were now approaching the time for a more thorough investigation of the more concrete elements of Avi’s ideology. This would inevitably touch on issues such as: borders, political strategies, perception of peace and war, relationship with the state, attitude towards the Israeli peace movement, Sharon’s disengagement plan, the murder of Yitzhak Rabin, relationship with extremists, the Palestinians etc. However, I still wanted to hear more about Avi’s time in the yeshiva.

I had become increasingly convinced during our conversation that the origin of Avi’s religious, Zionist ideology was be found not only in the content but also the manner in which they were taught in the yeshiva. I asked Avi if he could give me an account of a normal day at the yeshiva. Avi began, “[We would] wake up about 7.30 [for] Shacharit (morning prayers) [...] Then
Gemara for an hour [...] Then a very short break and then learn in, with my [teacher]. And then Gemara going over it. Or, there’s a possibility that I could go to other classes during that time instead of [...] which could be [...] which could be the writings of [...] Different things. Different [...] all different types of things that were offered. Then in the afternoon, there was an option at different times I did different things. Like an Ulpan to learn Hebrew. Or history, i.e. straight from the Tanach. Then that went up till about four in the afternoon. Then there was somewhat of a break or I had another Israeli [lesson], Hebrew to try, try my Hebrew because most of the time it was in English. And then in the evenings there was [...] the writings of [...] cos I read, laws of Shabbat. I mean there was all, all different types of things. And depending on how one, you know, how depending on how much you wanted to learn you could learn right up until 11, 12 whatever. Or you could just finish off at about 10.30.” As one can see from Avi’s description, the learning environment in a yeshiva is pretty intensive and wide-ranging; the students live in dormitories within the school and every moment of their daily life is devoted to religious studies. In many ways, the life of a yeshiva student is completely detached from the “normal” life of an average Israeli living within Israeli society. I could not help thinking that such a learning environment, where politics went hand in hand with religion and nationalism, could be (or more likely had already become) a hotbed for hatching religious extremists. In the wider perspective these extremists could pose a great danger to the stability of the Israeli democracy, indeed it was a fact that people like Yigal Amir, the young man who assassinated Yitzhak Rabin, Israel’s former prime minister, had himself been a yeshiva student as were many of his supporters and accomplices. During our interview, I noted in my field diary the following remark, “would not be surprised to read in a newspaper that Avi had been involved in illegal political activities if and when the dismantling of settlements would be carried out by a future government” (field dairy 1). I later learned, during our conversation, that this was indeed a potential reality, as Avi confirmed that he did not intend to shy away from such activities should they prove necessary.

I was interested to know if Avi would concur that the yeshiva, as an institution, did in fact ‘produce’ a new generation of settlers. This was his response, “No. I couldn’t say it like that. I mean what you could say is that they, they preach the supporting of the settlements. They show

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61Gemara is the component of the Talmud comprising rabbinical analysis of and commentary on the Mishnah which again is the first major written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions.
how the Torah, the land and the people. Sorry, the people, the land and the god of Israel are one and all connected. But the majority of the people there are Israelis. And I really couldn’t say that even the majority actually do go out and live in the settlements”. As part of my research, I have tried to obtain statistical materials on this matter, but my efforts have been in vain as no statistical studies have been made. However, extensive documentation on the yeshivas’ widespread support for the settlement movement and their political goals is accessible on a broader scale and Avi confirmed this in his answer. He continued to explain that the numbers of Jewish diaspora youth who attended a yeshiva and who subsequently decided to make Aliyah were high and what is more that many of them stayed in the proximity of the actual yeshiva they had first studied at. As a matter of fact there are quite a number of yeshivas located inside the occupied territories, but again it proved impossible to obtain figures for just how many of the yeshiva students would settle in those areas.

Avi asked me for a short break, as he needed to stretch his legs and go to the bathroom. We had been talking for more than an hour but I felt that the time had flown by. When Avi left the office, I opened my field diary to check the list of questions I had prepared before our interview. Avi and I had already been through most of them; however, I knew that some of the more contentious questions were still to come. As I waited for Avi to return, I sat back and tried to imagine what it would be like to live in a caravan on a Hilltop, at the Eastern edge of the Judea-Samaria Mountain Range overlooking the Jordan Valley. I had recently visited a different settlement in the area, so it wasn’t too hard to visualize the surroundings, but suddenly I was hit by a strong sense of anxiety. At first this feeling came as a surprise, until I remembered that it was the same feeling I had experienced the first time I had hitchhiked in the West Bank. I had never found myself in any kind of danger while travelling in the occupied territories; on the contrary, I had always felt quite calm during my fieldwork. But there was always a slight sense of uncertainty and unease about being there. The many stories of shoot-outs and assaults on Israelis in those areas had affected me as much as it had affected the many others before me. I wondered how Avi could bear to live in such an isolated place, commuting to and from Jerusalem every single day, on roads that were potentially dangerous. I noted in my field diary that I should ask Avi about the security situation of the area in which
he was living. I wanted him to give me an appraisal of the degree of danger that he and his
fellow companions were living with.

Throughout my research, the question of personal and/or collective security had been one of
the defining issues addressed by the migrant settlers. In every single interview, settlers would
either furnish me with accounts of their own, allegedly horrifying experiences, or would refer
to stories they had heard from other settlers. However, very few of them would actually admit
to ever having felt scared; on the contrary, many would say that they felt much safer in their
own community in the West Bank, than when visiting Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, London or New
York. Only occasionally would the odd mother perhaps reveal that she sometimes kissed her
children goodbye in the morning, all the while thinking that this might be the last kiss.

As Avi returned to the office, I felt more than ready to continue from the point where we had
stopped for our break. I wanted Avi to explain in detail his thoughts about giving up land in
Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip\(^\text{62}\). I pointed out that the surrender of land was naturally to
be regarded in the context of land for peace. A couple of months before our interview, Ariel
Sharon had made a speech proclaiming his intention to dismantle all settlements in Gaza and
four smaller settlements in North Samaria. This proclamation had sent shock waves through
the religious-nationalist community in Israel and especially the settler movement, who had
been on the barricades ever since. Avi replied calmly to my question, “[…] I think the whole
point about Zionism, you know the whole, our whole connection to the Land of Israel is to the
whole Land of Israel. And I don’t see any, any source or any reasoning to give up parts of the
Land of Israel. People say the only reason that I have heard is to say (because of peace). But I
don’t believe in any way that that, that could happen. I haven’t seen any proof of it. And
historically I’m not sure if there’s a precedent for it. You know, territorial compromise leading to
a true real lasting peace. So I think our stake to the Land of Israel is a very important thing. I
don’t know anyone can come from a religious perspective, I just don’t understand it. You say
either on the one hand that we shouldn’t be there, we should wait, we should be in the Diaspora.
On the other hand, that we should live in certain parts of the Land of Israel, certain parts of the

\(^{62}\) Dismantling of the settlements in Gaza became a reality in 2005
Land of Israel are holier and more important than other parts of the land.” I noted two points in Avi’s opposition to giving up land. Firstly, he did not believe that it would, or could lead to any lasting peace and secondly, that the entire “land of Israel” was sacred and therefore not sanctioned by God to be given away. However, if all the land was sacred, as Avi claimed, where did he think Israel’s future borders should be? He replied, “It clearly says in the Torah that Israel should go from Euphrates to the Nile and then it has to be.” I confronted Avi with the fact that throughout history, rabbis had interpreted the Bible in many different ways and that significant numbers of them, both within Israel as well as abroad, was opposed to the very literal interpretation of the Bible that he apparently held. I posed my point as a question and Avi replied, “I kind of get the question, not really. But as far as I see, I mean from the Euphrates to the Nile has, has the holiness of Israel shall we say is part of Israel. And you know, I mean in certain cases Israel could be slightly bigger and that Israel could be slightly, and I wouldn’t like to say smaller than that. You know I mean in certain times in history Israel was smaller than that. But why, you know, why compromise on, on something like that? I don’t see, I don’t see a reason for that.” I thought I could detect a weakness in Avi’s concept of the Holy Land, as he acknowledged that there were times in Israeli history when it had been smaller. However, the fact that Avi was a strong messianic believer (something he had already made clear on several occasions during our interview), seemed to nullify the notion of pragmatism over land concessions. This became even more apparent as Avi continued to explain his views on the subject, firstly reiterating what he had previously stated and then adding another more radical dimension to his views, one which he had refrained from before, “[...] as far as I’m concerned, the redemption [COUGH] happens stage by stage. Now in a time now when the Jewish people isn’t behind it, just like unfortunately they’re not behind the building of the temple, we can’t do it. Because, just because Avi Hyman wants the temple doesn’t mean Avi Hyman can go and build a temple. It could cause World War III just like, just because Avi Hyman wants the Land of Israel to be from the Euphrates to the Nile doesn’t mean it can happen. We have to come to a time when the Jewish people are united around these concepts. And it might take a year, it might 100 years. But that doesn’t negate my responsibility to believe it and to actively work for it. I say actively work for it, I believe that the Land of Israel should be from the Euphrates to the Nile. Some people believe that we should retreat to pre-67 borders or even pre-48 borders. So I’m doing my part by living on a hilltop by pushing out the borders so to speak. By holding onto that part of Israel to make sure that my dream, you know that we’re still going forward and not
backwards.” With this response, and by revealing his desire to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, Avi positioned himself alongside some of the most radical messianic settlers. However, he also demonstrated some vestige of pragmatism by acknowledging that such desires might be counterproductive if pursued in the current political climate.

We had now engaged with one of the most contentious issues on the Israeli political agenda. I was eager to discover how far Avi would go in pursuing his politico-religious agenda, which was apparently nothing less than the restoration of Biblical Israel, as prescribed by the Old Testament, along with the rebuilding of the Temple on the Temple Mount. As a way of discerning just how far Avi would go, I mentioned that I had previously been in contact with settlers who were not prepared to denounce the assassination of Israel’s former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. It had been my experience in previous interviews that a theoretical discussion regarding the use of violence often gave hazy answers, while concrete examples, such as the murder of Rabin, forced the interviewee to be clearer about where his/her limits were. However, despite partly revealing where his own boundaries were, Avi’s response to my claim regarding the other settlers raised further questions. “I, I don’t buy it as a very big amount of people in the settlement movement. Because quite simply I mean, firstly we’ll go in stages. Firstly the Rabin assassination didn’t achieve anything. Wasn’t a good thing quite clearly cos we’re obligated not to murder. And there was nothing achieved from it. There was no reason for it to be done. There’s also, there’s a lot of questions in, you know, there’s a lot of conspiracy, conspiracies shall we say. I personally like to believe one of those than to, to believe that a Jew actually could do such gruesome thing of killing another Jew. I’m totally opposed to even the fighting between Jews. I mean it’s, there’s no, there could be no Jewish reasoning behind that as far as I’m concerned. I don’t buy that. I don’t know who these people are”. Conspiracy theories regarding the Rabin assassination are very common amongst certain radical groups in Israel, but I was astonished to hear from Avi that he actually subscribed to such stories. However, I decided not to pursue the matter, as any immediate relevance to my research was not apparent. Instead I focused on Avi’s unconditional identification with the settler community. Avi apparently saw the settlers as a united entity with common aspirations, for example when he said, “Because quite simply I mean, firstly we’ll go in stages”. The question is who comprised the ‘we’ that Avi was referring to? During my research, I had learned that the
settler community was marked by quite a diversity of opinion when it came to such questions as the future of the borders, the relationship with Israeli politicians and the Israeli state, and not least, the means to accomplish one's politico-religious goals. What is important to notice here is something that I also noted in my field diary after the interview, and that is the way in which Avi repeatedly represented himself in various, differing categories. What does Avi mean when he says he is (a) a settler, (b) a member of Betar, (c) a Hilltop Youth, (d) an orthodox, religious Jew, (e) an Israeli, as opposed to a Diaspora Jew.

As we continued our conversation, Avi at last began to engage with the specifics of which political tools should be used in fighting the dismantlement of settlements; the dismantlement that Sharon had first proposed and which did later became a policy of his government as well as of the subsequent one led by Ehud Olmert. Avi said, “[…] if there was actual talk of dismantling settlements in Gush Kativ, I would be on the next plane to Israel, to actively, passively resist, as I have before in other Hilltops which were taken down […] But that’s one of the things of the settlement movement that people, that as a religious person I can say is a miracle. That the more people try, shall we say ‘cut us down’ the more we grow. It’s almost like pruning. They take down a settlement, and, you know, every settlement has a history of being taken down and put up. Where I live in Barak’s time it was actually taken down due to an agreement, was actually moved. So Barak got two settlements for the price of one, two new outposts for the price of one.” Describing the establishment of new settlements as a miracle: a response carried out by settlers to the dismantling of ‘old’ settlements, gave rise to an interesting new topic in our conversation. I asked Avi if he believed in miracles and if so, which other modern historical events could be identified as divine intervention. According to many of the more radical groups within the settler movement, as well as some of the orthodox rabbis, the ‘67 war had been an instance of divine intervention, and Avi confirmed that he too was certain Israel’s victory in 1967 had been a miracle. I decided to tease him by asking if, by extension, that meant the first phase of the Yom Kippur war had been a punishment from God on the Jewish people. The fact was that during this particular stage Israel had been on the brink of being defeated. The final number of casualties was extremely high in comparison to any of the other Arab-Israel wars. Surprisingly Avi did not notice the slight irony in my question, as he answered, “No, I don’t believe so much in that as a punishment. I think the
Jewish people had responsibility. And we made some mistakes. And we learnt from it. Just like, in my opinion, to go a bit stronger in the holocaust. I think the holocaust could have been stopped. It should have been stopped by the Jewish people”. Accusations against the Jewish people for having been complicit in the killing of six million Jews during the Holocaust were something Avi had in common with not only anti-Semites, but also some of the most influential rabbis in modern Jewish history. Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum writes, “Because of our sinfulness we have suffered greatly, suffering as bitter as wormwood, worse than any Israel has know since it became a people...In former times, whenever troubles befell Jacob, the matter was pondered and reasons sought--which sin had brought the troubles about--so that we could make amends and return to the Lord, may He be blessed...But in our generation one need not look far for the sin responsible for our calamity...The heretics have made all kinds of efforts to violate these oaths, to go up by force and to seize sovereignty and freedom by themselves, before the appointed time...[They] have lured the majority of the Jewish people into awful heresy, the like of which has not been seen since the world was created...And so it is no wonder that the Lord has lashed out in anger...And there were also righteous people who perished because of the iniquity of the sinners and corrupters, so great was the [divine] wrath”(Teitelbaum 1961). I was wondering if Avi shared the thoughts of Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum and the other rabbis who had expressed similar thoughts. Avi rejected these theological assertions, but put forward one of the famous statements of Vladimir Jabotinsky, “[...] Hitler had a clear message that [...] wanted him to put the Jewish people in one place. And that was a message of pure evil. He wanted to put them in one place, which was the gas chamber. Which was underground. And the Jewish vision is the absolute opposite of that. The Jewish vision is you wanna be in one place, in Israel, the land of Israel the redemption. So it was unfortunately a clear message that we didn’t understand. It’s a clear message that Jabotinsky went round Europe preaching that, he said quite clearly ‘if you don’t liquidate the Diaspora, the Diaspora will liquidate you’. It doesn’t matter what type of Jew you are, you know, what synagogue you go to. If you’re a Shomer Hatzair63 if you’re Betar it doesn’t matter. If we don’t liquidate the Diaspora, the Diaspora will liquidate us. And I still hold to that [...]” I asked Avi if I understood him correctly in saying that the liquidation of six million Jews during the Holocaust was in his view the fault of the Jews themselves? “To a large extent, yes. I mean everything that happens, we have to look on a personal level and on a national level. Was our responsibility fulfilled? That’s why I personally can’t sit back and live in

63 Shomer Hatzair: is a Socialist–Zionist youth movement founded in 1913
England because I don’t believe in it. So I, on a personal level, have to go to Israel. And in the Holocaust, I mean, on a personal level we can’t blame people, we weren’t, you know, you can only, you can’t judge the […] until you’re in their own shoes. But on a national level, a lot of our leaders did some very disgraceful things”. I now felt I understood the basic components of Avi’s worldview, especially when it came to issues connected to Zionism and politics. Avi’s overall ideology was characterized by a mixture of strict, modern, orthodox and religious Judaism, inspired by people like Rabbi Kook, and combined with the revisionist Zionist ideology of people like Vladimir Jabotinsky and the radical settler movement Gush Emunim. In fact, most members of the Hilltop Youth, in addition to a significant number of the more right wing, modern orthodox group of Israelis, share this particular synthesis of Zionist revisionism and Judaism. I could recognize many of the same ideas common amongst other migrant settlers that I had previously talked to, and these ideas would continue to feature in later conversations in my research.

However, it is very important to note here that there are also quite significant differences of opinion within the groups themselves. When it came to questions such as: where the exact location of borders should be drawn; the use of violence as a means to accomplish one’s political goals; the democratic process; their approach to Arabs and Palestinians, and the peace camp within Israel, these sorts of topics were capable of generating quite strong deviations in opinion. Avi was in many ways one of the most hard line radicals I had met; yet at the same time, he repeatedly stressed that he would never harm another Jew. In fact Avi expressed this in an all encompassing fashion by saying, “But for me as an individual, as a Jew, and I love all Jews, I’m obligated to love all Jews. And respect all Jews.” However, at the same time, Avi was quick to refine this thought by adding, “But if I see a Jew cutting his wrists I have to stop him. You know through education or through whatever it is […]” Through whatever it is, I asked him. And he replied, “I mean, yeah, through what’s needed at the time”. I must say that I did not feel completely convinced by Avi’s allegedly complete opposition to the use of violence against another Jew. Let me put it this way: even though Avi was quite explicit about this issue, when talking about the assassination of Rabin he still seemed to manifest certain ambivalence on the subject of the use of violence.
By this point in the interview, I felt that I had spent a long time exploring Avi’s religious, political and ideological position, so I decided to change the subject and ask Avi about his Aliyah experience. Three years had passed since he arrived at Mechin Meir; the time of his studies in the yeshiva had finally ended. The next step would be to finalize the Aliyah process that had, in a way, been in progress since he first became involved with Betar in London, nearly six years earlier. Avi returned to London for a short time. He was told by people from the Jewish agency that, to be entitled to all the benefits of being a new Olim, he must first start his Aliyah process by returning to his country of origin and staying there for three months. Finally, at the beginning of 2003, Avi at last arrived back at Ben Gurion Airport just outside Tel Aviv. He moved into a newly founded yeshiva established by one of his former teachers at Mahon Meir. Here Avi lived and studied for six months, while in the evening attending Hebrew classes. At that time Avi was living with four other yeshiva students, in a house connected to the school.

I asked Avi if he could tell me how he eventually got in contact with the people from Maale Shlomo, the hilltop that later became his home. Avi told me that he had already known about the place from fellow yeshiva students since before he had officially made Aliyah. He had attended what he described as a ‘housing fair’ where he had come into contact with some of the residents of the hilltop. This piece of information took me by surprise as I had never even heard of a housing fair, still less imagined that one might find such a thing: a market place where people like the settlers or the controversial Outposts would have a stand ‘selling’ illegal residences to interested ‘buyers’! I asked Avi what his own experience had been when he attended the fair and he said, “[…] when the time came when I officially made Aliyah, I went to Aliyah fair there and there was everything on offer there, from going to move and to Modiim, to going to the settlements. I didn’t want to live in a settlement per se, for a number of reasons. And so I asked around, you know, if they had new Hilltops, the newer the better as far as I was concerned because ideologically I wanna do as much as I can. And a number of people offered me places. And one of the nice Kochav Ha’shachar was Maale Shlomo. So […] so I moved in”. I decided then that I would like to attend such an exhibition as soon as the opportunity arose.

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64 Kochav Ha’shachar is a National-religious settlement located in Mateh Binyamin Regional Council and the mother settlement of Maale Shlomo.
Avi continued to explain that the people from the settlements were what he articulated as “being in force. In fact half the place was [filled] with settlers”.

After the exhibition, Avi went for a trip to the hilltop to see what the place was like. He already knew a friend and former fellow yeshiva student from South Africa who had become a resident a few months earlier. Avi told me that from the moment he saw the hilltop settlement he was fascinated; he decided instantly that he wanted to move in. I asked Avi how he felt after his first encounter with Maale Shlomo, “The first time I went there I went with friends and I was just astonished by the amount of land that was, was there. Like the view, breathtaking view. And I didn’t expect anything from the caravans to be honest. I really wanted to move up to the hilltop. I made a call to one of my friends that was there, I said ‘Look you haven’t got back to me for two weeks whatever. You’re probably busy. But I want to make it quite clear, I am moving up to a Hilltop’. Sorry, this was after I’d seen it. I came there once, I looked, he took me around for a walk for about 40 minutes around the area. As I say, breathtaking view, amazing place. Fell in love with it. Wanted to live there. And thought about it for a bit but really was [...] place. Then as I say, tried to get hold of him for while to let him know I wanna move. Left an answer on his, message on his answer machine saying ‘I will be moving up to your hill’ You know ‘I’ll do the process of whatever it is but I want to move up to your hill. If you haven’t got any room I’ll sleep on the floor in a sleeping bag, whatever has to be done until there’s room, until there’s more caravans’. I really fell in love with the place. So he phoned me back straightaway and said that a room had opened up. And I moved in actually within, within a week”. Watching Avi as he thought back on this first encounter was for him a very emotional point in our conversation. His face lit up, his eyes shone, and the tone of his voice seemed clearer, louder and much happier. I noticed a change of atmosphere as we continued. Avi told me how moving into the hilltop settlement had been: the fantastic reception he got from his now fellow companions and the singing and talking around the bonfire, during the first nights of his stay. Avi had truly found a community and communion with people he felt in tune with. This was something he had never experienced in his life before.
I asked Avi what the general procedure was for people who wanted to move in. I thought this might give me an insight into what sort of people might be attracted to moving to such a place. Avi explained, “Generally [...] I mean there’s two ways nowadays. Actually, there’s three ways nowadays. One, those freaks that come by the internet. Like we have a webpage and we actually had one family make Aliyah on [...] from Texas through the webpage. That’s freakish, it doesn’t happen very often. We wish it did. But generally through word of mouth. People know other people that live on Hilltops, the word is spread. There’s a vacancy in this one, whatever it is. That’s for singles. Now singles, in settlements generally it’s not easy to live. Because singles aren’t seen as the committing type of people for obvious reasons. If I tomorrow was to get married and my wife would wanna live in another Hilltop or Natanya or Tel Aviv, I’d have a conflict there. So all settlements generally try not to accept singles. That’s another reason why I was looking for a new one.” This was an interesting piece of information as, during my research and while trying to find newly arrived migrant settlers, I had in fact had quite a difficult time finding singles. I knew from some of the settlements down in Gush Etzion that I had visited during my last field trip that they preferred couples, but no one had told me that this was the reason. Avi’s information was later confirmed by some of my sources in various settlements.

Finding new residents for the settlements via the internet was of course something that I had been aware of beforehand. Nearly every settlement has its own homepage, with often very detailed descriptions covering all sorts of issues relating to the life, history, housing opportunities, schools, job opportunities etc. in the settlement. Donation opportunities are also a typical feature of these websites. Moreover, I knew from talking to the migrant settlers that these web pages were of enormous value in the search for the right community. As a matter of fact, the settlements and the outposts, as well as most other settler related organizations, not only used the internet to recruit new people, but crucially used it also as a communication tool, through which they were able to generate financial support, as well as recruit people for activities related to their political struggle against whatever and whomever they felt was working against their objectives.
Avi and I then turned to issues specifically related to Maale Shlomo. I wanted to know more about the people living in the community: where they came from, their ages, etc. Avi told me that the community consisted of seven families and six singles, with a total of twenty-five residents, all quite young. At the time of my research only three of the families had children. Sixty percent of the residents had been born in Israel, and the rest had originated from various places in North America, South Africa and England. The housing facilities of the residents were apparently a combination of new and old caravans. Avi lived in one of the old caravans, which they had obtained from the neighbouring settlement Kochav Ha’ahachar. In fact, a small group of young people from this mother settlement had originally created the Hilltop community Maale Shlomo. Avi’s caravan is one of the original caravans used by some of the first residents in Kochav Ha’ahachar, right back in the time when this settlement was established during the late seventies.

Then Avi told me the story of the establishment of Maale Shlomo. His account was very interesting as it gave an insight into the manner in which new outpost’s were created, as well as the way in which many of the existing settlements had been established historically. This is what Avi said, “I mean this particular scenario. An older man from the settlement passed away and one of his missions in life was to make [wine], he had a vineyard [where he] made wine for the temple and his vineyards were on the valley above here. So as a mark of respect and honour to him after he passed away, some of his students shall we say moved up to the hill and started some kind of something [new settlement] there and it could possibly, as far as I know they took up some caravans or whatever, they could have possibly have even been from [other settlements...] And then gradually they got their families to move up, [...] young families, and then it happened [again] recently in my time. The time before it was actually children from [Kochav Ha’ahachar] but the scenario is where people with families would, like the most extreme shall we say the families will take a bus or an old caravan and go up to a hill without, you know, AMANA’S connection, without anyone’s connection, electricity, without water, and start a new settlement [INAUDIBLE...] I mean they’re the ones that paid the road, they’re the ones who organised through AMANA bringing the caravans and all these type of things. We’re waiting now

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65 Amana is “the settlement movement of Gush Emunim. Amana was established in 1978 with the primary goal of developing communities in Judea, Samaria, The Golan Heights, The Galilee, The Negev and Gush Katif. This goal includes not only the establishment of communities and their supportive industries and social services but their continued maintenance and development”.
for phones, they've put up the poles for the phone cables. I mean on a week to week basis, on a
day to day basis, people from there come up and do security for us, on occasion they on a
Shabbat they make up the minyan⁶⁶ if we don't have a minyan they come to [read] the Torah, we
have someone to do that. And generally you know they support us and help us out on the road.”

Avi’s account of the history of Maale Shlomo reveals interesting and important information on
two different levels. Firstly, and significantly, by exposing the patterns in which new
settlement outposts in general are established: the key players and the procedures by which
the new outposts are established both now and historically. And secondly, how the specific
settlement of Maale Shlomo was established by a group of Hilltop Youth in collaboration with
members of an ‘old’ settlement from Kochav Ha’ahachar (these members were young, second-
generation settlers). During my conversation with Avi, I decided to focus on the latter as it
revealed Avi’s own Aliyah story, which is of course the focal point of this chapter. It is clear
however that we are witnessing a significant collaboration between the ‘new’ and the ‘old’
settlements, as well as between the ‘new’ and the ‘old’ generations of settlers. On a concrete
level, this collaboration is very broad when it comes specifically to Maale Shalom. Firstly,
second-generation settlers originating from the mother settlement established the new
outpost. Secondly, the caravans and other supplies were contributions from the same sour-
case for all the labour and security equipment as well. The sharing of political goals and
the overlap of people and activities within the ‘new’ and ‘old’ settlements reveals just how
dependent a Hilltop like Maale Shlomo (and others like it) is on its mother settlement. Just as
with the establishment of the settlement itself, it was clear that the daily welfare of Maale
Shlomo was frequently taken care of by members of the mother-settlement, Kochav
Ha’ahachar. This was especially true when maintaining the security of the Hilltop. I asked Avi
to tell me more about the security situation on the Hilltop and he replied, “Generally, I mean,
we don’t have like 24/7 security there we have tours er secure, I won’t say it in Hebrew - security
patrols from the settlement down below [...] neighbourhood. And security patrols from the army.
Which, you know, fairly regular. And occasionally we do, you know, it’s been on and off, we have
actual 24/7 security. But most of the time, no. Some of the, some of the, the men carry firearms.
And we have dogs and that’s about it really. But [...] thank God that the area isn’t, isn’t shall we
say, a high-risk area. So, [I am] not, not very worried.” His reply then gave rise to a general
assessment of his own, as well as that of other members of his Hilltop’s security situation. Avi

⁶⁶ Minyan is an assemblé comprised of ten adult Jewish men required for certain religious obligations.
repeated what I had heard from others many times before: that he felt more secure on the Hilltop of Maale Shlomo than he felt when he visited the big cities within Israel. Moreover he added, “So the only real Arabs that you see or even non-Jews that you see are Bedouins. And they just, I mean most of the time keep to themselves. And doesn’t really bother me. I mean the traffic is Arab traffic and there is a threat. But at the end of the day, I didn’t move to Israel to feel like I was in a ghetto and I don’t wanna, you know psychologically I don’t wanna even go down that line. So I, it doesn’t bother me at all”. His answer was quite typical not only for him, but also for a lot of the other settlers I had met before.

As we continued to talk, I asked Avi if he had been in the army. “I would have loved to. I went and I asked and I begged. But I have arthritis. So, I mean, they, they don’t really beg for Olim Hadashim (Hebrew for new immigrants) to come into the army anyway. So when you’ve got a medical condition, that the guy just, I mean the guys in the office just couldn’t understand what my deal what. They kept telling me to go home. And I kept coming back. Whatever. But so I, I serve in other ways.” For Avi it had been a tremendous blow: not to have been able to serve in the Israeli army. But the rejection had served in turn as an extra incentive to becoming a Hilltop Youth. At least his becoming a settler, conquering land in the name of God, served a purpose that could in some way compensate for Avi’s defeat, “I mean living on a Hilltop is doing what I can do for my nation, yeah” Avi explained.

We had reached the end of our conversation. I felt I had enough data now to support my original targets for the interview, indeed more than enough. During the last part of our conversation, we had touched upon two further areas, which I have decided to play down in this chapter as, however fascinating; they do not throw any additional light on Avi’s motives and ideology.

I thanked Avi for a very interesting and informative interview and promised to come and visit him at his Hilltop one day in the future.
CHAPTER 5C - JAMIE BEN DAVID NOVEMBER 2005 (MAALE ADUMIM)

The waiting had been long and dreadful since my return from a disastrous New York field trip. Coming home more or less empty handed from a trip which had lasted three months, without any interviews from families or individuals contemplating making Aliyah during the summer, really showed me for the first time since starting this research, that obtaining field material within such a politically contentious area was going to be quite a challenge. During my last trip to Israel and the West Bank in the winter and spring of 2004 I had thought my connections with the Aliyah and diaspora organizations were solid. But a few critical newspaper articles in the Israeli press about the work of some of these organizations had really turned everything upside down. I hadn’t even seen or read these articles, but apparently they criticised the Jewish Agency for helping newcomers (Olim) to move to places on the other side of the Green Line. In New York, during a phone conversation with the director of Tehilla, I was told this was in fact the reason why nobody would help or even talk to me while I was in the city. Nefesh B’Nefesh whom I had spoken to and emailed with all through my research completely avoided me during my stay there.

Once home from New York, I tried to regain the trust of the Aliyah organizations that I had lost since the release of the above-mentioned articles. Finally, after a very long and intensive correspondence with Rabbi Yehoshua Fass (the Founder and Executive Director of Nefesh B’Nefesh), and, not least, the Director of the Israel Aliyah Centre in New York: Michael Landsberg, I finally had a breakthrough. Michael Landsberg provided me with a contact to Gidon Ariel, Director of Community Aliyah from North America in Maale Adumim. After a short correspondence, Gidon Ariel completely grasped the nature of my research and which kind of people I wanted to get in touch with. During the following week the first couple of emails began to arrive. These emails came from both individuals and families of new Olim: Americans who had arrived in various settlements in the West Bank since the start of the Second Intifada. I had told Gidon previously that this was the criterion for my research. I was exhilarated by the response. Due to the terrible setbacks of my failed trip to New York earlier in the year, I had started to nurse doubts about ever finding the type of families I was looking for. However, over the next couple of weeks emails arrived on a daily basis and before I knew it, more than thirty new Olim had contacted me. The variety of people: men and women of
different ages, living in various settlements, some living in Samaria, others in Judea, with a whole range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and, not least, people who were affiliated with more or less every sector of Judaism, spanning from the more secular, cultural Jews to people who either described themselves as traditional or modern orthodox. The only sector missing was the classical orthodox. This was more than I had ever dreamt of. I replied to every incoming email as they continued to pour in.

On September the 6th an email arrived from Jamie Ben David, a male settler living in Maale Adumim. The content of the mail was short but succinct:

Danny,

We made Aliyah 2 years ago and came to Maale Adumim 1 year ago. We didn’t come with Nefesh B’Nefesh; we did come on the same day as an NBN flight though.

Shalom

Jamie

I have always been intrigued by communications that cut to the core of the question in hand, and Jamie’s email fell into this category. Two hours later I replied with a standard email describing the content and purpose of my research, as well as what I expected of the participants’ contributions. The following email from Jamie was once again intriguing:

Dear Danny,

Since your organization is focused on Human Rights is your research going to be a study on how we are somehow responsible for the hardships of the Palestinians? Even if it is we would be happy to participate in order to clear up any misconceptions of the realities as they are on the ground here. I didn’t mention that I am also a volunteer Border Guard with the Israeli Border Patrol, so I may be able to provide additional input for your research.
You can reach me at this e-mail when you are in Israel, or call me locally at:

Shalom

Jamie

Jamie had apparently searched the internet for information about me as well as the research institute that I am affiliated with, as I had not mentioned anything about the Human Rights Department in the Institute, which I am not connected to anyway. But Jamie’s comment did not surprise me at all. On the contrary, since my first field trip to Israel I had been in contact with many settlers who had ‘done their homework’ by searching for information on me. Often the result of this mutual interest had turned out to be very fruitful but on other occasions settlers would immediately turn their back to me and my research. I was afraid that Jamie would turn out to be in the second category. Settlers are general very aware that people from the outside world have a very critical attitude not only to Israeli settlement policies but also towards settlers as individuals. Jamie’s response surely reflected just that. I replied the same evening hoping that this wasn’t going to become a big issue, as I had experienced with some of the other settlers:

Dear Jamie,

The Danish Institute of International Studies is doing research on various subjects. It is true that we have a department on Human Rights, but that is not where I am working. As I explained in my previous email, my study is mainly focusing on Aliyah studies. The funding for this research is not paid by the institute but the Danish research foundation. Let me again be clear about what my interest in the subject is; this study has nothing to do with the Israeli/Arab conflict as such - instead the focus is on People in transition moving from a safe society to a conflict prone area. What is interesting is mainly the question of why and how people adapt. The focus is your stories and how you experience the transition. The questions related to the issue on the Palestinians will only be addressed if you chose it. I will call as soon as I have arrived in Israel October 26.
All the best

Danny Raymond

PS. Jamie if you know other new Olim in Maale Adumim, who would be interested in participating in this research, please let me know.

With this email Jamie and I settled the issue and he invited me to come to his home in Maale Adumim when I arrived in Israel on my next field trip.

It was the end of November 2004 when I at last left my place in Tel Aviv for Jerusalem took a bus from the main station and finally arrived, forty-five minutes later, at the gates of Maale Adumim. During the last year and a half I had visited so many different settlements in the West Bank that I barely noticed the presence of armed guards or the closely guarded fence and entrance surrounding the settlement.

The size and condition of the roads connecting Maale Adumim with Jerusalem gives one a feeling that this is just another suburb of Jerusalem. And that is apparently what the Israeli state wants and what the inhabitants of the settlements are hoping for. I had arranged to meet Jamie near the entrance of the settlement. We would then walk to his house and conduct the interview there. I found Jamie immediately after leaving the comfortable air-conditioned bus that I had travelled in all the way from Jerusalem. Jamie greeted me and we walked through the settlement heading to his house. The air felt fresh and clear in my face. As we were walking I once again noticed the cleanliness and neatness of the settlements. Many of the houses that we passed were strikingly large, especially when compared with most of the houses you see in the big Israeli towns. Another noticeable feature was the number of houses with gardens attached. You get a strong sense of the space out here in the occupied territories, particularly when compared with the more central parts of Israel where people live in extremely close proximity to each other. The walls of the houses in the settlement were white.
and had the characteristic red tails on top of the roofs. This was definitely the biggest settlement I had visited since first starting my research. It felt more like a small town and it certainly didn't have the same kind of intimate atmosphere that many of the other settlements I had visited had. It was quite a long walk to Jamie's house and as we were walking Jamie told me about the surroundings: pointing out various places and sights within, as well as outside, the settlement. His stories were peppered with biblical references, made as he singled out anything from specific flowers to some of the many hilltops we could see on the horizon. Every single settler I have met so far has done the same. People who choose to live on the other side of the Green Line seem to have a tremendous attachment to and compassion with the place they have chosen to live in. And throughout our conversation, Jamie repeatedly confirmed this general impression.

Eventually we arrived at his house. It wasn’t big, but it did have a small garden running out to the narrow pathway on which we had come. As we entered the house his wife greeted us. She shook my hand and I immediately understood that she wasn’t as religious as perhaps some of the other female settlers I had met. Some strictly orthodox Jewish women are prohibited from touching men other than their own husbands. In the middle of the living room a table had been set. Jamie offered me a chair and went into the kitchen to prepare coffee for all of us. I briefly explained what we were going to talk about in the interview. They were of course already aware of the nature of the research and they had already given their consent to using a tape recorder for the interview. Jamie and I were sitting near the table while his wife had placed herself on a sofa near the front door. Apparently she was going to listen in on our conversation but I didn’t really mind. Maybe she might feel like contributing too, I thought. Either way I felt confident that her presence would not have any particularly negative effect on Jamie. Jamie had been very talkative since we had first met outside the bus so there was no shyness in his personality. I was ready to start and so were they. I placed the microphone so it would pick up both the sound from us sitting near the table and also his wife sitting at the sofa. As we were about to start the interview I felt very excited and upbeat for some strange reason. In my field notebook I wrote “the atmosphere is good. Jamie seems like he is looking forward to this interview, he seems very relaxed and so do I” (Field diary 3).
I started the interview by asking Jamie if he would say his name and then continue by telling me a little bit about his family, where they came from, etc. Jamie told me that his surname had originally been Johnson, but that he had changed it on arrival in Israel. At the time, I simply forgot to ask Jamie the reason for the change of name and why he had specifically chosen the surname Ben David. I was so familiar with the fact that many newcomers to this country would use their Hebrew name, if they had one, that I took it for granted that Jamie must have taken his mother's birth name. But after an email correspondence a few months later I did decide to ask Jamie if he could elaborate more on his motive for changing his surname. His reply was as follows:

Danny

As far as the name change it is a bit theological and strange to some but there was a reason for it.

My mothers' family name is Yanklowitz. My biological fathers name was "Johnson". Don't know if he was Jewish the name didn't reflect it and he left when I was a 2 so I wasn't able to ask him. When I thought of Hebrecizing the name it literally translated to "Ben Yonathan" - Son of Jonathan.

Jonathan being the son of Saul was symbolic of a breaking up of the Kingdom of Israel - for under King Saul's rule the Northern & Southern Kingdoms of Israel split and became two separate feuding Kingdoms. It was not until under the reign of King David that the Tribes were once again united into a single Kingdom and the Jewish tribes were unified, as they should have been.

Upon reading the History & writings of King David himself I identified with him, not from a standpoint of his Kingship or royalty, but his humanity - his strengths & weaknesses as a man. I felt as though in spirit so to speak I was in a way a descended of David the Shepherd boy from Judea.

These two factors together lead me to change my name from "Ben Yonathan" to "Ben David". A bit deep in thinking I know but there was a reason for it.

I also changed my first name as well to "Israel". This explanation is a bit simpler.

My name "Jamie" Hebrecized in every book I found would translate to "Yakov". Apparently it is some form of Jacob? I didn't see the connection but this is what I found.
I didn’t really like the name Yakov, and Yakov’s name was eventually changed to “Israel”. Being the Zionist that I am :) I preferred the name Israel over Yakov. However I never really use “Israel” except in formal settings like Aliyah to Torah, etc. (It says “Israel” on my Teudat Zehut too so when someone calls using that name I know it is probably the bank - Ha!

Shalom Jamie

Jamie and his older brother grew up in San Diego. His mother who was a single parent had been divorced from Jamie’s father when Jamie was only two years old. Jamie told me that he had only been in brief contact with his father, “once or twice” since then, and in fact did not want to talk about him. Jamie’s mother originated from New York and grew up in what Jamie called “a religious Jewish middle-class family”. Jamie continued, “My grandfather […] was in business, he established synagogues [in New York] he [used to be a] president or vice-president [within a Jewish congregation]… so, they would always go to shul. And […] they were actively involved”. When Jamie’s mother was in her mid-twenties she decided to leave New York. Her first stop was Florida, but later, after she had given birth to her two boys, she eventually decided to settle in San Diego, having found a pleasant and wealthy neighbourhood called Coronado. Jamie told me, “Me, my mom and my brother lived in an upscale part of San Diego, but we were poor folks. But we all had rich friends and lived in a really nice neighbourhood”. Jamie’s mother originally grew up in an upper middle-class family and it felt natural for her to settle in a place where she felt comfortable and where she knew that her boys would get a good upbringing. The reason why she had actually left New York and turned her back on her family had a very tragic story connected to it. This I found out later in my conversation with Jamie while talking about what kind of religious environment his mother had grown up in. Jamie explained, “…There was a kind of a darker side to it. My grandmother, my mum’s mum, was drinking a lot. Her husband would beat her. And in situations she would say that she would kill herself”. Eventually Jamie’s grandmother did commit suicide and it “really turned her (his mother) away from the whole religious aspect. It made her rebel from the whole thing”. When she was in her early twenties she eventually left not only her family but her whole life behind and went to Florida.
I asked Jamie what his mother’s profession was, and he told me, “She worked on and off. She was a legal secretary. At a point she was even a mud wrestler, she even was once a go-go dancer. You know, eh, she was an ex-biker from Florida, you know, so she was a, she was a tough New Yorker type, so eh, and you know, she kind a dropped in and out of drugs, she smoked a lot of marihuana. That was pretty much it; there were a lot of marihuana. It kind of had that… a kind of negative influence. And so, eh, but I didn’t really get off of on the drugs, I just, eh, was just more angry and just kind of rebellions and, and did my own thing. You know, get in trouble at school and were kicked out, fights and that, you know stupid things.”

Jamie went to a regular high school in Coronado. His upbringing was quite rough, but he never really got into more serious trouble. Jamie pointed to the fact that he was raised in a family without a father and with a mother who seemed more focused on keeping her own life together than on taking care of her two sons. “It was rough growing up” Jamie said, continuing, “I didn’t have a dad to discipline me”. It was clear that Jamie saw his childhood, and especially his mother’s upbringing of him and his brother, in a very critical light. In many respects it seemed Jamie felt battered by the tough experiences he had had while growing up. His mother was very unstable. She didn’t really assume the responsibility of raising her two boys. And even when Jamie got into fights in the street or at school she failed to understand what problems were actually causing his behaviour. On several occasions she even encouraged him in his violent behaviour, “eh, she was like, you know, it’s funny as she came out one time I had a fight out in front of the house, she saw me push around this bigger kid, like a she said yeah, yeah, she’s like encourage it, I’ll shouldn’t take any crap, no. So eh, you know, there wasn’t really a stabilising influence there [laugh]. That was pretty much it”.

I wanted to understand more about Jamie’s background, and thought further insight might be gained by asking him about his relationship with his brother. The first description Jamie gave of him proved to be an interesting touchstone for his current relationship and attitude towards him. “My brother was a stoned surfer...he surfed and smoked a lot of pot”. Yet when they were younger Jamie had in many ways seen him as a hero: a person that in contrast to Jamie lived by his dreams and enjoyed life. “He [his brother] was always very laid back, and I
was always the hyper.” His brother, who is seven years older than Jamie, became at one point a professional surfer, but he also had quite a few drug problems. In many ways his brother’s problems seemed to echo the problems their mother used to have. When I asked Jamie about his relationship with his brother it became clear that when they were younger Jamie had very much looked up to him. At one time his brother had even talked Jamie into becoming a surfer like himself; and for a short while they had lived together in Hawaii, surfing and partying all the time. After a while Jamie went back home. He wasn’t as into surfing as his brother and he definitely didn’t have the same drug and party habits as were typical of the surfer lifestyle in Hawaii at the time.

Today Jamie’s brother works as a building constructor, moving in and out of the job market. He still has drug problems, smoking dope and taking cocaine, and can’t seem to get a grip on his life. Interestingly, in many ways their relationship roles seem to have reversed since Jamie’s move to Israel. Jamie underlined this by saying “Eh, you know he keeps, you know, he talks about things about God and things like this and coming up here. And eh, but I don’t think he’d make it out here; he is not ready for that. And so eh, but you know, he wasn’t really good for a while, and then he falls back into it. I just, I just said cut the whole thing loose you gotta get out it you gotta get out of California, saying yeah, he can’t keep going on like this”. When I asked Jamie how his brother reacted when he first told him about him becoming religious and moving to Israel his response was as follows, “You know he’s like wow, you know? Tell me about it, you know. So, he is more like my little brother now, or as I was his little brother and he was my big brother. And now it’s kind of the situation is reversed, I am the more responsible one and, and now he is like the little brother.” It was evident that Jamie felt somewhat ambivalent about his ‘new’ relationship with his brother. On the one hand it was very clear that he felt both sad and troubled by his brother’s lack of willpower regarding his own life: his being into drugs and having no direction or sense of purpose. Yet on the other, one could also strongly sense that Jamie derived some kind of pleasure from having become the more responsible, more mature person in their relationship. We left the subject to concentrate more on Jamie’s own upbringing.
Leaving school after twelve years without any qualifications, Jamie left his mother’s home at around eighteen or nineteen and got his own home, working in a gun store. He also told me that he had spent some time in the military. That made me curious: working in a gun store and serving in the military, where had that all come from? I thought I needed a more thorough explanation so I asked Jamie to expand a little on what might have prompted the interest. He replied, “I just have this military mind. Eh, it’s funny as I didn’t really have it. When I was young grown up I was like more into marshal art and something’s like this... And then one day I watched the, the movie Platoon. Yeah, yeah! A friend said you gotta see this movie. I was thirteen years old, I never forget it. When I saw that movie something just kind of snapped, something clicked, in my brain and from then on it was like, eh, I just had this whole military mind that was like really traumatic just seeing it. I didn’t know anything about war, how this whole thing came about. That will never happen again if I can help it. And from then on I just really got involved with military things. That really got it. Besides, then I was a little bit in the reserves, I was also working in some gun stores, selling guns. Eh, and then after that I opened a window tinting company. Eh, we got doing window tinting on the cars and that was, was pretty much it, I was just in, just in business. I wasn’t really thinking about Israel at all. [But] it was always in the back of my head. And then when the Intifada broke out in 2000”.

At that point in our conversation we had only touched on the Israeli issue on one occasion. This had been regarding an incident that had occurred when Jamie was only fifteen or sixteen, but which in Jamie’s own view had had a long lasting effect on him. Jamie told me the story like this, “…and then, eh, when I was, eh, I was, well, fifteen or sixteen or so, a friend of mine’s mother, eh, she was talking and eh, she said, one day, you know, you’re gonna end up in Israel.” It was a comment that came suddenly and very unexpectedly for Jamie and he continued, “Yeah just out of the blue you know, we were talking about some other things I’d forget what. And eh, she says, one day you’re gonna end up in Israel. And eh, she was talking about things, biblical things. And you know, I had a lot of respect for her, and so it really stayed in back of my head it planted that seed, in the back of my head.”
I asked if he could remember what he thought of it at the time, “I was like ‘wow’, I was like ‘cool’, you know Israel, and you know that kind. To me it was just, just like this big cloud, this dream, I didn’t really know anything about it (Israel) other than the history, the biblical history and that stuff, and I was like, Israel, I knew nothing about, you know, something, maybe they ride on camels or what, I don’t know what was going on there, right? But all that I knew was that it was Israel, Israel. And eh, I knew that it was a really tough army that was about it, eh and not to mess with them”.

I took the opportunity to direct the interview deeper into this particular area by encouraging him to continue on the same path. As far as their family life went, his mother had brought them up as completely secular. They didn’t keep any Jewish holidays, nor did they have any contact with a Jewish community, and their contact with the close religious family in New York had been very limited. So, with the exception of one occasion, as far as Jamie could remember, they didn’t have any religious experience or guidance, and more or less no firsthand knowledge. “We were mainly secular. Eh didn’t really have any kind of influence, religious influence at all”. In the area where the family lived Jamie naturally had contact with other Jewish kids, and some of these were also good friends, but in general he never thought about his family life as Jewish in a religious sense; identity-wise though, his mother never let them forget that they were Jews. Jamie explains, “But that was one thing she really did. Pound eh, pound into us that we were Jews. And eh, she never let us forget that. And eh, you know, we couldn’t forget when we talked to our family back east they were you know too concentrate Jew, you know? But eh, she would say, ‘yeah, Jews are like that, Jewish jokes and Jew this, Jew that’, so we always knew that”. On the question of any family connection to Israel or whether Israel had been talked about when he was growing up, Jamie couldn’t remember any reference to it. And as far as any family connections actually living in Israel, there were none. It was only after Jamie and his wife had made Aliyah that a cousin of his came to learn in a yeshiva (a Jewish religious boarding school) in Jerusalem. The first time Israel and Zionism became an issue in Jamie’s life was after the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000.
Besides the incident with the mother of his friend that occurred when he was fifteen, Jamie didn’t have any real perception of Israel nor did he have any real incentive to move there. But when the Intifada broke out Jamie suddenly became aware of the conflict. At the same time and quite by coincidence, Jamie stumbled over some books that would change everything. Jamie explains, “Yeah, the Second Intifada, right. I remember seeing the first one on TV, but then the second broke out. And something just, eh… Oh you know, I read some books, some novels, eh, The Key to Zion - novels or something, and eh, there was like five of them. And they were basically fiction; they were based on, eh, non-fiction history, based on real history and then they plugged in some fictional characters. But they were very historical books. And so, eh, the history of it, the real history, eh, really got me like fired up inside about Israel. It was it came at the same time, eh, of the Intifada. The Intifada broke out, I started thinking, my mind was more set on Israel”.

I asked Jamie how he got hold of these books, expecting him to tell me something about maybe the mother of his friend, whom I knew that he had a special relationship with, or maybe someone else who he looked up to and who really had an important influence on his personal life, but instead he told me this, “I was in a library one day. And eh, and I just saw something Zion, something Israel just caught my eye. You know, because I had this Intifada thing in my head. So I picked it up and I just started reading it. It was historical, and it looked, it looked cool, you know. It was like a novel but it was based on history, so I read like two or three of them. And after that I was just like the, the Zionist fire was just alive. And so, I was reading in an encyclopaedia and was reading and reading and, eh, and I just couldn’t get enough. Anything Israel I just had was, like three or four newspaper a day, I mean, Time Magazine, Newsweek, everything I could get, just to pick out anything on Israel.” Jamie continued, “Yeah, and you know, it was just like, it was just like I was starving for it. The news, I watched the news all day long, anything could go on, and I was just watching it…and then one day, I was going through an encyclopaedia and I read about the Law of Return. And it just blew me away and soon as I read that any Jew that returned to the land of Israel and attained instant citizenship, it was like, boom! and at that moment I knew what was going on. So I didn’t know when, except but I knew within a few years I would be there”.
I put a note in my field diary that I had to get hold of this book *The Key to Zion*. In my notes it says, “I must admit that I am extremely curious to find this book and see if I will be able to understand why a person, like Jamie, would get so obsessed with a subject he in many ways felt so little towards”. At that time I still felt pretty much mystified by the fact that a young man without any knowledge or incentive, whether from his family or peer group, or from any other person close to him, could suddenly turn into an ardent Zionist just because of a fictionalized account about Israel. Later I found out that *The Key to Zion* is the last book in a series of five called *The Zion Chronicles* series, which in many ways resembles the famous book and later film *Exodus* written by the author Leon Uris. *Exodus* became an international publishing phenomenon: the biggest bestseller in the United States since Gone with the Wind. The book was published in 1958, ten years after the Israeli state was established. Two years later, in 1960, *Exodus* was turned into a film with famous actors like Paul Newman and Eva Maria Saint. The book and also the film captivated a large part of American society in particular, but also had a great impact on the European population of the day and definitely had an influence in boosting Zionist zeal in sectors of the Jewish population. The *Zion Chronicle* series is far from as famous, but after reading it I can to a certain extend understand the impact such books might have on a “goal searching seeker” like Jamie Ben David.

From Jamie’s point of view, it was the book that really started his need to know more about Israel; and his craving for more knowledge made him a serious and dedicated reader of all sorts of historical and contemporary material on Israel and the history of the Jewish people. Soon after, this desire, or one might say obsession, led Jamie to take a closer look into the religious aspects of Judaism. Again this struck a chord in him and from then on he decided that he wanted to become religious. When I asked him where this religious desire came from he said, “I always had a consciousness of God. And I believed in God and there was always a… You know, there was always outside influence. You know, in America things biblical whether we… You know, whether you are Christian or Jewish or anything, it’s just always [there]… a religious kind of [atmosphere], eh… And so, to have a consciousness of God but didn’t really… you know, not formal kind of get into Judaism itself, eh, until I started getting back to my roots in a sense. And so, it, it started really after the Intifada broke out and I started being thrown back to Israel, and then, I started being drawn into things of Torah, things like this.” I asked Jamie whether in the beginning, he had received any guidance or help from somebody in his circle at home in

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67 *The Zion Chronicles* is a factionary book written by Bodie and Brock Thoene.
San Diego, but he told me that from the very start it had been just his own determination and interest that inspired him to delve into the more religious Jewish books, satisfying his own enormous craving for Jewish religious literature. “I basically just started reading on my own ’cause I didn’t know anybody. And I went to one; I went to one shul (Hebrew for synagogue). And it was like a reform shul. And eh, I walked in and it was like a movie theatre type of thing. And, it was just like, people sitting there and some guy was like on a guitar and just singing…and I just walked out, I was like scared when I walked out...” In America there are three main religious directions in Judaism. Contrary to the situation in Israel, the conservative and reform Jewish communities are quite large and influential. In the reform synagogues the rituals, as well as the prayers are often held in English. In contrast to the conservative and orthodox synagogues, you often hear music played on instruments on the Sabbath, which is strictly forbidden in the more traditional interpretation of Judaism adopted in the more conservative and orthodox Jewish parts of the population.

Being inspired by the traditional religious texts like Torah, Gemara, and Tanach. Jamie would naturally have felt somewhat disconcerted and maybe even revolted by what he saw in the reform synagogue he first visited. On visiting his first orthodox shul, his reaction was completely contrary to that of his first experience. In Jamie’s own words he said, “I first went to an orthodox shul or synagogue after I got here. The first time I went to a synagogue here was when I went with my kid, something with my kid’s school, a holiday or something. A part of the thing was to go to the synagogue and the parents could come with them. I walked in it was like, wow, it was like, it was like I was in the temple. You know, the temple back in, you know, 2,000 years ago or something, it was like; cool, it is a shul, and I just didn’t wanna leave, you know? And eh, I dug it. I really liked it....”

After Jamie’s ‘re-discovery’ of Judaism he found himself with a desire to follow a very strict course within the religious orthodox stream. Jamie bought a used; thirty-dollar Tanach translated into English and started to read on his own. The Tanach is what Christians also call the Old Testament. At the beginning of his reading Jamie was fascinated mainly by the history of the prophets, and then later he got hold of the Torah. I asked Jamie to elaborate more on the early stages of his reading and he explained, “…basically I just started reading, eh... Eh, you know, reading on my own. I didn’t have the Gemara and [I didn’t] have the Talmud; I just went and bought a thirty-dollar Tanach. Starting reading, you know, like the prophets and the history
and... You know, you like to focus a lot on Torah, Torah, Torah but I read like, you know, Isaiah, Jeremiah and just all this history and stuff... You know something that we don’t really get into. It was so cool! And I dug it, you know, it’s like, you look at your back yard, [and] here it is, and here are the hills where King David ran from King Saul. It was like, wow, you know? And, and, you know, people don’t believe that, they don’t believe in history as something, [they] don’t know what they are missing...” After a while Jamie tried to get in contact with the local synagogues, but he didn’t get the help that he was looking for. Jamie explained to me that he almost gave up, but in the end he contacted an old friend who he knew had another friend who had been brought up in a very religious way. This man could teach Jamie the more ritualized and ceremonial parts of Judaism such as how to keep the Sabbath, how to light the candles etc., but Jamie was desperate for even more. Here is how he explained it to me during the interview, “And so, in the meantime I did the Partners and Torahs68. And then I had a, a friend that took me to another friend who was, eh, grew up Jewish. Eh, was adopted and, and grew up Jewish. And, he grew up very religious so he knew all the ceremonies and things, and he would come over and teach me. How to light candles. And, anyone that, anyone that knew anything I was latch onto him. I said, teach me! You know, and so, you know, some people I would pay, some people would do it volunteers for free, and some people would do it just ‘cause we were friends. So I get it from all these different areas. And then my cousin would help me on it too.” Jamie even made contact with one of his cousins in Chicago who he knew was religious. This cousin later made Aliyah so Jamie still keeps in contact with him and asks him for advice regarding religious questions whenever he needs to. The program Partners and Torah, is an American Jewish organisation that helps North American Jews to study Judaism, either as home studies or as what they call ‘partners in person’. An important component in “partners in person” is that the students get an own personal religious tutor,

As our conversation continued we started to talk about how Jamie’s mother reacted to him getting into, not only Israel, but also the more religious aspects of Judaism. Jamie told me that his mother definitely approved, and that even she was now drawn more and more back towards religion. I asked him how much he had actually known about his mother’s religious upbringing before becoming religious himself. Astonishing enough he had almost no knowledge of it. It actually came not just as a surprise, but as a shock when he eventually

68 Partners in Torah is “a convenient, cost-free learning institution for Jews to discover or rediscover Judaism. See: http://www.partnersintorah.org/
found out. Jamie: “we were lighting, eh, candles for Shabbat I think it was, right? And eh and my wife was doing the, you know, the candles, and then... or no, in my mom walks in, rather than then she starts saying it. And I go: ‘what is this, thirty years and you don’t say nothing, you didn’t say anything?’ She replied, ‘You didn’t ask.’” I could hear in the background that Jamie’s wife had also felt stunned by his mother’s sudden revelation. I couldn’t exactly hear what she was saying but she laughed. Naturally I got even more curious about how he and his wife reacted to the situation and Jamie said, “I was shocked that she still remembered. But eh, I was all... I was like, a little ticked that she... [Debbie says in the background, “yeah you were angry for a while”]. Yeah, I was a pretty ticked that, you know, she [his mother] did not teach us anything. But you know whatever. I didn’t understand what she went through. But I, I felt that, just as a, even a cultural thing and identity thing you should be brought up knowing that, I mean, it’s... I, I really respect even the secular here like here in Maale Adumim, they’re real traditional. Like they might, you know, you might see girls in tight pants or in something like this. But every Shabbat they light the candles and they, you know, they moderately observant themselves. It’s just, even as a cultural kind of identity techniques. And so, I was a little bit upset with my mom that she didn’t give us a little more. She did let us know that we were Jews, so [laugh]”. I thought at that moment that what Jamie had just told me was pretty hard to imagine. Why would his mother, for all those years, hide from her children the fact that she had a very religious background? And even when her youngest son started to become religious, to still kept it as a secret? Like Jamie and his wife I was mystified. I immediately put a note in my field diary saying, “very important; mothers big secret; she must have had a very traumatic childhood by completely abandoning her past” (Field diary 3).

Shortly after this episode Jamie read about the Law of Return in an encyclopaedia and was once again fired up by the fact that he and his family could obtain an Israeli citizenship if they wanted to move to Israel. He told me that, from the very moment he read the article, he just knew he had to make Aliyah. He knew that, now he had at last found what he was looking for, he would not be swayed by the opinions of his mother or his friends. In Jamie’s own words he just knew that he wanted to move to Israel and “do his part”. It was the old Zionist dream to be reunited with his people in the ancient Jewish land. He wanted to be a soldier protecting

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69 Law of Return is Israeli legislation, enacted in 1950, that gives Jews, those of Jewish ancestry, and their spouses the right to migrate and to settle in Israel and gain citizenship.
Jewish lives, as a real Maccabean\textsuperscript{70}. His dreams were strong and he was determined. The only question left for him was how would his wife react?

To Jamie's big surprise his wife was very open to the whole idea. He told me exactly what she said to him when he asked her, do you want to go and live with me in Israel. She said, Oh, okay cool. Jamie's immediate reaction was that there must have been some kind of divine intervention in the situation, as he really hadn't expected his wife to take the whole idea of going to Israel as easily and positively as she in fact did. Jamie put it like this, \textit{“I was like thinking okay, if God really wants this to happen, he will make her go because she [was probably] only going to block it”}. Jamie of course knew that his wife did not go along because she had a hidden Zionist dream. For her, as she herself explained later, \textit{“At that time it was more a question of trying something new, like an exciting new adventure”}. At that point she did not yet fully appreciate the full implications of immigration. Leaving most of her closest family: her mother, her friends and, not least, her sister with whom she had a very close relationship, none of this really entered her mind.

Gradually, she did start to get somewhat nervous about the whole thing, as she began to appreciate that the decision would have serious consequences for her and her family's life. But why then, did she say yes, and why didn't she eventually stop the whole process as it came closer to the time of their departure? A part of the answer surely has something to do with the relationship she and Jamie have. Being together with Jamie and his wife in their home and having a conversation as we did, one couldn't help but notice that it was Jamie who was the most dominant partner in their relationship. When it had come to choosing the religious path, it had been Jamie who was the driving force. Also, the decision of moving to Israel was a fulfilment of his inner desire. And being in their company, I just felt that this might be something of a pattern within their relationship.

\textsuperscript{70} Maccabean: A Jewish rebel army who took control of Judea during a revolt against the Seleucid Empire 166 BC. The Maccabees founded the Hasmonean dynasty, which ruled from 164 BCE to 63 BCE.
During the interview I couldn’t help noticing that the whole setting, from the way we were sitting, to the way our conversation was conducted, all underlined this idea. Debbie, his wife, did not sit at the table with Jamie and me. Instead she had decided to sit on the sofa a few meters away. She also only participated in our conversation, either when she was asked something directly by me, or when Jamie needed her to confirm or elaborate on things he had just said. During all my interviews with settlers I had never experienced anything like this. Not that Jamie was acting like a patriarch or a tyrant, but I did get the feeling Debbie was somewhat submissive to him. In many respects their relationship seemed rather uneven.

Jamie was 28 years old at the time when they made their decision to make Aliyah. At that time he had a small window tinting business that was going fine. They had a baby son that his wife was looking after and their family relationship was pretty close. Jamie and his wife had been moving quite a lot during the last couple of years, but for a variety of reasons. The first time they decided to move was when they were living in a one-bedroom condo just across the road from where his mother was. This house was simply too expensive so they decided to move further out of town. After a while though they had to move house again, this time because of Jamie’s work; it was simply too far away from their home, he said. They found a place closer to his work and they lived there for a while. But later on, when they had their first child, they found yet another house. This one was bigger and nicer and, with their newborn baby, afforded them the greater space they now needed.

Jamie told me that they really enjoyed living there. In many ways the family had a good and stable life in San Diego. Their financial situation was comfortable and they had quite a number of good friends. Jamie’s wife Debbie was spending lots of time with her sister, as she too had become a mother during that period. For a long while she and her sister hadn’t been all that close, but during the last five to six years before Debbie left for Israel, their relationship became much stronger. Debbie told me that they would see each other almost every day when the kids were babies. In many ways Debbie appeared very content with her life in San Diego, at least from what she told me during our conversation. But for Jamie something was apparently still lacking in his life.
Through his recent discovery of Judaism and not least his feverish Zionist dream, he finally knew what he wanted in his life. His religious life coupled with his new found Zionist ideals had now given him an identity and a sense of purpose bigger than anything else he had experienced before. I asked Jamie to tell me at what point they had made their final decision on making Aliyah, and if he could elaborate further on that interim period before leaving for Israel. Jamie told me that from his point of view the decision had already been taken, “Eh, as soon as I read that article [in the encyclopaedia] I would say it was within a year time I said we’re going. Within a few months I told her, and then ... then within a year the decision was pretty much made”. This was in 2001 but it took them nearly two years before their departure. During this period Jamie felt very restless, “I was still working [at that time]. And so, eh, I just wanted to quit my job and go. I didn’t care if we just left with...a suitcase.” But of course Jamie, Debbie and their two children (Debbie had just given birth to a baby girl) did not leave with just a suitcase. The process of making Aliyah often takes quite a long time. During my field study in the settlements I have met plenty of new Olim who had planned their Aliyah years before eventually leaving their country of birth. Many Aliyah applicants try to find the specific place where they want to live before leaving, others try to find, or at least look for a job before their departure. And some people even spend a considerable amount of time learning Hebrew. At the very least, all the families I have met during the course of this research have saved up money to enable them to feel more secure during that first period of their stay. Either money for buying a house or an apartment: savings that they can fall back on if it takes a long time to find a job and so get a proper, liveable income.

At the start of 2002 Jamie went to the Jewish Aliyah Centre to open up a file. At that time he thought they would be leaving within a few months. But then a lot of problems suddenly appeared. Jamie explains, “actually went and opened up a file with Jewish agency. Eh, and then we planned of leaving within [...] a few months. Eh, but what happened is, we had all this furniture we had bought. A ton of furniture, and this and that and a house full of stuff. So we were trying to plan so we could have enough money to come over here, pay the rent, buy a car and, eh, and bring our furniture at the same time, it’s like four or five thousand just to bring the

71 Opening a file at the Jewish Agency entails that one have started the Aliyah process.
furniture. So the furniture was what held us up for another year.” They had sent an application to Nefesh B’Nefesh applying for economical support, which they were sure they would be entitled to, but their application was eventually turned down. During this period the Jewish Aliyah Centre also told them that they should take a pilot trip before making Aliyah.

Neither Debbie nor Jamie had ever been to Israel, but because of their tight economical situation they decided to buy only one ticket and it was ‘of course’ Jamie who went. He told me how he reacted when he was first advised to go on the pilot trip and how he later felt after coming back. “I said, look, it’s a waste of time. But I’ll go. You want me to go? Fine. I went, I went there and I came back a hundred times more motivated to go to Israel when I came back. I, when I left [Israel], it was like I left my child in Israel. I just had to get back. I kept on telling that I had to get back, I have to get back to. My heart was it’s like I had left my heart there. And eh... it’s all I could think about. 24/7. When I was miserable I just had to think about Israel and Jerusalem. And eh, I see a video tape, with the Old City, just the Old City. It got me, it was great.” I asked Jamie if he could tell me a little about what he saw and experienced during this trip. It seemed Jamie had spent all his time in Jerusalem staying in a hotel near the Old City. He was so excited by being in the city that it just added to his enthusiasm for moving to the country. “Yeah, yeah [...], if I had a fire of Zionism this was like the gas or something. [Laugh] It’s like, you know now I have been on the pilot trip but now I just wanna go, right.” It was in many ways a very hard period that they then went through, especially for Jamie who felt very unhappy about the long delay. He had invested so much time and energy in making this decision. His brain was filled with the dream of getting to Israel and starting a new life, but all these mundane and practical obstacles postponed it all. There were times when he became deeply depressed. Jamie told me, “Yeah, it was very difficult. I was, I was very depressed when we, when we didn’t make our first date, I kept setting marks. I didn’t make it and I was just like really, really depressed. And eh, I just wanted to go.” Eventually, after a year, he simply couldn’t stand waiting any longer. “And then in 2003 we said screw it. We sold all the furniture and just came over with what we had. 4,000 dollars and we just went”.


Right from the start of their Aliyah process Jamie and Debbie had decided not to tell anybody (except a few of their closest friends) about their Aliyah plans. At first I couldn’t understand why on earth a family like theirs, with close relationships on both sides as well as a lot of devoted friends, would decide not to share such a big decision; one which would change everything in their life and at the same time have a tremendous impact on everyone they knew. My first thought on the matter was, as I noted in my field diary on the bus later that afternoon, “Jamie’s decision not to tell anyone about making Aliyah really resembles the way his mother completely turned her back to her family New York when she was in her mid twenties as well as turning her back to her religious life and not even telling her closest family about it”. When I asked Jamie and Debbie why they had kept it as a secret, their reasoning at least on the surface was very different. Jamie explained, “Because we knew that people would go crazy. Her mom was very, very like sneaky and like, eh, she was the type of person that could physically do something to get in our way not go. This was kind of like... She’s really bizarre like mentally, like that. Like borderline something. So ... Yeah, she’s got these issues. And so, that’s main person we didn’t wanna know. We knew my mom would freak out too. Because of the grandkids. And so ... I probably could have told my mom, she had gone crazy and cried and tried to get us to stay but she wouldn’t have done anything to get in the way. ‘Cause she knew she never gonna talk to me again. But for her mom she didn’t care. Her mom would have done something very vindictive. So, and she’s was that kind of person that would go and be a social bee and talk to all of our friends, so she could find out what was going on with us. Yeah, she’d go... People that she not even know that she would go like... So, we couldn’t even tell a lot of our friends. ‘Cause we knew that they interacted with her. Eh... We couldn’t tell her family. We couldn’t tell my mom because her mom talked to my mom ...”. It had been hard for Jamie not to share it with others.

In many ways I felt that Jamie was an open book. During our conversation I kept thinking again and again that here I was sitting in front of a person who was happy to disclose the most intimate details of his life when asked, and yet who had somehow contrived to keep such a huge thing as this secret and for so long, especially given that their young son had known all about it. Jamie and Debbie told me that it had been like a game between them and when it came to their son it absolutely wasn’t a problem whatsoever. He hadn’t had any problems keeping it as a secret. At that time, during our conversation I had to accept their explanation
but later I couldn’t help thinking that history repeats itself. And I still feel that the way Jamie chose to deal with not only this particular issue, but also how he handled a lot of things in life in general, was either a continuation of the way his own mother had dealt with life or a direct reaction against it. He really needed to reverse everything that he had thought in his childhood. Of course, many of their friends were disappointed when they later discovered that the family had immigrated to Israel. Jamie and Debbie’s mothers were of course very upset, but Jamie and Debbie still feel that they made the right decision in not telling them. In fact they first told them over the telephone when they arrived in Tel Aviv airport.

Jamie and his family didn’t travel to Israel in a group like many of the other Jewish American immigrants who have come with Nefesh B’Nefesh in the last five years. The reason was basically that their request for financial support for their Aliyah had been turned down. Apparently the reason why the family had been turned down was that the organization had too many applicants at that particular time of that particular year. Nefesh told them that if they could wait three to six months, they might then get the financial help they had applied for. But Jamie simply couldn’t wait any longer and that was why the family decided to go it alone. By complete coincidence the family actually travelled in one of the same flights that were leased by Nefesh B’Nefesh.

After arriving, the family were sent to an absorption centre in Karmiel (town in northern Israel). Karmiel is located in the western part of Galilee. The town was established in the mid-sixties and has a population close to 50,000 people. During the last ten to fifteen years it has absorbed thousands of Russian Jew who came after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The vast majority of the new Olim staying in the absorption centre was also new arrivals from these countries. At the point when Jamie and his family arrived in the centre less than ten other people had come from America, so it was very difficult for the family to communicate with the people living there. The main obstacle was of course the language problem. Neither Jamie nor Debbie could speak any Hebrew at that time. Jamie had only learned a few phrases and he knew maybe thirty Hebrew words at best. He already knew from his pilot trip that the language barrier would cause the family some difficulties but he never expected it to be as big
a problem as it became, whether during their stay at the centre or later in the town of Karmiel where they rented an apartment two weeks after their arrival. It was much easier for the people who spoke Russian. Because of the massive influx of Russian speaking people to Israel over the last two decades, Russian had become the third most spoken language in the country after Hebrew and Arabic. Jamie told me how this language problem affected their life during the first year. “…It was very difficult. The first year was very difficult up there because, the fact that there’s so many Russians. There are not a lot of English people, so if you spoke Russian or Hebrew you were okay. But eh, very few English speakers. So it was extremely hard…. We didn’t know how to buy food. We ate humus and bread for like what two or three weeks. We didn’t know the language we didn’t know the words, what was what, you know? We could have buy milk or yoghurt or something, you know? [Both laughing] And eh, you know we felt humiliated and eh… You know, and it was so embarrassing, it was like… Oh, we hated it, we found like one lady [in the local shop] who spoke English. And we would just go and wait in that line, the longest line just to talk to her, to talk English. It was so traumatizing [Laugh].” In the end Jamie and the family decided to leave Karmiel.

In fact Debbie felt so terrible about her situation that she wanted to go back home to San Diego. She missed her family and especially her sister, so much that she almost felt it was unbearable to stay. Jamie explained how it felt during that time, “And we fought and fought and fought, and she just wanted to go back, she would cry, she was so miserable and depressed”. During that period Jamie and Debbie searched for another place in Israel to settle in. Jamie told me that they had looked for a place closer to Jerusalem. Since his pilot trip, he had always felt that he wanted to be as close to the city as possible. When I’d ask him why they hadn’t felt like moving right into the capital he told me this, “Just because, I’m from San Diego. You know, it’s a city of about a million, a million and change, right? So, it’s not huge like L.A. but it’s still a city. And so, I’m not a city type, you know, I worked in the city. I should have been born in the countryside or in the woods. And so, eh ... Jerusalem is too... city. It’s cramped, it’s crowded, you know. And so, I want, but I love Jerusalem, especially the Old City, so I wanna be close to it. But somewhere on the outskirts and I wanted to be on the other side of the Green Line, you know. Just for ideological reasons I wanted to be on the....” Up until this point in our conversation we hadn’t yet spoken about why they had actually chosen to live in a settlement. But now that
Jamie had introduced the subject himself I knew that the time had come to delve into the whole question of politics, Zionism, the Green Line and not least, issues relating to the occupied territories and the settlements.

It took the family quite a long time to find the right community, and they visited a number of places after deciding to leave Karmiel. They weren’t very familiar with places beyond the Green Line, and at that time didn’t know anybody who actually lived there. Jamie told me that they first went to look at Efrat but that his wife didn’t want to live there because she thought it was too dangerous. Next they visited Modi’in and another settlement nearby, but found those two places too big and crowded. Then one day Jamie had a conversation with a friend they had met in the Ulpan (Hebrew school) and he told them about Maale Adumim. Jamie, “...as soon as he said Maale Adumim it some kind of snapped. And then I pulled out a map. And as soon as I saw it, I said, that’s the place. And I knew that that was the place, it was, eh, east of Jerusalem. Everything, we checked north, we checked north, we checked south, and as we saw it was in the east, I said, that’s the place. I just knew it. And then, eh, when we drove out here and we saw it, it just confirmed it, it was like my pilot trip. I knew I was coming. And then I saw it and it just confirmed even more. She liked it too. Yes. It’s great. We love it. So, it’s for now, it’s close to Jerusalem, it’s cheap, but you’re still close to Jerusalem...” Jamie and his family had been living in Maale Adumim for nearly a year at the point when we had our conversation. They told me how much they loved the place and how happy they were with everything in the community: especially the locality and the nature, but also their children’s school and all the people they had become friends with since moving into the community.

At the point when the family had just settled into the community Jamie had a job in a big Israeli company in Jerusalem and was earning just enough to support the family. His income wasn’t very much when he started this job, but because their expenses weren’t that high, living in a settlement with a pretty low rent for the house, subsidised public transport, and generally keeping a very modest lifestyle, they could manage for a while. Compared to how they use to live in San Diego their living standards had dropped considerably. Later Jamie was offered another job with a company that dealt with different projects. His wages nearly
increased to double and for a while the family were financially comfortable. This job only lasted for a few months though as the company made him redundant. Today, both Debbie and Jamie work for the same company. They have nightshifts and sleep when the kids are in school. Together they earn enough to support the family but are still thinking about setting up their own business.

For Jamie it was very important to live in the occupied territories. He put it plainly to me in this way, “and I wanted to be on the other side of the Green Line, you know. Just for ideological reasons...” Jamie had a very determined character, in every sense of the word. He seemed to know what he wanted and once he had set his mind on a certain desired goal he would go for it. Moving into the territories was clearly one of those strong desires. But what I found intriguing was why this particular desire had become so important to Jamie. It was obvious that his wife did not share his very ideological stance, or at least one sensed that neither religion nor ideology was at the forefront of her agenda. And it was certainly not something that Jamie had been born into, as had been the case with some of the other migrant settlers I had met during my research. In fact when it came to Israel and Judaism, only as far back as five years ago, Jamie had been a complete novice. One can genuinely say that the transformation Jamie had been going through within such a relatively short period of time was quite remarkable. During our conversation Jamie himself pointed to this fact more than once. Remarks like “I'm not even close to the person I used to be. She will tell you that” and “they (the religious people) should just have seen how I was just a few years ago” or “five years ago I would have broken your neck”. To get a more thorough understanding of why Jamie had become so determined to move into a settlement I simply had to ask him to elaborate further. Jamie told me that his views on Israel and Zionism were inspired more by the Bible than the secular nationalist stream within the Zionist movement. For him this land was given by God to the people of Israel, which meant the Jewish people. In Jamie’s words, “Just because my ideology is, is really… It’s, I would say it’s deriving Biblically, I really had kind of a... It’s primarily out of biblical... Of course it’s kind of biblical foundation. Eh, it’s not, it’s not religious ideology, it’s deriving but it is biblical. Historically biblical, you know, I do believe... that when it says, you know that this land was given to us. That that’s what he meant. And eh, and I see what happens to us, the problems that we encounter when we try to even give it away or not believe that this
belongs to us. And so I feel really, really strongly about the fact that, even though they say, oh, it's an illegal territory and this and that, this is ours and it belongs to us. I can say... these guys (the Palestinians) have been living here, you know, forever, you know, whatever, a few decades.” What I found interesting in this answer was the fact that he also distanced himself from the big group of settlers that define themselves as being religious ideologists.

As for Jamie's ideology, it made me think about some of the Hilltop Youth people I had met here in Israel earlier in my research. For this group of people “authenticity” was the key concept, which they had built their beliefs on. I later asked Jamie how he felt towards the Hilltop Youth thinking that he would be very much in line with their views, but he dismissed this, at least when it came to the issue of using violence in the struggle for keeping the land. I will return to this question later. For now it was more important for me to understand why he felt so strongly about the whole land issue, so I asked Jamie and his response was as follows “...I really have a real strong ideology as far as the land goes. I mean it, it’s really... They will try and call me a right-wing extremist, whatever but, it’s just... It’s, it's very, very strong. And so, I believe in it and, eh..., I don’t act out in, in extreme violent ways but, eh, it’s, it’s something that, you know, I am sure that it is our right. Eh, but this is ours and I wanted to live here and I, I don’t even feel comfortable when I travel on the other side of the Green Line, it’s weird. Eh, I know it is.” The first time I was confronted with a migrant settler who told me that he or she didn’t feel comfortable travelling to Israel I was very surprised. But after fifteen to twenty interviews with migrant settlers of all different sorts, I have now heard many migrant settlers as well as veterans’ express similar views. It seems psychologically important for a substantial number within the settler population to distinguish themselves from the secular Israeli population inside Israel, but also, and maybe even more so, the modern Israeli society and democracy, with its modern lifestyle etc.

I encouraged Jamie to continue expressing his thoughts on the subject, and he said, “Yes, it's bizarre! Eh, and I thought it was just me. But every time I go out towards Tel Aviv and these areas now. I just feel like more comfortable over here, like... I don’t, I don’t know, maybe it’s just something not right in my brain, but eh [laugh] I just feel more comfortable over in this area in
the territories, whatever. But it's just Israel, Judea and Samaria. And eh, I really feel like I'm really at home. When I leave out of these areas I feel like, I'm still in Israel but I don't feel like I'm, like at home, like it's kind of the feeling when you leave your house, something like a little bit foreign, kind of somewhere foreign like in Karmiel. But eh, when I'm in Jerusalem, eh, I'm okay in Jerusalem or, you know, down south in Zefat or Efrat its okay. I love going out by Shrem (Hebrew for Zefat). Up north, up in deep, deep Samaria. Just like such biblical history there... And so I think that's really where it comes from.” I found his explanation very interesting but at the same time quite strange. Why would he continually mention being out in the territories, in deep Samaria, the woods and so forth? I did not find Maale Adumim so far removed from many of the cities inside Israel. In fact, in many ways this settlement seemed to resemble a large city suburb. Though, as was typical of other settlements, the houses here were bigger and more modern. Settlements also tend to have cleaner streets, and their overall structures are typically more distinct, in the sense that they are often built like fortresses, with perimeter fences and all the public spaces and communal houses focused at the centre. Maale Adumim was no different in this respect, and so stood in some contrast to Jamie’s repeated references to the territories etc.

For now, I felt that Jamie had told me enough about his reasons for moving out to a settlement in the occupied territories. We took a short break to make another cup of coffee and chat without having the tape recorder on. During the break Debbie started to be more open and talkative, and again we returned to the question of how homesick she had felt up until quite recently, but how something had happened, which had changed her perception of being in Israel completely. I thought that it might be important to get this on tape; maybe it would cast some more light over the fact that they did in fact both seem very happy and relaxed, despite frequently touching on past struggles and pains throughout our conversation. Apparently this new found happiness didn't have a very long history. I asked if it would be ok to press the record button while talking about Debbie’s background and it was fine with them.

After moving into their new home Debbie still felt terrible about being in Israel. She still missed San Diego and her family and friends. In the end Debbie got her father to send her and
their two kids a ticket home. At first they were only going to stay in America for one month, but it was clear from our conversation that Debbie hadn’t been convinced that she would ever return to Israel once she had left. And apparently Jamie also had his doubts. Eventually the day came for their departure and Jamie drove them out to the airport to catch their flight. Debbie and the two kids checked in and handed over their luggage to the airport staff. They passed the passport control and entered the plane. At that moment Jamie was all alone in Israel. This was definitely not what he had envisioned back in San Diego, when he had first made that decision to move. But as he was leaving the airport terminal his name suddenly came over the loudspeakers. Then, to Jamie’s surprise, his wife and their two kids stepped back out into the terminal hall, to be reunited with him. Debbie was simply unable to leave Israel. As she had entered the cabin of the plane she had at last known that Israel was the right place for her and her family to live. Debbie told me the story with a light in her eyes. “We were ready to get on the plane, so you know, we had to take, bags off the plane and everything... Then we went right back here. ... it was like a happy new year, like I had come here for the first time.” Jamie interrupted saying, “It was like, from that day on; it was a few days later. She told me a few days later and she says, you know I love it here. I just want to tell anyone to come here. It was like, it was like, hello, meet my wife here she’s a totally different person.” I was not so sure that I believed her then and I must say that I still don’t feel entirely convinced by the reasons she gave, either to me or to Jamie. As I mentioned before, Debbie was in my impression very much under Jamie’s influence.

Earlier in our conversation she had told me a little bit about her family background and particularly her mother’s mental state. Debbie’s parents had split up when she was a kid. For the first few years after this she grew up with her father, later though she moved back home to her mother. Debbie and her sister grew up with a mother who wasn’t really able to take good care of her daughters, and during these years Debbie was again and again abandoned by her. During our conversation Debbie described for me how her mother treated her while she still was living home, “my mom would, she would, you know, tie me up some place like in the bathroom or so, and then she would go. You know, she would come back [later]. She was once in Greece one time. And I was talking to her like for much of the time. Pretending like she was next door, you know? Didn’t even know she was in Greece.” It was clear that Debbie had suffered a
terrible and traumatic childhood and it was even clearer that this experience had left her fragile and lacking in self-confidence. And I think that even at that time, during our conversation, I already felt that the real reason for her turning back to Israel was more a turning back to Jamie whom she probably thought she couldn’t live without. A remark she had made earlier in our conversation, when discussing why she had given her consent to going to Israel in the first place, suddenly came back to my mind. She had said, “I was happy just pleasing him. And eh, I didn’t really think that we would go. And then suddenly it was for real! [...] I was never that kind of person to say no to him, so that’s how we would end up here.” Jamie’s response to her remark had also been very telling of their relationship “She just followed me [laugh]”. And perhaps this was in fact the same thing she experienced when deciding at the last second to leave the plane and reunite with Jamie in the airport terminal.

At this point I had intended to explore the political a little, but instead it seemed more pertinent now to ask them how they regarded their relationships with their religious and secular friends here in Israel. I somehow knew that Debbie would click much better with people who were secular, perhaps because her religious conviction didn’t seem as strong as Jamie’s. Debbie did not wear a cover on her hair, unlike so many other women out there in the settlements, and she was also comfortable shaking my hand when I arrived at their door. This surely indicated that she still kept much of the old lifestyle that she had brought with her from San Diego. I also remembered Jamie telling me at some point in our conversation, that his wife still needed her cigarettes on Shabbat. So I was wondering what sort of friends Jamie and Debbie might spend their free time together with. Jamie explained, “we have... super-ultra orthodox friends, you know, secular, left-wing friends ... yeah, we have both broad spectres of friends, this is how I always was growing up. I didn’t really fit within one little group. Eh, because, you know, the way I was... Being such a knucklehead. I couldn’t really be judgmental of other people. You know, and eh, I didn’t really fit in a mould, in a specific mould. You know, even in high school I you know”. Debbie then told me, as I had already guessed, that she found it much easier to socialize with the secular people. “They didn’t seem as derogatory as some of the religious ones, when it comes to how we perform religiously.” It seemed that sometimes, when she was wearing pants they would give her disapproving looks. Apparently she had even experienced a situation where one of the women from her kid’s school, with whom she'd
felt she had a good and close relationship, suddenly started one day to ignore her just because she disapproved of the way Debbie dressed. Jamie agreed while trying to explain further, “We have friends, you know, secular friends down here. Eh, we have, you know eh, Haredi friends, Chabad friends and then we have our religious friends, the kind of moderately religious friends. We have the whole spectrum... But eh, I think we probably... eh, click more with the secular kind of traditional friends. ‘Cause they are not so judgmental.”. But at the same time Jamie was keen to stress that even though he really enjoyed being with his secular friends, he sometimes felt that because religion had become such an important element in his life it was inevitable that there would be certain things he was able to share only with his religious friends. “And, and when it gets another aspect of it. That’s one thing that I can’t really click with with my secular friends but we’re just kind of hanging out. Then eh, you know, then it’s more, we get more a kind of eye-eye but if it is on the religious issue and that kind of thing, when Shabbat comes around it is with the religious, it’s really very nice. It’s like I go over to their [secular] house one day, you know, one said: “Hey, you wanna ride somewhere, you wanna turn on the TV.” But, you knock them for it. I’m not; I’m not the one to be knocking on anybody.” It was clear that Jamie was a bit uncertain about how to balance the two very distinct feelings he had when it came to the question of his choice of friends. He simply couldn’t dismiss the fact that because of his background he just felt much more relaxed when with his secular friends and, as Jamie is such a sociable type, he really does need to have close friends. However, he also knew that if he really wanted to become a full and devoted member of the religious community, it was imperative that he be active socially within that specific environment. It seemed like Jamie sometimes felt trapped between his instinctive desires and the demands of his religious choices. He simply felt that he had to defend those in the religious community who expressed their negative bias towards the secular people and society. Jamie articulated it in this fashion, “Eh, you know, just a lot of them [the religious] come from, eh... You know I love them we have a lot I common, it is just that a lot of their [negative] comments are part of being religious and stuff.” This comment really expressed Jamie’s ambivalence towards the religious community. It was surprising to hear Jamie trying to defend the tendency you often find amongst religious people who can be very judgemental towards people outside their own group. But even though Jamie had at many points during our conversation asserted that he tried to live in a non-judgemental way, I suppose this sentence serves to underline the dual emotions he experienced in relation to the religious community he so wants to be a part of.
I wanted to know more about this issue so I asked Jamie to tell me a little bit more about his and his family's religious life. He told me that he definitely was the driving force when it came to imposing the religious lifestyle on the family. “I'm the driving force but she (Debbie) definitely follows me. Eh, but, but she definitely has that, she is the kind of the same page too, she has always had a, you know, like a consciousness of God and always believe in him and always had, she’s had a strong connection. She always felt like she could like talk to him like she was, he was right there, you know? Since she was a little girl, she would say. So, she is definitely there.” It is one thing to believe in a God and another thing to take on all the rituals and follow all the religious commandments as written in Torah.

The path Jamie and his wife had taken was the very strict orthodox strand of Judaism, and the change of lifestyle this demanded did not come easily for the family. Right from the start, back in San Diego, Jamie had tried to impose the strict rules all at once, but it was too much for them. Slowly they drifted back into their old secular lifestyle, and that was when Jamie decided to take it on at a slower pace. The fact was that it was also too much for their kids, so Jamie decided that it might prove easier for the family as a whole once they had actually settled in Israel. Jamie then explained how they had settled into their “new life” after making Aliyah, “So we just slowly eased into it. A slow transition. Eh... And so eh, it was first until I got here, that I started wearing kipa. And so it was like, okay we’ll do this. And we’ll try out new limit. We would let the TV be on during Shabbat ‘cause the kids can’t go “cold turkey” and we just, slowly kind of cut it down. And it’s still a process but the most part, you know, we’re pretty much by the book”.

Settling slowly into Judaism, like Jamie and his family, isn’t something unusual. This is without doubt one of most common bits of advice many Rabbis give to Jews who want to get back into the religious life. Jamie wanted to be sure that I didn’t misunderstand why they had decided to do it this way, “so it’s been a process, it’s a growing process... Most people understand that, some people are more critical, it’s like... It’s a process, you know? You give too much at once, and then you end up the same, forget it! You know, you gotta be comfortable at what you’re doing; you
gotta... go to places that you feel is comfortable, so I think that at this point we’re pretty much there. It was a growing process”. Apparently he felt very strongly about putting his point across as he then continued, “...you get religious people, I mean, don’t get me wrong, of some like, I got a 180 degrees completely in another direction. I’m not even close to the person I used to be. She will tell you that but, eh, you know, we have still have this kind of laid back influence and when we get these types, eh, straight religious people, they have just religious their whole life and they just don’t get it, don’t understand, you know, it’s some are real anal about it.” It was quite interesting to hear Jamie use such strong words against people within the religious community: people he, at least earlier in our conversation, had emphasized he had a good relationship with and whose world he surely wanted to be a part of. What was especially interesting was that every time he used the term ‘anal’ about people from the religious community it was directed against the orthodox American Jews there. Jamie made a point of again and again, making a distinction between the Israeli orthodox population and the American orthodox population.

I decided to change the theme by asking Jamie about his border patrol duties. In the second email he sent me he had mentioned being a part of the Magav (the Israeli Border Patrol). I thought that it would be a good introduction to talking more about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the disengagement from Gaza and his view on the Palestinian population. Jamie had wanted to be drafted for the military once he had made Aliyah. As he mentioned earlier in the interview, he had what he referred to as ‘a military mind’. Right back from when he was young he knew that Israel had a strong army. That was actually one of the few things he did know about Israel. Given his short military background from his brief stint with the reserves in the USA he genuinely thought that he would have a good chance to be part of the Israeli army. What he didn’t know was that if you aren’t of the right age and don’t have the right family status, it is more or less impossible to be drafted. When he came to Karmiel he applied to the IDF (Israel’s Defence Force) but was immediately turned down. Being over thirty with a wife and two small kids, there was no way that they would let him join. This was a big disappointment for Jamie because one of the reasons for him coming to Israel had been specifically that he wanted to join. Jamie told me in this fashion, “Eh, I mean, I have a friend who were like... 23, 24. They were trying telling him he was too old. He had to fight to get in.
Yeah. And so, eh ... and me being 30 with a wife and two kids. Forget about it. They wouldn’t have it. And so, eh ... But I, I really wanted to. And so ... But I wanted to do something, I volunteered for Mash'az the voluntary police. And it was all right but I didn’t really like it because, you know, they go around and... You know, I wanted to catch terrorists. I wanna protect the country. You know, they were like, you know, check these Jewish kids, see if they have weed, or sometimes the guys speeding, all of that. Let’s please stop, you know, I am not interested in that. Someone needs to do that but that’s not my gig. You know, I’m a military mind and I wanna be, you know, catch some terrorists or, forget about it”.

Jamie didn’t know what do at first. Being a soldier in the Israeli army had really been one of his most important goals since becoming a Zionist and moving to Israel. Jamie was, as he had told me during our conversation, a very strong believer in the Zionist vision and he had been looking forward to serving his people as a soldier and then suddenly the dream was shattered. Jamie told me that one of his friends had then mentioned the voluntary border patrol, which is called Magav in Hebrew. The duty of service in the Magav is in many ways very similar to what the soldiers do in the military and Jamie decided to volunteer immediately. I asked him how often he would go and what they were expected to do and Jamie told me the following, “they pretty much require you to do like, eh, one week, one day a week. And if you stay away they just kick you out. But I usually go two days a week [...]. We have different assignments, some nights we all have specific missions that we do. Eh, if there is, eh, you know, some nights we go and protect one Gan, you know a kindergarten for the kids ‘cause the [...]. We have certain missions, yeah. We...eh, some of us are set on missions to protect certain events. And, eh, some, sometimes we just do general patrolling. Eh, and then when we do patrolling, we also hit certain areas where we know there is illegal workers. [...] Or, like illegal building [workers]. Eh, we set up checkpoints, on the roads. Eh, so it’s a whole kind of broader range of stuff. That eh, that goes on, and obviously when there’s alert, eh, then eh, then we go into specific missions”. I thought being out twice a week sounded like a lot. How was Jamie able to do two patrolling shifts a week, while at the same time going to work in Jerusalem at night, spending time with his family, as well as participating in all sorts of religious activities? “It’s very crazy. Yeah, it’s pretty difficult I have to work my schedule around; it’s really a priority for me. If, if I go 48 hours without sleeping because I got to do it, then I do it. [...] obviously I have to work, that’s number one priority [...] but this (participating in Magav) is pretty much number two.” But what I really wanted to know was why it was so important for Jamie to be a part of the Magav. Jamie replied, “Eh, I mean,
this is like, it’s half the reason I, I moved here. This is, when I was seeing these things on TV when I was over here, and this is what was pouring at me, as I would see the explosions of people getting blown up and, and fighting. I was like, man, I wanna be over there, doing my part, fighting as doing my part. Not like, you know Rambo, or that kind of type of things ....” Jamie’s priorities seemed very logical and rational, I wrote in my notebook. There was definitely coherence in the way that he was thinking and acting. Jamie was, in a way, living his dreams right from the whole idea of making Aliyah, through moving to Judea and then enlisting in the Magav. His wife too had adopted his way of life, after of course a very difficult personal crisis, but after this crisis she had learned to accept that if she wanted to stay with her husband she had to make compromises regarding her own dreams.

Now the time had come to explore Jamie’s thoughts on the current political situation in Israel. It was as if most of our conversation had been building up to this stage in the interview, not that I had planned it that way, but more because it was the last big issue, which we hadn’t yet touched on. The interview with Jamie took place only two months after Ariel Sharon had completed his disengagement plan and removed eight thousand settlers from the Gaza strip. The aftershocks of this cataclysmic decision were still being felt in Israeli society. It was like visiting a country that had just experienced a major earthquake and, particularly here in the settlements, the resentment, pain and anger were still high. During the last half a year activists from all strands in the settlement community as well as their allies within the national religious camp living inside the Green Line, had tried more or less everything to sabotage the implementation of Sharon’s plan, but all their efforts had failed. When planning my field trip, I had already anticipated that most of the people I would meet out here in the territories would let an interview like this be dominated by the subject. I really didn’t want this to happen. Of course I knew that the disengagement would be very much a part of these people’s experience at this crucial juncture in history, and it wasn’t that I wanted to avoid the question, but I also knew that focusing primarily on this specific issue might spoil or at least colour the interviews in such a way that my results would be useless for exploring the broader issue of making Aliyah.
Jamie laughed as I put the question as to how he felt about the disengagement, “Yeah. Yeah, what you got about three more tapes? [Laugh] You know, I think, eh, the disengagement was a big mistake, not just because obviously I’m attached to the land and I don’t think giving it away was, eh… was something that should have been done. But, I mean, just, eh, from practical purpose, from a practical aspect it’s really set the tone internationally that, oh, the big, you know, the big “no-no”. Something that couldn’t be done has been done. They can give away the land, they can expel the people and, and, and, and give it to these folks who, that were, you know, crying for it for all those years, so… Eh... So, now it’s, it’s kind of, there is, it’s, everyone is expecting us to bend over backwards and to do more, okay, now, you’ve done with Gaza, and we’ll go ahead and do Maale Adumim and the rest of it....” Jamie explained that he now expected strong pressure from the international community to continue what he considered to be the uprooting of Jews who had a god-given right to live in those areas: those areas which in his opinion (naturally) were an integrated part of the Land of Israel.

Another aspect he felt uneasy about was that Sharon and the Israeli state had now given in to the pressure of terrorism and Hamas. “And so, it’s really, not only internationally but even internally with the, the Arab population. Now they really become in involving, and they think. Eh, you know Hamas done all this. You know, we liberated our lands and they were right a, you know, we drove them away. And in a sense, you know, I’ll say they, they’re correct. They, did you know, they put down the pressure and, they pulled out of Gaza and so now they’re bolder and now... Eh, there is this kind of... There is almost kind of a depressive... Starting to ease off that there is a kind of a depressive atmosphere. You know after the disengagement.” And Jamie was right; there was kind of a depressing atmosphere in the settlements: a sense of defeat that I hadn’t experienced out here in the West Bank settlements before. When you looked around the streets of the settlements one could still see the relics of the battle they had been through. The torn orange banners that still hang there and the many ragged posters on the walls and on light posts. It also seemed suddenly as if earlier that afternoon, as Jamie and I had first walked through the settlement, I simply hadn’t noticed the feverish look in people’s eyes. Maybe I was mistaken; maybe Jamie’s remarks simply made me remember it that way. What was certain thou were that the national religious camp had been defeated and the Likud party was in ruins, mainly because of the internal rifts over the disengagement: Ariel Sharon
fighting for his political survival and Benjamin Netanyahu’s opportunistic fight for control of the party. For the first time since the beginning of the eighties the nationalist camp and especially the settlers and their allies were beginning to realize that their enterprise of creating a greater Israel was doomed to fail. The overwhelming majority of the Israeli population supported Sharon along with his concessions, not only in Gaza but also in parts of the West Bank, and naturally that made the settlers very nervous. Who would be uprooted next? And when would the next disengagement plan be set in motion? These and many other questions had already been raised before and, having made that move to Israel, many of the settlers now felt betrayed and let down: thoughts that still occupied a prominent position in their mind. It was not only the injustice they perceived as targeting them directly, but also what they saw in Israel as a whole that concerned them. As Jamie pointed out, “It’s, it has set the tone, eh, I would say that now we have left that, eh, you know, people are expecting more from us and nothing from them. Eh, you know… All we are demanding is stop the terrorism and they’re just demanding that we just give; you know, give land and throw the people out. So it’s, eh… It’s a double standard.”

Jamie felt that America particularly was to be blamed, or at least those politicians and members of the Israeli population who would invariably bend to American pressure. “And it’s frustrating. Eh, everybody here, all they always talk about is America, America, and America. The most are only concerned about what America thinks. We’re like the 51st state. Eh, so America has a lot of influence on what is going on here”. What seemed especially to concern Jamie was what would come after the disengagement, “You know, next step is going to be, the territories here […], and then Jerusalem. And so, this is, well it’s just how Gaza is the stepping stone. And so it’s a kind of a double edge, a double edge sword because, eh… You know, we pulled out of Gaza. And the world is demanding more. But at the same time, you know, we’re trying to say, look, we’ve pulled out of Gaza, now they have to give something. And I know they are not demanding that they (the Palestinians) give anything.” I wanted to know if Jamie and his wife had been involved in the protests, as I knew that a lot of West Bank settlers had been. As a matter of fact most of the protests had been orchestrated by the settlers in Judea and Samaria, and thousands and thousands of people, from all over the occupied territories, had come down in buses to participate in the big demonstrations down in Gush Katif and other Gaza settlements.
The activities had started several months before the disengagement plan was to be implemented. The settler movement initiated a well-organized campaign, lobbying in the Knesset as well as within the government. At the same time they started instigating street protests by mobilizing people within the religious nationalist camp, inside as well outside the Green Line. As time went on the protests got more and more excessive, blocking highways in the streets around all the big cities in Israel and organizing mass demonstrations against Sharon and the supporters of the plan. As the date of the disengagement drew closer, the demonstrations and the rhetoric turned uglier. In many ways it resembled the time just before the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. The security around Sharon was tightened and Shin Beth intensified their surveillance of the most extreme segments within the national religious camp.

I was of course curious as to whether Jamie had been involved in some of these activities, but I also wanted to know what he thought about the violence that had eventually erupted, as the military and police started to move the demonstrators in Gaza and demolish the houses of the settlers who were living in the communities. The first question I posed to Jamie was whether he had participated in the big demonstration that took place the day it all started, “I was, I was going to. I was waiting until, I was going to go, and it really mattered. Eh, you know, a lot of times it was just a lot noise making. You know just a lot of talking, and I was telling these folks, you know, it’s gonna take a lot more than just orange ribbons to stop these things. You wanna stop it, you have to go physically put yourself there and it’s gonna be. You have to have enough numbers there. Even the army admitted this. If those 40.000 people that went to [unclear] had they actually gone and punched through the lines, just pushed away through the lines which they could have, they could have gone through into Gush Katif.” I was thinking that Jamie’s answer sounded rather like an excuse, I even put a note in my field diary, saying, “why does he need to excuse his behaviour not participating in the demonstration”. I wanted him to continue so I told him to go on, “I was ready to go. I actually called; I told my wife I’m going. I called my wife, eh; actually I called my wife before I was at work and said we’re going […] So I talked to my friend and I’m watching on the news. I’m watching, I’m watching that the whole crowd starts moving, 40.000 people, they get up to the line of soldiers and stuff […] Well, the whole time they were saying, we’re gonna push to the soldiers and we’re gonna go into Gaza, and we’re gonna stop
this. And eh ... And they stopped and they said, no, no, and they all started pushing up to the
soldiers and they said, no, no, get back, get back, get back, don’t push against the soldiers. And at
that point, the whole thing was defeated. I knew from that point on, eh, when they backed off and
they sent everyone home that was it. I wasn’t gonna involve, I said, I’m not going out to no
protest. I’m not going to any protest. Because they’re not serious. They, they basically defeated
themselves right there”. It was interesting to hear Jamie criticize the people who had
participated in the rally, not having been at the rally himself. He repeated a harsh judgement
of the settler movement’s Yesha Council, which I have subsequently heard and read on many
occasions since the day of the rally. A lot of the more hardcore settlers have put the blame on
the Yesha Council because it was they who in the end ordered the crowd to back away from
the soldiers. The Yesha Council were basically afraid that if the whole thing turned into a fight
with the military they would lose the remaining sympathy that they still had amongst certain
segments within the Israeli public.

Later, during a demonstration in Gaza, violence did actually erupt and the Yesha Council were
then able to claim they were not to blame for the incident. As Jamie did apparently share some
of the views of some of the more extreme elements in the settler community, I thought it
would be interesting to hear how far he would have gone in the protest, had he been there. I
put the question to him in a very direct way by asking if he would have used violence against
an Israeli soldier and this is what he replied, “No, of course not. No way. Not, not a chance. No.
And [...] I would have pushed my way through, and I would try and get away from those lines. [...] But actually fight and punch and fight the soldiers, no. No way. And, and this is where... I have issues with the Hilltop Youth. Eh, I mean, I, I know they have come on.; I’ve never met them, so I can’t really say anything. Okay, I can’t even name them by name. Because I, I’ve never even met them other than what you read in the paper, but... Anybody who goes and assaults a soldier or punches them or anything like that is way out of line. Eh, when they were like throwing like paint and things... Or like water, or, or a phone, I thought that was funny, [...] But as soon as they started throwing chemicals or punching soldiers or anything like that, that’s just, that’s way out of line. And people throwing, eh spikes on the freeway, or oil... It’s just, give, actually it gives a bad name for everybody”. It was clear that as a new Olim Jamie had a strong feeling towards
the IDF. In most of the literature Jamie had read, the Israeli Defence Force was quite simply
the embodiment of everything he admired about Israel. And in his answer Jamie also strongly emphasized that many of the soldiers didn’t really want to be at the rally that day. Jamie expressed it when he told me what had occurred when small groups of demonstrators had tried to push themselves through the army lines, “Then they just pushed away by the soldiers, they [who] didn’t really wanna be there. And know, I’m with these guys, the Magav guys and stuff was all down there [as a part of the force that should keep the demonstrators out]. They didn’t wanna be down there. They were miserable, they hated it, that this is their mission, this is what they are forced to do.” It was clear that Jamie felt very uncomfortable with the fact that the soldiers had in a way become his enemy and that’s why he had to put the blame on someone or something else; it was their mission; they hated it; they were miserable and so forth. Later Jamie put some of the blame on the police, who were brutal, but said that the really guilty ones were of course the politicians who hadn’t been able to resist the American and international pressure on Israel. What I found especially interesting about our conversation was when Jamie suddenly told me that he thought the whole idea of having settlements down in Gaza in the first place had perhaps been a complete mistake and that it was something he hadn’t even been that aware of when he had first came to Israel. “Don’t get me wrong, I understand the situation, God, I mean, there is millions of them (Palestinians) and there was a few thousand Jews down there and it’s really off set, and the army has to put forth an enormous amount of manpower just to protect these people. And I understand. We obviously, personally for me I don’t think that the area, maybe not, should have been settled in the first place. I can’t say that but I’m just saying that, it was a very big surprise for me to learn that there were settlements down when I finally got here. Put it that way. Wow, is there someone in Gaza, wow. If there’s defence there, it’s kind of pretty much a dumb thing in itself. Eh, but I was very surprised of the settlements, but I was opposed to know that now the fact that they were there, to ripping them out. And then giving that land to people who really didn’t deserve it. They’ll just, you know, it was just giving it to the murderers. So, I was, I was opposed to it for that reason. Getting rid of these people and giving away the land to people who didn’t deserve it. Which it didn’t belong to?” Jamie ended his sentence with a question. But his question was more rhetorical than directed towards me and of course I didn’t reply.
It was obvious that throughout our conversation Jamie hadn’t expressed any kind of sympathy towards the Palestinians. In fact the only encounter with the Palestinians he’d had here in Israel was when he was out patrolling with the border patrol. And those encounters hadn’t inspired much empathy in Jamie towards the Palestinians. Being on the frontline, always dealing with the negative problems of encounters with the Palestinians like setting up check points and road blocks to ensure the safety of an area, dealing with the protection of certain buildings to safeguard them against terrorist attacks, and keeping out illegal Palestinian workers from inside Israel, naturally added to the suspicion that many Israelis have of the Palestinian population. In fact, the only significant personal relationship Jamie had ever had with a Palestinian was from back when he was living in San Diego before making Aliyah.

For many years Jamie's brother had a Palestinian girlfriend. Jamie felt that they they’d had a very close relationship with each other, pointing out that she had been like a sister to him. She came from a pretty wealthy family (an ‘upscale family’ was the term that he used) but had what Jamie called a little bit of a militant side to her. Even though she knew that her boyfriend and his family were Jews she didn’t mind. Jamie told me, “It was interesting because, he (Jamie’s brother) had a girlfriend for like almost ten years that we’ve known for about seventeen years. Who was a Palestinian, and eh, she got family from like Ramallah and this and that. And they almost got married, right? And so, she always knew that we were Jewish and it was like all this was a joke. You know, and, and, but she just like, that we’re like; “a-ah, you, you’re Jews but not real Jews, you know, because you’re secular and you just like, you know, it might be in your blood, your DNA but other than that.” Eventually their relationship ended when Jamie told her that he wanted to make Aliyah. “You know, and so eh, when I told her, when she found out I was making Aliyah she exploded!”... You have gone crazy! She said, “oh, you baby killer, you wanna go kill babies, you were always into guns, you are gonna go, you’ll murder anything, and go murder my people and this and that.” She just went nuts. And eh sent me this e-mail and just went crazy. And so, eh, after that point I just, was okay fine, I was a little bit antagonistic I said things about the Palestinian history. [Laugh] It was the last I heard of her.” Jamie told me how he had at one point told his brother’s girlfriend that the Palestinian people didn’t have the right to Palestine as they originally came from Jordan etc. He was laughing as he told me this, as if it was a joke, but on several occasions during our conversation he had underlined that the
Arab population, in Israel as well as in Judea and Samaria, hadn’t really come from these places. They had, according to Jamie, only lived in these areas for a few generations. This historical view is something Jamie shares with quite a lot of Israelis and especially those in the right wing nationalist camp. In recent years there has been a heated debate around this very question and it is a fact that quite an extensive part of the research on the history of Israel from the fifties onwards, claims that only a small number of Arabs inhabited Palestine before the time of the first Jewish Aliyah towards the end of the nineteenth century. And this was definitely also a part of the mainstream Zionistic narrative in the Israeli schools and amongst the Jew of the Diaspora.

But Jamie’s point about the broken relationship with his brother’s Palestinian girlfriend offered a more general insight into his perception of the whole of the Palestinian population. He continued by adding another story which he claimed was but one of numerous others he had heard from many Israelis, “But, it’s, it’s interesting when I tell that story to people. They have heard stories of people, who like, a couple who lived in Efrat. He said I was, yeah, I was really leftwing [...] I thought we could have peace together and we have this Arab he would come over to our house, we lived like a year and a half, we were like really good friends with him, he was like our brother. We give him meal, our crystal. You know, we have all this all crystal expensive things we gave it to him, and one day, eh, we were eating, he was sitting eating with us. [...] She said to him, eh, you know, if, if they were asked to they never came down to it, you, you’ll never hurt us, right, they were like family. And he looked at her dead cold in the eyes, as he said, “okay,” he said, “it will be best if you don’t ask me that question.” And that was it, she said, she just, from that point on the whole lefty thing just kind of dissolved in the reality of the situation, so then... And the whole naiveness just shattered. [...] and I can relate to that, you know, Sandra, seventeen years I know her she was like a sister and as soon as you know.” When talking about the Palestinians Jamie would constantly use words like sister, brother or family to underline his point, as if to show that it was they, the Palestinians, who were to blame for the conflict between them and the Israelis.
We were coming to the end of our conversation. I felt that Jamie had already contributed enormously to my research and the only two questions I really needed to ask him now were: how he saw the future for his family and, not least, how he saw the future for Israel in relation to the ongoing conflict we had just discussed. I decided to start with the latter, as I thought the other question would be great to finish the interview with. And of course Jamie would have to include his religious beliefs on the issue of the future perspective. I must admit that there were quite a lot of moments during our conversation when I would forget that Jamie had a religious interpretation of what was going on around him. It felt in many ways that his religious convictions were somewhat artificial. Not that I didn't believe what he was telling me, but more that it didn't seem to be a natural and integrated part of his personality. So when he answered my question about the future of the country I again felt somehow surprised hearing, “Eh... I mean, I believe what it says biblically that this, that the, the land will eventually be ours. Eh and I think it will happen, I don’t know, I don’t think it’s gonna happen the next five years. I think it’s gonna take a few decades. Like two or three decades, but I think it’s gonna take somebody... It’s going to take two things, eh, of major dramatically event. The Second Intifada pretty much woke everybody up. Eh, not everybody but woke up but many people woke up to the fact that there is not gonna this peaceful two state solution. Okay I’ll be back on the track, the next five years [Laugh]. I think it’s gonna be a whole lot of the same. Eh, and eh... I really don’t know”. I didn’t ask Jamie what he meant by saying it would take a major dramatic event before something would eventually happen. At the time I was thinking, as I noted in my field diary, “maybe Jamie believe in a divine intervention from God or he thinks that a major terrorist attack will wake up the rest of the Israeli population” (field diary 3). I still haven't resolved which interpretation I favour. But one thing was for sure: though Jamie wasn't very optimistic in the short term, in the long term he felt confident that the solution of the Old Jewish Land would be coming just as it was referred to in the Bible.

His answer to the second question regarding how he saw the future for himself and his family was that he really believed that one day (maybe in the near future) they would move deeper into the territories finding a smaller settlement with people whose beliefs was more in accordance with his political (read nationalistic) and religious stand. In fact Jamie and his
family did eventually move to a new settlement and it was as he said in the interview a more extreme religious settlement with a much clearer religious profile than Ma’aleh Adumim.

The interview was over. I said goodbye to Jamie and Debbie left their house saying “Thanks. Thank you very much. It’s been a pleasure talking to you”. Two hours later I was back in Israel already thinking about my preparations in connection to my next interview up in Shomron the following day.
It was during a short, but busy field trip to the West Bank, in the autumn of 2005, that I got the opportunity to revisit the settlement of Kochav Yaakov in the Binyamin region of central Samaria. I was going to meet an elderly couple, Shaya & Miryam Heiliczer, who had recently arrived from Maryland, USA. For a long time now I had been hoping to find contacts among the older migrant settler community, as the majority of my interviews had tended to be with younger individuals and couples. This lack of contacts among elderly migrant settlers was partly due to the fact that their numbers in general are far fewer than those of their middle-aged and younger counterparts. Across my research the vast majority of people had been between twenty-eight and forty, with only 20% over fifty. However, the selection of older migrant settlers, as passed on to me by the various Aliyah organizations, particularly during the first phase of my research, had been further limited in numbers. In addition, three elderly migrant settlers that I had managed to establish email contact with, had declined my request for an interview partly due to suspicion towards my research and the research centre or because they didn’t like the idea of going more public on their personal history. I later had the opportunity to make some non-recorded interviews with one of the contacts. The actual numbers of migrant settlers, and also their age distribution, is in fact unknown, as the Israeli Bureau of Statistics does not hold any figures for this.

I must say that as I left Tel Aviv for the Jerusalem Central Bus Station to catch the bus to Kochav Yaakov, I was feeling both optimistic and excited. This was a journey I had done many times before and I had become so accustomed now to the extensive security checks at the bus station that I did not even pay much attention when the security guard in front of me started to search my bag. Overall, the previous sense of insecurity which I had experienced during earlier trips to the occupied territories had decreased to such a level that I had hardly registered my host’s remark as I left his apartment an hour earlier, “Danny please take care”. As I sat on the bus heading for the settlement, I tried to recall the thoughts and emotions I’d had the first time I made this journey. It was actually quite difficult. What I did remember was that I had been staring at every single passenger joining the bus, as if each subsequent one was a potential suicide bomber about to set off his or her bomb. I recalled thinking that at any
second the bus would be turned into wreckage, leaving me and the rest of the passengers, severely wounded or dead on the floor of the bus. I could not now sustain these recollected nightmares for long, however, as we passed through the distractingly beautiful landscape east of Jerusalem. I took up my field diary to write some notes on the extraordinary transformation my emotions had undergone, in what had been less than a year since the start of my research. I wrote, “Where is my fear - where did it go? (field diary 3)” I suppose the short answer to that question is that one’s level of fear decreases the more one gets accustomed to situations, so long as nothing negative occurs. I knew at that point that this was exactly the same mental process of acclimatization which most of the migrant settlers had been through, once they had lived in the settlements for a sufficient length of time. I noted in my field diary that this issue was something I had to look into when analyzing my cases.

I arrived in Kochav Yaakov approximately forty-five minutes after leaving the central bus station in Jerusalem. It took me a while to find the Heiliczer house, as it was located in a part of the community I was unfamiliar with. But with the help of a resident of the settlement, whom I had met on leaving the bus, I eventually stood at the doorstep of Shaya and Miryam’s house. The husband and wife greeted me as I entered the door. It was a warm welcome and it seemed as though they were looking forward to the interview as much as I was. Coffee, cold drinks and homemade cakes covered the table in the family living room. Miryam offered me a seat in a chair placed in front of the table, close to the settee where they were apparently going to sit. As they sat down I took out my tape recorder and placed it and the microphone on the table next to them. They had already agreed to the recording in a phone call the previous day. I introduced my research and explained the purpose and significance of their contribution. They then inquired about my family background, as well as the research centre’s motives in supporting such a project. I had become familiar with these kinds of questions, as more or less all the migrant settlers I had met had asked me the same type of thing.

The information about my Jewish background clearly had a positive effect, and Miryam noted with relief that they had been a little nervous about contributing to such a research, “as you never know what it will be used for”, she said. After ten minutes, I asked them if they were
ready to start; they replied positively and I conducted a short sound test to confirm the microphone was in the right position. Recording the voices of three people can be a little tricky and I wanted to be sure that all of our voices would be picked up clearly.

Group interviews differ in many ways from individual ones because, as an interviewer, you often have to work much harder to create the level of intimacy so crucial for life-story interviews. However, in this case, it seemed as though the relationship between husband and wife was so open and honest that it would not pose any problems. I had experienced, in previous interviews with couples, that either husband or wife would feel uneasy about having their partner listen to them share intimate details of their personal life with a stranger. Signs of such unease would often occur very early in the conversation, and you would register nervous glances, awkward body language etc. Shaya and Miryam did not show any signs of that. In fact I had an immediate sense that they had been through and shared such a lot of hardship in their lives that such reservations and unease had disappeared many years ago.

Before telling the life-story of Shaya and Miryam Heiliczer as it unfolded in our conversation, I will start by mentioning something Shaya told me much later in the interview as it in many ways sets the tone for what I shall try to illustrate (with this fourth case story) in the following analytical chapter. Shaya told me that during the last couple of years he had become closer and closer to identifying with the philosophy of Rabbi Meir Kahane72. I must admit that this information came as a complete surprise to me at the time, and it was only halfway through my analysis that I really began to appreciate what sort of an individual would be inclined to becoming a Kahane supporter.

I started the interview by asking Shaya to tell me about his family background. Starting with Shaya was a very deliberate choice, as he had so far been the quieter of the two. I felt that it was important to get the correct balance between husband and wife right from the start, and it seemed like Shaya was the one who needed a nursing hand here at the beginning of the

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72 Rabbi Meir Kahane was the founder of U.S. Jewish Defense League and the founder of the Kach Party in Israel
Shaya told me that his family had originally been orthodox but as time went by they had become more affiliated with the Conservative Jewish community. Shaya had followed his parents’ path, and as good as stopped attending services at the local synagogue once he had had his Bar Mitzvah. Shaya, who is now in his sixties, grew up in the predominantly Jewish town of Lakewood in New Jersey. His parents originally met in Brooklyn where they had grown up, but had moved to Lakewood after spending their honeymoon there. Shaya went to the local public school in Lakewood but due to the high Jewish population in the community, more than half the pupils, as well as teachers, in the school were Jewish, which meant that it used to close for the Jewish holidays. Shaya and his brother and sister also attended Hebrew school when they were young, and both his and his family's social networks were entirely Jewish. Moreover, located right next to their family home was a famous yeshiva, run by the late Rabbi Kotler. Shaya remembers clearly how his mother used to put out chairs for the female relations of the yeshiva students so they could sit in the driveway and wait for their men to come out of the yeshiva in the evenings. He also remembered how he grew up with the sound of Jewish prayers and the images of Hassidic men dancing in the street outside the yeshiva, during the important holidays. “There was a strong religious orientation [growing up]”, Shaya told me.

Shaya’s father had been a window cleaner when Shaya was a child; this profession had been something of an inheritance, as his father and grandfather before him had also been in the window cleaning business. Later, due to a work-related injury, Shaya’s father had become a salesman and later still, Shaya told me, his father had eventually opened up a small shop selling auto parts. During most of Shaya’s childhood, his mother had taken care of the upbringing of the children, but later she also had started working. She became a physician’s assistant for a Jewish physician just down the road from their house. Later, when both his parents retired, they decided to move to Florida. At that time, their three kids had already left home. Many years later Shaya was reunited with his parents, as he and his wife would look after them during the last couple of years of their lives.
When he was growing up Shaya's mother had been a member of the Mizrahi Women’s Zionist Organization. Her work for the organization was something that stood out clearly in his memory, he told me. He described her affiliation with the organization in this way, "She did a lot of activity you know for sending money and ... planting trees and everything [for Israel]. At the same time the philosophy was: We’re Americans first and Jews second. And I never really understood that. I guess I had learned more in Hebrew School than they had about the history and you know it didn’t seem to work that way; it seemed to me that we’re Jews and Israel is where we belong. And that stayed in my mind and later on I ... that became stronger.” I was interested in understanding what factors had prompted Shaya to think differently from his parents on these issues. I asked him whether he had, as a child, had any affiliations with any Jewish organizations. He answered that he had been a member of an organization called United Synagogue Youth (USY). The USY movement is a Conservative Jewish youth organization, which describes its primary endeavour as follows: “The general aim of the United Synagogue Youth program is to bring about a meaningful and fully reciprocal encounter of Judaism, the Jewish people, and the Synagogue on one side, and the Jewish teenager on the other. As a result of this encounter, the Jewish teenager will, firstly, demonstrate and experience how the Jewish way of living, through study, action and fellowship, leads to personal fulfilment and growth while meeting his spiritual and social needs, and secondly, make a significant contribution to his synagogue, community, society and the Jewish people”. I asked Shaya to describe to what degree he felt the organization had nurtured the very close affection he had built over the years for Israel. He replied, “It was a social organization and they had conferences and they had some teaching and, they did Israeli dancing and ... things like that. And I always, I guess I always ... felt that ... someday I would just move to Israel, [it became] just natural for me.” Shaya also pointed to the fact that Israel had always been very close to his mother’s heart. Not only had she been an active Zionist, but Shaya could also clearly remember from his childhood, that she would buy "Israeli style products and have them around the house; you know on the wall....”

Summing up, one could describe Shaya’s upbringing as a fairly traditional, but to a large extent secular, Jewish family life in an average Jewish neighbourhood in North America, with a

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73 AMIT or Mizrachi Women’s Organization of America is engaged in what they call vocational education and teacher training on Zionism.
mother who demonstrated a clear affection for the newly established Jewish state. His ancestors’ orthodox background did not play a significant role in the way the family had chosen to live their life and indeed the only experience of orthodoxy Shaya had as a child was by virtue of the neighbouring yeshiva: the proximity with which had afforded him a treasured selection of aural and visual memories. As a child, Shaya had been a member of a Jewish youth organization, just as so many other kids living in the Jewish Diaspora have been, and as a member of that youth organization Shaya had taken part in various educational and cultural activities. In Shaya’s assessment these activities had planted the seed, which would one day lead to him making Aliyah. However, as he clarified later in the interview, these ideas of Aliyah more or less vanished for a while as he grew older, got married and went on to have children. Indeed, at the time of their marriage, neither Shaya nor Miryam entertained any serious thoughts of moving to Israel.

I now turned my attention to Miryam, as I was eager to hear what kind of family background she’d had. During the first part of the interview, she had been very discrete, keeping more or less in the background as Shaya told his story. She started by telling me that her grandparents on both sides of her family had originated from Eastern Europe: from Russia, Poland and the Ukraine. Miryam told me that it had been her grandparents who had “installed the [spiritual] spark” in her as both her parents had only been “Jews by social standards”. Like her husband, Miryam described her parents as, “Americans firstly…but proud of the fact that they were Jews”. One of the main religious influences she could recall from her childhood was that of her grandfather (on her maternal side) taking her to the synagogue now and again. She had clear memories of standing, watching him swaying his body while singing his prayers, in a manner typical for religious Jews when they gather together for prayer. In addition to this, her grandmother (also on her maternal side) would show her how to perform the Jewish holidays: lightning candles, keeping kosher etc. However, Miryam’s own parents never observed any of the religious services, so in her daily family life Miryam lived as a secular American Jew. As a child growing up with secular parents and religious grandparents, Miryam told me, she never really understood what the religious side was all about, “[...] but now I understand and I had often thought about, even recently, I wish that I could just go back in time but knowing what I know now. [...] Because I would certainly appreciate it much more than I did
growing up. So anyway I remember my grandfather taking me to shule (Yiddish word for 'synagogue') and [...] and sitting on his shoulders and, carrying the flags with an apple on top [LAUGHING] and it was, you know it was just a lot of good feelings [...] Very warm, very wonderful feelings.” As Miryam told me this, I could sense the great affection in her voice. She became visibly nostalgic as she thought back over the days of her childhood and not least her memories of her grandparents.

I asked Miryam how it was that her mother who had been raised in a religious family had become so indifferent towards Judaism. Miryam responded by telling me this story about her mother’s upbringing: “My mother started school as a youngster. The only language she could speak was Yiddish. That was her primary language [...] She did not know English. Her parents didn’t speak English [...] and I remember her telling us the stories about how the other children would just make fun of her. It was terrible. And I think that the roots of ‘I don’t want to be, I don’t want to be Jewish. If this is what I have to endure I don’t want anything to do with it.’ But you know, but [that was how] she was raised so she ... lied to make friends.” Miryam apparently interpreted her mother’s disassociation from Judaism as symptomatic of a self-loathing sparked by the hostile reactions of a society which in those days did not accept the kind of lifestyle the older generations of East European Jews brought with them from their former Shtetls (small Jewish town or village in Eastern Europe).

Miryam’s father, on the other hand, came from a completely secular family and his mother had been alone for most of her life. She was, as far as Miryam could remember, either born in America or brought there, as a very small child. Miryam’s grandmother had been married to a man who was not Jewish but she had left him just after their marriage and then, as Miryam put it, there was “a whole blank page”. She had hardly any information about him as no one in the family ever spoke of him. Miryam’s parents first met each other in Brooklyn where they both grew up. Miryam’s mother was more than happy to embrace the secular lifestyle of her husband and they did not pay much attention to religious Judaism when bringing up their two daughters. Miryam gave an example of this, by saying “So when my parents got together, my father was used to trayf (non-kosher food). You know I mean he was eating cheese with meat
Miryam told me this with a grim expression on her face and immediately followed it up by saying “Not that I liked everything”. I found this remark typical for an individual who had later embraced an orthodox religious lifestyle, as I noted in my field diary at the time. In contrast to her husband, Miryam’s home life had been more or less devoid of any religious Jewish influence. Her friends were mostly Jewish, which was natural as she lived in a Jewish neighbourhood, but she did not have any formal connection to the Jewish community, “I mean I didn’t go to a Hebrew school, I didn’t belong to any youth, you know religious youth group, I didn’t have any of that. And after my grandfather died it was like all the Yiddish [and Jewish elements] went out the window.” This was how she described it during the interview.

Miryam and Shaya met each other through mutual friends in Jackson, New Jersey. Miryam was still a student in her last term, while Shaya was about to leave college on account of learning difficulties. Two months into their relationship Shaya and Miryam decided to get married. Both were very young at the time. Miryam was only seventeen and Shaya nineteen. All of this happened against a backdrop of America’s involvement in the Vietnam War. A crucial implication of this military activity was that most of the young American males of the time were in imminent danger of being drafted into the army. As for many other young American couples during this period, Shaya and Miryam felt almost certain that Shaya, who was a healthy young man, would eventually be drafted. And they were right. Soon he received a draft notice from the army. The prospect of being sent on active combat duty in Vietnam made the young couple look for alternative solutions. Miryam explained, “And he (Shaya) was afraid that if he got a draft notice that they would put him in the army, and then there was a very strong possibility of him seeing action in ‘Nam […] both of us didn’t want [that] to happen. So he decided to enlist in the Navy, Oh God, it was safer.” Because of Shaya’s enlistment, they decided to get what Miryam described as a “shotgun marriage ceremony”. The wedding took place in the mayor’s office in the City Hall. A month later, they got a rabbinical wedding ceremony, but this had to take place in a back office of the synagogue, as Miryam was already pregnant. Listening to Shaya and Miryam talk about this period of their life, I could sense a level of excitement, and that the period had been characterized for them by their strong emotional
relationship as a newly married couple. At the same time though, the story seemed fraught with difficulties because of their complicated situation.

Shaya and Miryam's marriage suffered because of Shaya's being in the Navy. Over the next three and a half to four years, Miryam had to move from one base camp to the next, in order to follow her husband across the world as he performed his naval duties. They were only together during the short intervals between Shaya's periods of service at sea, which meant that they hardly spent any time together. This is what Miryam said as we talked about her husband's time in the Navy, “So out of the four years, or three and a half years, that he was in service, maybe we were together about nine months total [...] He had like three different [...] major cruises; one of them he was gone for almost a year [...] It was very, very difficult”. Adding to their hardship was the fact that Miryam had become pregnant again and given birth to another daughter. Being a young, single mother with two very small children and a husband sailing the Mediterranean, Miryam really suffered, as did the marriage. I asked Shaya to tell me a little bit about his work in the Navy. He responded by saying, “I was on an aircraft carrier. I was part of a...a aviation squadron; a hydra squadron [...] And so this was during Vietnam, but our ship wasn’t in Vietnam, our ship was in the Mediterranean, which was worse because the cruises were longer, because all they were doing was practicing, 20 hours a day practicing. In Vietnam, you could only fly at certain times and it was, they stayed for shorter periods. So, then we’d come back and...we’d be there for a few months and then I’d go back out to sea again and...” as Shaya spoke about his time in the Navy his voice was trembling. This was the first time during our conversation that we had touched upon a topic that was sensitive for both husband and wife. Meanwhile, Miryam repeatedly said the following, “it was really a very difficult period in our life”. She continued, “We were having some marital issues. You know we had a lot of conflict and being in the service certainly didn’t help anything; I mean the residual effects of being in the service at that time. And then [...] in the meantime, while I was pregnant with her, he (Shaya) became...ill, [emotionally] ill [...]”. She said it with some hesitation and with a very low and fragile tone in her voice; as if it was something I should not hear or know about. This at least was what I was thinking at the time. I knew at that point that what she had just told me was in fact a key event, which had shaped their lives over the many years that followed. Miryam continued, “She was only ten days old, [...] our other daughter, and
I had been ill because I had a Caesarean [...] and at that point is when I, I just, I couldn’t take it anymore.” It was clearly painful for Miryam to disclose these very intimate details of her life.

Shaya did not say much at this point in the conversation. From what I could understand, Shaya had been hospitalized and had later ended up in a mental institution. Because of the sensitivity of this issue, I decided to let Miryam continue without asking her too many intrusive questions. Miryam told me that she had asked Shaya’s parents to take care of their sick son, so she could arrange all the formalities surrounding their separation. She had decided to get a divorce and Shaya had not objected. His only comment on this during the interview was that he simply could not remember anything from that period in his life. I remember thinking that Shaya had probably been on medication for his psychological problems and that this was most likely the main reason why he could not recall anything from that time of his life. There was one thing though that Shaya highlighted in connection with their separation (and later their divorce), it appeared that he and Miryam had never received a rabbinic divorce and it seemed very important to Shaya to get this fact across. I asked Shaya and Miryam if they had been living a Jewish religious life while Shaya was in the Navy, as I thought it important to discover how far back I could track their religious life. It was clear that now both husband and wife lived a very strict, orthodox religious life; Shaya was wearing a kipa (a small piece of textile that religious men wear on top of their heads) and their home was filled with religious items. Also, in an earlier email, Shaya had described himself and Miryam as an orthodox, elderly Jewish couple. To my surprise, they both told me that back then, their lifestyle had been completely secular.

After their separation, Miryam and her daughters returned to New Jersey. Once there, Miryam decided to get an education and become a nurse. She told me that a decent income had become essential for her to take good care of her kids and, with help from friends and family, she managed to pass all her exams and eventually start working as a nurse. Miryam stayed in New Jersey for the next five years and then moved to Florida. Miryam explained her decision by saying, “My parents had [also] moved to Florida – not in the same place, but also in Florida. And I had been making trips back and forth, back and forth to visit them [...] with two little kids
[... and I [LAUGHING] said 'This is crazy!' You know I, I...I didn’t have a million strings. He (Shaya) really didn’t object to us going and he didn’t, he had very little [to do with our daughters].” In fact, Shaya had more than enough to think about, what with trying to recover from mental illness and attempting to resume a normal existence. He admitted that he could not recollect the time or circumstances surrounding the departure of his former wife and daughters, their leaving New Jersey and moving to Florida. And during the next fifteen years, Shaya lost all contact with Miryam and his two small girls.

As we continued talking about Miryam and her children’s new lives down in Florida, Miryam suddenly revealed that she had been married to another man. She mentioned it just as if it was a throwaway comment and of no significance for our interview. This is how she put it, “And so I moved to Florida and, in ’77, and about [...] eight years, anyway, I had an... I had a marriage in-between, which was ... a whole other book. ... Which we won’t go into [...] Other than it was devastating. And so it was Hashem (Jewish name for God) [who] released me from that marriage”. I could see from Miryam’s eyes that she really meant what she said. I could also hear the pain in her voice as she said the words “it was devastating”. I knew that she definitely would not elaborate further on this issue and of course I would respect that. At the same time though, I was also conscious that such an experience must have had a tremendous impact on her life so I was hoping that she might later return to the subject of her own accord.

Instead though, I turned my attention to Shaya. Unfortunately, he did not disclose much of his life during those years. From what I could gather (from the very sparse details he was happy disclosing), after he had completed his treatment for mental illness, Shaya had tried to regain a ‘normal’ life. He started to become interested in computer programming in the mid-Seventies. At that time, computer technology was still in its infant stage and so there were very few educational possibilities for those interested in the field. Shaya never underwent any formal education; instead he more or less taught himself all the basic computer skills, which would later enable him to take up a position as a software designer. And from that point on, he worked on and off for various, different computer companies. Shaya lived a quiet life after his recovery. There was no reference in his story to living a religious life and he did not once
mention going to the synagogue or being a member of a Jewish congregation. In fact, there was no reference to Judaism at all. Another striking point was the lack of information about friends, family and girlfriends during this period. The absence of any such detail became very apparent as we turned to focus on what had happened in Miryam’s life after her terrible second marriage.

Miryam was now living and working in Miami, Florida. After her failed marriage, she found a job as a nurse in a local hospital and this job gave her a small but decent income, which enabled her to support her two daughters. On the surface, life was ok, Miryam told me; but just beneath the surface she felt very lonely and fragile. She decided to visit the local synagogue as she was desperately craving social contact and spiritual guidance. Miryam explained “...you know ‘cos I’m feeling this empty void”. Unfortunately, her encounter with the local synagogue did not bring her much comfort. But instead of giving up, Miryam took the decision to visit all the different synagogues in her local area, hoping that she would eventually find a congregation that suited her. Again, her search did not bear any fruit. I asked Miryam why and she replied, “None of them were really ... they weren’t open, they weren’t helpful.” Miryam felt repelled by the fact that each of the congregations she had contacted had all demanded a certain percentage of her income in exchange for membership. Being a single mother on a limited income, Miryam had found such a demand very unfair, and she said, “Why do I need to pay them money, a single mother with all these problems and issues, why do I have to pay them money when I can pray to God on my own?”

In the end, Miryam decided to give up on the Jewish congregations in her local community, but her spiritual life continued as she still believed and prayed to God. I asked her if she could explain what it was she was looking for and she answered, “I knew, I knew there was a God, because with – at every time in my life when something bad was happening, I always felt like there was a hand catching me.” At that point in her life Miryam decided not to confine her search for a fulfilling spiritual life just to the boundaries of Judaism. Every now and again, when she met religious people they would, “Water the seed that (her) grandfather had planted many years ago”. She constantly felt lonely and lost but eventually her patience, and her
receptiveness to new spiritual stimuli, was rewarded when she met some people from the Unitarian Universalist Association\textsuperscript{74}. However her encounter with this organization only lasted five months. I asked Miryam to tell me a little bit about them, as I did not have the slightest idea what kind of organization they were. Miryam explained, “They don’t believe in anything [...] except each other, a higher consciousness and sex”. All three of us started laughing, but stopped as Miryam continued, “But here I was still searching for something, [...] I was still pretty far down, you know. Even though I would still make stupid makes that he (God) would like rescue me. And I always felt that [...] Hashem’s hand [was] protecting me.” It was clear by listening to Miryam’s story that she had been terribly unhappy and distressed for quite some years.

As the years went by, Miryam’s spiritual search continued. Her daughters who were attending a local, non-Jewish school had now reached puberty. Miryam told me that at that point, her eldest had “befriended several people; one of whom was a young man.” Miryam continued, “And she used to start going over to his house ... a lot, and it wasn’t because she was interested in the boy so much, as his mother had an influence over her. She started introducing her to Christianity.” Miryam told me that at first she felt very upset by the idea that her own daughter could be drawn to the Christian faith, but as time went by Miryam started to accept that it had to be her choice. Later when her daughter insisted on being baptised, she even managed to convince Miryam to come to church and watch the baptism ceremony. Miryam told me during the interview, “Okay. So...she went to...this church and she was gonna be baptised and the preacher there knew that I was gonna be you know in the audience. [...] And he started talking about how Jesus was the Messiah and he was Jewish and all his disciples were Jews...you know all this, now [fishergus?] okay. But you know the last supper was Passover and he just...all kinds of things that made it sound very appealing to me. And...you know they’re, they’re trained to, to hit somebody in the emotional aspect in a person that’s vulnerable.” Miryam continued her story by underlining that at that particular time of her life, she had felt very vulnerable. And, because of that vulnerability she said, she revisited the church a number of times and in the end became convinced that she had at last found the spiritual community

\textsuperscript{74} Unitarian Universalist Association is an association of religious communities.
she was looking for. What Miryam found, she told me, were decent and kind people who she felt accepted by and who took care of her.

Several years later Miryam’s daughter met a young man through the church. As the young couple wanted to get a traditional marriage, they asked Miryam to see if Shaya would be willing to walk his daughter down the church aisle. At first Miryam had her reservations on the matter. Shaya and Miryam had barely had any contact during all those years of separation. In fact, the only contact they’d had during the whole period had been limited to just a few phone calls, but in the end Miryam gave in to the pressure that her daughter and future son-in-law were exerting. “I sent him a postcard”, Miriam said. “I knew that he still loved me, I still loved him, but I still had these doubts about whether things had changed from, from the past, and I was very cautious. So anyway [...] he called after he received my postcard, and he called every single day [LAUGHS] until he came to visit us at Christmas, you know December 25th time. And I asked him if, you know if he could have a vacation at about that time. I said, ‘the girls are gonna be in some play and maybe you’d like to get to know them better’. So he jumped at the chance, he said sure and then you know, like I said, he called me every single day.” What Shaya was unaware of at the time was not only that his eldest daughter was going to be married in a Christian church, but that the family had also devised a plan to draw Shaya into their Christian congregation. “So the time came and the girls they, they started leaving religious tracts, tracts, religious stuff. And I said you know, ‘Well don’t, we don’t want to force you into anything we just want you to understand what we believe.’ This was my daughter’s, the older daughter’s. And, so he ... he was reading all the tracts and everything and, Shaya was going to the church with us.” At first Shaya kept an open mind to the fact that his family had become religious, messianic Christians but the more he became engaged and familiar with their faith the more sceptical he got.

Miryam told me that Shaya’s scepticism towards the theological foundation of the church eventually opened her eyes too. Miryam explained it by saying, “This preacher says, and the books say, that he (Jesus) was Jewish, [but] there’s nothing Jewish about this church. And he (Shaya) was right! And that was when my eyes started opening”. In spite of Miryam and Shaya’s
increasing scepticism towards the church, they decided not to leave straight away. The church had become Miryam’s home. For her this home was a safe haven, something she had been searching for throughout her years of loneliness and hardship. Miryam and Shaya decided to get re-married. Their wedding took place in the church and once again, they became husband and wife. Eighteen years had passed since their divorce.

When Shaya left New Jersey for Miami, he also left behind his job as a web-designer. He was certain that he would be able to find new employment, but the reality of the job market during the mid-Eighties caught up with him. By now Shaya had reached his mid-forties, he had not had any formal education to begin with and his network in Miami was almost non-existent. After a fruitless search for a job, Shaya started to put all his energy into Bible studies. Through people they met within their religious circles, Miryam and Shaya eventually got an introduction to what Miryam described as a ‘Judean style’ of Christianity. This introduction opened their eyes, she told me, and it gave them a completely different perspective and new interpretation of the Bible. Shaya and Miryam had found what they thought was a perfect arena for their religious-spiritual life. In fact as Shaya assured me, the importance of getting closer to the roots of Judaism was the guiding light of their new religious orientation, and both of them became deeply involved in the Judeo-Christian messianic sect. Shaya started to take religious lessons over the internet and after two years of study he one day came across the website of a messianic, religious society in Pittsburgh headed by a Jewish woman. At that time, Shaya was still unemployed. His efforts at finding a proper job in Miami had proved unsuccessful. The fascination of the Pittsburgh messianic society grew steadily in his mind until he eventually decided to ask Miryam if she would be willing to leave Miami and try their luck in Pittsburgh. At that time, both their daughters had already left home; Miryam and Shaya had also already cut all ties to the Christian church which they had, for a time, regarded as their home, and the prospect of finding jobs in Pittsburgh seemed much brighter than Miami. While they were considering moving Shaya did in fact get offered a job there; Miryam’s training as a nurse would enable her to find work wherever they went, but this was not necessarily the case for Shaya, so the job offer was good news. However the most important issue for them both was the prospect of finding the ‘perfect’ spiritual environment for their
search for God. This search would later turn into a long, perhaps lifelong, journey for husband and wife.

As I was sitting with Shaya and Miryam listening to their story in their new home in Samaria, I could not help thinking that they were still on a journey, a journey that would never end. What would be next? Would they one day leave the settlement and find another place, maybe follow a new rabbi who would provide them with a different interpretation of the Bible? On the other hand, was this in fact the completion of the circle: by first leaving Judaism for Christianity and then once again returning to the faith of their ancestors: becoming orthodox Jews? I would probably never get the answer, but would they? As I was leaving Kochav Yaakov on the bus later that afternoon, these were the questions that came to my mind. I could not help reflecting on what Miryam had said about the empty void inside her, and I instantly knew that, perhaps without knowing it she had hit the nail on the head. I will come back to this issue later, in the following analysis chapter, but for now I shall return to my conversation with Shaya and Miryam.

Shaya and Miryam left Miami for Pittsburgh later that year and soon after their arrival, Shaya started to work full-time as a software designer. Meanwhile, Shaya and Miryam continued their spiritual journey firstly by contacting, and then becoming members of the messianic society. Unfortunately, Shaya’s job did not turn out as he had expected, so he decided to quit. Instead of finding another job though, he became a full-time student in the messianic society, which had set up a religious school for its members. Shaya spent the next two years learning and studying messianic theology, but after that period the society decided to move the school down to Maryland. As devoted disciples, both Shaya and Miryam took the quick decision to move with the school. Once Shaya had completed his studies, he became a prominent figure in the messianic movement as both a writer and teacher, actively disseminating his religious thinking on the Internet. Shaya and Miryam even set up their own congregation. Shaya’s theology was at this time still very much influenced by the Christian faith. Jesus was seen as the true Messiah and the New Testament was the foundation of Shaya’s and his congregation’s faith.
This is just a small extract of what Shaya told me about their time in the messianic movement, “Well eventually I, we started our own congregation and I was doing a lot of writing and teaching on the Internet, on Messianic [...Then we] started an organisation that was called The Association of Torah-Observant Messianic [...] Later I was working with another group and we were calling ourselves Nazarene Jews. But there was a split between me and this other organisation over some Christian doctrine that they insisted on keeping and I couldn’t believe [...] I was teaching on the Internet and in my congregation I was teaching about Torah, about living according to Torah [...] As I did research, and as I tried to prove the New Testament, I ended up not being able to prove [it].” Time passed and Shaya became more and more convinced that his Christian Messianic faith was based on false assumptions. Slowly but steadily his religious convictions seemed to sway further towards Judaism, as the Torah took a more prominent role in his theology. It eventually came to a point where many of his own followers started to turn their back on him. I asked him if he was able to explain why they had left. Shaya replied, “Because they didn’t wanna hear that [...] they were used to just [...] pray and they’re saved [...] They did not want to follow [...] any lifestyle you know [...] Eventually we got down to two people in the congregation”. Gradually Shaya and Miryam started to change their own religious lifestyle. They wanted to live their lives more in accordance with the rules of Orthodox Judaism. “We became, became clean”, Miryam said.

One of the first steps in that direction was to start observing the kosher dietary laws as described in the Torah. Later they decided to follow the even stricter rabbinic rules. Miryam began covering her head, just as she had seen her own grandmother do when she had been a child. And finally, Miryam and Shaya decided move to a Jewish area. Their choice fell on a specific Jewish neighbourhood in Baltimore where their daughter now resided. I was surprised to hear that their daughter and son-in-law had chosen to settle in a Jewish neighbourhood. I was under the impression that they had simply continued with their Christian lifestyle, as neither Shaya nor Miryam had mentioned anything about them since their account had moved on from Miami. So I decided to ask Miryam for an explanation. She told me that both her daughter and son-in-law had followed the same sort of path, as they too had been becoming more and more Jewish over the years. Throughout Miryam and Shaya’s
spiritual journey, they had been in constant contact with their daughter and her family. Miryam described their relationship as very close, "She was also listening to our teachings and [...] we’d discuss it and we would agree [...] We both had the same [...] ideas about [religious issues]", Miryam said.

Once again, Miryam and Shaya were on the move. This time they did not only leave Maryland behind, they also cut all remaining ties with the Christian Messianic faith, which had once been their entire life. I was feeling somehow exhausted by their story. It was like listening to the tale of the Wandering Jew, walking through the Wilderness, bewildered and confused by an endless search, a search for meaning and purpose in life. I needed a break and so did Miryam and Shaya, they told me. I turned off my tape-recorder and took a sip from the glass of cold lemonade that was standing on the table before me.

After a break of about ten minutes, we continued our conversation and I started by summarizing what we had last been talking about. Shaya was the first to resume their story by explaining how they had felt when leaving for Baltimore. This was what he said, "we realised we needed to go some place to learn; because we had gone from being teachers [to becoming pupils again]... and knowing so much, to realising we don’t know anything and we have to start from scratch. So we needed to find rabbis and synagogues and you know places where we could learn to be Orthodox Jewish. So [that was why] we moved to Baltimore". Shaya continued by explaining that he had previously read a book by Adin Steinsaltz75: a leading Jewish scholar and now rabbi who himself originated from a secular family. The book focused on issues relating to Jews who had either lapsed or never been orthodox, yet who now wanted to pursue an orthodox life. Shaya told me that the writings of Rabbi Steinsaltz helped them to accept that the process of becoming orthodox was long and at times, extremely difficult, and that the best way to succeed was to slowly incorporate one religious rule at a time. I had heard this sort of thing many times before in the process of my research. Indeed a sizeable number of the migrant settlers I had interviewed had similar stories: they too were ‘born again Jews’, with a range of experiences similar to those of Miryam and Shaya. Rabbi Adin

75 Adin Steinsaltz is a well known teacher, philosopher, social critic, and spiritual mentor.
Steinsaltz and others like him had published an endless number of books providing a recipe for people wanting to become religious. And as I was listening to Shaya, I began to appreciate the extent to which the market for such books existed, especially given the last ten to fifteen years, where we have witnessed a rise in global religious trends, not solely amongst the Jewish population in Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, but also amongst Christians, Muslims and Hindus. It had become clear to me, quite early on in my research, that I needed to look deeper into this global renaissance in religion, and in particular its more specific relevance to many of the Jewish migrant settlers I had so far interviewed. Shaya and Miryam, as well as more than half the other migrant settlers I had met, had originally come from secular or moderate religious backgrounds, yet all had embarked on spiritual journeys which over time had become more and more religious, even orthodox as was the case here.

Moving to Baltimore ushered in a new epoch in Miryam and Shaya’s life. Having returned to a Jewish environment, their priority was now to integrate successfully with the Jewish community there. Shaya and Miryam soon found an orthodox congregation and a synagogue that they felt happy joining and within a short time they began to feel comfortable in their new home. As time passed, both husband and wife gradually adapted to the Orthodox Jewish lifestyle, and eventually they found that they had fully returned to the faith of their ancestors and it felt right, they told me. Reunited with Shaya’s mother (his father had since passed away), their eldest daughter and son-in-law, as well as their grandchildren, there was only one thing lacking, Miryam told me. She keenly felt the absence of her own mother who was now living in New Jersey. For a long time they tried to convince Miryam’s mother to come and live with them in Baltimore, but it wasn’t until she became ill that she finally decided to join them there so that Shaya and Miryam would be able to look after her. Meanwhile Shaya’s mother, who had been staying in a nursing home close to where they lived, also started to get health problems. Shaya had been looking after his mother for the last couple of years.

What eventually happened was that both Miryam and Shaya’s mothers passed away; remarkably, their deaths occurred on the same day, at the same hospital in Baltimore. Shaya and Miryam decided to hold their mothers’ funerals on the same day, in the same Jewish
cemetery in Baltimore. Shaya and Miryam explained that everybody in Baltimore had commented on how strange it was that their mothers’ deaths and funerals had coincided and both husband and wife interpreted the incident as something approaching miraculous.

It was shortly after their mothers’ deaths that the idea of making Aliyah occurred to Miryam and Shaya. Shaya explained, “But after that we started realising we didn’t, we were no longer required to stay there, because we didn’t have anyone to take care of”. Miryam continued by adding that their daughters were older now and more independent, and so did not need their parents to be around anymore. The whole idea of making Aliyah came onto the agenda after a Shabbat service in their local synagogue. Here Miryam and Shaya heard their rabbi talk about the work of Nefesh B’Nefesh. Both husband and wife were captivated when the rabbi started to talk about Aliyah and how quick and easy it had become for American Jews to immigrate to Israel. “He didn’t say the [name of the] organisation but he was talking about Aliyah. And he had gone to visit Israel, and he was talking about this organisation where everyone - they chartered a plane, and everyone on the plane was making Aliyah, and all the paperwork [was taken care of] on the plane and by the time they landed they had everything set up”. Shaya and Miryam had never been to Israel before, not even as tourists. Moreover they had never, not during their marriage nor independently during their separation, even talked about the possibility of moving to Israel. But the rabbi’s account made a huge impression on both of them, such that they both referred to it as some kind of revelation. Miryam described her reaction, as she was listening to the rabbi, “That was [when I got] goose bumps you know”. In fact the rabbi’s speech made such a tremendous impression on them both that just a few days after the Shabbat service, they decided to make contact with their local Shaliach (an emissary from Israel) to ask for a meeting regarding the possibility of them making Aliyah.

Shaya claimed that at that time quite a large number of rabbi’s were coming forward with similarly urgent requests for Jews in the community to make Aliyah. Shaya and Miryam seemed very excited as they told me how extraordinary this wave of talks concerning the issue of Aliyah had felt at the time. Husband and wife were talking over each other and I could barely hear what each was saying: “[It] was, we were told was very unusual [...] and it was a
very interesting phenomenon. There was this one who was a regular Orthodox rabbi [...] yet there was another synagogue we went to because right where we lived you could walk to about 20 different synagogues. There’s another one where my daughter and her family went, which is, which is a Chassidic synagogue, and they had just come back from a trip to Israel and so we heard about Aliyah there and how he dreamed of picking a whole congregation and moving there. Then we heard [...] that there’s another rabbi from Baltimore who is bringing a group of people to here, to this shule [...] and there’s two or three other families from Baltimore moved here. And we knew one thing was happening after another”. It was as if Shaya and Miryam regarded the various Aliyah incidents as interconnected, as if they were part of a greater plan, not instigated by man, but by God, and it was clear that they saw their own decision as being part of a higher purpose. I could not help noticing that this was exactly the way they had expressed themselves when talking about their mothers’ deaths.

After Miryam and Shaya had met the Shaliach in the Aliyah centre and heard what the formalities were for making Aliyah, they immediately chose to open an Aliyah file, which is the first step in the process of making Aliyah. (See later chapter.) After returning home they quickly began to research into what sort of communities were amenable to orthodox religious people like themselves. It came to their attention, whilst surfing on the Internet, that there was an organization specializing in assisting religious Jews with this matter and so they arranged a meeting with a representative of the organization Tehilla.

I was very curious to know what the selection criteria had been when Shaya and Miryam were deciding which settlement to live in. Through the aid of the Internet, they had discovered quite a number of communities that they found to their taste. Shaya told me that the most important issue was that it had to be a religious environment, “You know, I felt at that [point] where I wanted to be immersed in a spiritual environment”, he said. The first interesting community that they stumbled across was Efrat, which is located just to the south of Jerusalem in the settlement bloc of Gush Etzion. Shaya’s first comment on the settlement was, “We sort of fell in love with Efrat”. However, as they continued their search many other options opened and choosing the right place was not that easy. During their meeting with the
representative from Tehilla, they had been told that a visit to Israel before making Aliyah was compulsory for Jews who had never been there. Miryam and Shaya started making plans for the pilot trip and with the help of Tehilla, they were able to arrange a whole package, which had included, “a number of visits to different communities, as well as professional contacts and visits to housing developments, new and established communities, and absorption centres”, as described on the Tehilla website. It was a “comprehensive series of seminars (exploring) issues relevant to the Aliyah process.”

Another criterion for Shaya and Miryam, as they worked through the Tehilla list of settlements, was that it should be a small community, on the edge of one of the larger Israeli cities. A considerable number of the settlements listed on the Tehilla website are situated outside the Green Line. In fact, 34 of the 70 communities listed are outside the Green Line. At the time when Miryam and Shaya were choosing their new home, they had no idea what the Green Line was and therefore had no idea which of the listed communities were located in the occupied territories. This is what Shaya told me when I raised the subject of the Green Line, “You know we didn’t know what the Green Line was about and we didn’t realise – we didn’t know what the claims were about in Judea and Samaria. You know that … that people want us to go back to the ’67 borders”. It might seem strange or implausible that Jewish people from the Jewish Diaspora, contemplating making Aliyah to Samaria or Judea, could be ignorant about such a crucial matter. But, having interviewed more than forty migrant settlers from ten or twelve different settlements and spread across the whole of the occupied territories, I would say that more than 10% of those migrant settlers had been unaware of the term ‘Green Line’ before leaving their country of origin, even though many of them had either been in Israel beforehand or had participated in one of the pilot trips arranged by Tehilla or some other Aliyah organization.

What seems equally surprising is that on the website of Tehilla there is no mention of the occupied territories whether it is in the section on housing, or indeed any other section of their site. In much the same way, the other major Aliyah organization, Nefesh B’Nefesh, has only one paragraph on its website dealing (albeit indirectly) with the issue of the occupied territories: “A few words regarding the term “Yishuv.” Its literal translation is “settlement,” but Yishuvim are not located only in the Judea and Samaria, or Gaza regions. It is possible to
live on a Yishuv in the Galil, the Negev, the centre of the Country, almost anywhere. A Yishuv generally has a relatively small number of families, anywhere from a dozen to several hundred, who choose to live in a close community environment. Generally, people looking to live on a Yishuv must first be approved by an acceptance committee (though this process is not usually as intimidating as it sounds). Yishuvim are run by an administrative committee selected by the Yishuv members. Yishuvim are generally small self-contained units with their own mini-markets, synagogues, educational institutions, and parks. Some Yishuvim are located only a few minutes away from major cities, while others are highly isolated. People who are happy with Yishuv life are usually those who are searching for a close-knit community, but one without the shared lifestyle found in kibbutzim, and to a lesser extent, in moshavim” (Nefesh B’Nefesh homepage). As one can see from this quote, as well as from the entire Nefesh B’Nefesh homepage and website in general, claims relating to territorial conflicts, whether made by Palestinians, Israelis or the world community, are either completely erased or at best downplayed. The implication of this is that people who are contemplating Aliyah (and who might therefore be looking for a community through one or other of these websites) are not being given the opportunity to know if they are choosing a home in or outside the occupied territories. And this had clearly been the case with Miryam and Shaya, when they too had been looking for a suitable community in their prospective homeland.

The next step in Miryam and Shaya’s Aliyah process was the forthcoming pilot trip with the Tehilla organization. They had decided to visit Israel for ten days, attending absorption meetings across the country and visiting several communities that they had selected from the above-mentioned homepages of Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh. Both husband and wife told me how much they had enjoyed their visit to Israel (except that it had been very tiring) and that once they had returned to Baltimore their desire to make Aliyah was at such a level that both of them could hardly wait to start their new life in Israel. During the pilot trip they visited quite a number of settlements that they found attractive. Shaya wanted a place where he could live out the dream of becoming ‘a pioneer’, but as Miryam explained, “you know, I am just a little bit too old for a caravan”. Choosing Kochav Yaakov was a kind of a compromise in

76 See: http://www.nbn.org.il/index.htm
the sense that it was “something in between”. However, they both agreed that Kochav Yaakov was the perfect place for them to live. I asked them why this particular place was so special and Miryam replied, “You can’t actually say what it is. But it was just a feeling that this was the right place for us”. Kochav Yaakov was one of three or four settlements that Miriam and Shaya had been initially drawn to. I noticed some obvious similarities between their choices as they mentioned the respective communities: firstly, all were settlements located in the West Bank; secondly, they were all relatively small, orthodox (or mixed) religious communities with modest buildings; and lastly, they were all located within a relatively short driving distance from one or other of the big Israeli cities. Later in our conversation, Miryam and Shaya expanded further on the different criteria that had informed their choice of Kochav Yaakov. Shaya said, “You know I felt at that point [where] I wanted to be immersed in a spiritual environment”. This was very much in keeping with their earlier decision of moving to Baltimore once they had abandoned the messianic Christian lifestyle and returned to Judaism. Both emphasised the importance of the settlement of Kochav Yaakov having a diverse religious Jewish population. Shaya said, “You know [they have] eight different Minyan...and four to five different synagogues”, he continued, “Like a small town you have in the US and it was...the people were very nice, and it was very quiet, and there was children’s [sic], you know, families and different kinds of religious Jews”. Shaya’s reference to the typical American small town proved to be an important theme for both husband and wife. Shaya told me that they had both been raised in a small town and were keen to re-create such a life in their new environment. This actually came to be a crucial element of their final decision in choosing Kochav Yaakov, they told me. Like many other migrant settlers, both Shaya and Miryam had been preoccupied with the idea of finding a small community, and of living with people they could interact and create close friendships with. They were also preoccupied with the notion of moving to their image of a diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural neighbourhood. This had been a high priority for Miryam and Shaya, just as it had been for many of the other migrant settlers I had been in contact with.

As we continued to discuss their pilot trip it was interesting to hear how they each highlighted the warm welcome they had received from residents of the different settlements they had visited. Together with the broader networking they had achieved, creating personal contacts
with many of the residential settlers had been the most important outcome of their trip, they told me. This was again a common feature of all the migrant settler stories I had heard during my research. As I listened to their account and particularly their praise for the residents of the different settlements: how they had opened their homes to them: how they would invite the coming settlers in for Sabbath meals: the exchanging of long lists of telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, I made a note in my field diary that it might be an important topic to pursue later on. I had no doubt that these first encounters between people contemplating making Aliyah and the existing settler residents (as facilitated by organizations like Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh), that these encounters would have a crucial impact on the willingness and indeed complaisance to move into the settler communities. But the question was whether it was one of the decisive motivators for moving specifically to the West Bank; or if it was simply just one small element in a much bigger picture. I would have to return to the issue later, once I had finished conducting all my interviews, in order to get a broader picture, I wrote in my diary. In Shaya and Miryam’s case it was clear that their first encounter with the residents of Kochav Yaakov had been very significant in their eventual choice of community. I could hear from their story that their first visit had not only given them an important and positive impression of the place and people, but had also given them a more ‘realistic’ picture of what it meant to live in a guarded, religious enclave in the West Bank. This was particularly so when it came to such questions as: feelings of security; the possibility of good integration; building up of a strong network in Israel; the standard of living in the settler community, as compared to other places in Israel, and, not least, the quality of life in its broadest sense, when living in the occupied territories.

At this point in our conversation I felt that I had enough information about Miryam and Shaya’s pilot trip, so I encouraged them to change the subject and tell me how the reaction had been amongst friends and family, when they had first announced they were moving to the West Bank. There were a lot of contradictions in their answer. Firstly they told me that some people had been very critical and alarmed, mostly in connection with the danger of terror. Miryam’s sister had been the most upset when she heard the news. “It was probably because she was worried of our safety, now both our parents had died”, Miryam explained. It seemed the majority of their family and friends had been very supportive regarding the general question
of making Aliyah, but, as Miryam continued, “...as far as the Green Line [was concerned], everybody voiced concerns”. Shaya and Miryam continued by stressing that many people had expressed a sort of envy on hearing about their decision to make Aliyah, saying things like, “Oh I wish that I was in a position to do that”. Miryam continued, “Most of them would say that we were being heroic”. It was clear from how she chose her words, as well as from the expression on both Shaya’s and her own face, that such remarks had been music to their ears. The interpretation of their intended Aliyah as ‘heroic’ had clearly bolstered Miryam and Shaya’s sense of self worth, as well as their sense of the significance of what they were planning to do. (See analysis chapter).

As we continued our conversation, Miryam, Shaya and I began to touch on important subjects such as: personal security, terrorism etc, but before tackling these issues I have decided to follow the chronology of their story, by describing their departure from America and their subsequent arrival in the settlement of Kochav Yaakov.

After Miryam and Shaya received their grants from Nefesh B’Nefesh they immediately booked a seat on one of Nefesh own flights, which would transport them as part of a larger group of new Olim leaving North America. Just a couple of days before that, they had managed to rent a house in Kochav Yaakov. Coming from a rented apartment in Baltimore and having only limited financial resources, their options in finding a home in their new country were somewhat constrained. What they did eventually find though was a fairly large, sub-let house in the settlement: a property that they would certainly have been unable to afford had it been located in one of the cities of Israel. Miryam and Shaya expressed how happy and relieved they had been when they got the offer of this home, just three days before their departure. Husband and wife finally arrived at Ben Gurion airport in a cabin full of other new immigrants from North America and England. The Israeli news agency Arutz Sheva wrote this piece on their main Internet page, the day after the plane landed, “More than 220 new immigrants (Olim) from the United States arrived this morning in Israel. They are just one group out of a total of 1,800 North American Jews moving to Israel this summer under the auspices of Nefesh

77 Arutz Sheva is an Israeli media network identifying with Religious Zionism.
B’Nefesh, an organization founded to help North American Jews make Aliyah” (Arutz Sheva 1/8-2005).

Miryam and Shaya had arrived only three months before our interview took place and memories of their arrival were still fresh in their minds. The incredibly warm welcome had been absolutely overwhelming, they told me. “We got a terrific reception from all the residents”, Miryam said. The day after their arrival, a settlement ‘welcome committee’ introduced husband and wife to what was to become their ‘contact family’. Getting a contact family is part of the usual procedure for all new arrivals. All newcomers to a settlement are entitled to the support of a designated family whose primary function is to help and assist the new arrivals through their period of integration, a period which typically lasts for about a year. The philosophy behind such an initiative is to help newcomers accomplish a full and successful integration into the community. According to all the migrant settlers I have spoken with during the past two or three years (with the exception of those living in the Hilltop communities) the contact family procedure is something that is very highly regarded. And it seemed, as our conversation continued, that this was also true of Miryam and Shaya. In fact they appeared overwhelmingly positive about almost everything related to the settlement and its residents, and again I was struck by noticeable similarities between their account and the stories I had been told by other migrant settlers; everyone seemed keen to emphasise just how grateful and satisfied they had been with the work of the volunteers in the respective communities, and seemed also to credit them with their own successful integrations. Shaya gave me some examples, “...they volunteered yeah. And [...] so they set up everything at the beginning. If you’re moving into a caravan or into an empty apartment, then [the Yesha] lend you a refrigerator and a stove and beds, dishes. And,” he continued, “If you need to go somewhere or you need something translated, they’ll do it for you”. What most settlements do in fact, with regard to integrating new families, is engage recent Olim in the integration process; this invariably means that you have a highly motivated group of people, with experiences similar to those of the newcomers, smoothing the whole integration process. They know intimately what the needs of these newcomers are and at the same time exhibit a genuine interest in their wellbeing. This almost symbiotic relationship between newcomers and their host (both the ‘contact family’ and any others taking an active part in their integration
process) has a very interesting and quite profound influence on socializing (in its broadest sense) the newcomers into the community. As my conversation with Shaya and Miryam began to approach issues relating to the residents, I noted in my field diary that I needed to get a more thorough understanding of exactly how this socialization process worked and what sort of consequences (in terms of a lasting influence on political or religious convictions, or on relationships with the world outside the settlement) what sort of consequences this might have on the in-coming migrant settlers.

In Kochav Yaakov the settler residents are organized in a range of subgroups responsible for various community activities such as organizing cultural, religious, political or social events. For example they have an Anglo-American women’s group, due to the substantial Anglo-American Jewish population there, who assist and help one another in various ways. Miryam and Shaya were still at the stage of discovering what all these different committees and groups could offer and also what they themselves could contribute in return. They both emphasised that they thought it very important to become involved with the Anglo-American Jewish members of the settlement, as one of their most important motivations for moving here had been the high degree of diversity in the community. This was highlighted repeatedly by them both, during our conversation. Shaya particularly focused on the presence of different Jewish congregations and they both mentioned their desire to be part of, and to learn more about, all the different “customs”, some of which they had already been introduced to since their arrival.

As mentioned earlier, I will now return to Shaya and Miryam's thoughts on issues such as personal security, choosing to live in Samaria (and hence the occupied territories), terrorism, etc. Miryam, Shaya and I had just been talking about their friends’ and relatives’ reaction to their decision to make Aliyah and specifically to the choice of moving to a settlement in the territories. Miryam told me that if I had asked them, before their pilot trip, if they were going to move to a settlement, she would have “stamped [her] feet and said absolutely Not! I am not going over the Green Line”. I cannot say that I was surprised by her comment. During my conversations with migrant settlers I often got the feeling that the pilot trips and, crucially, the
visits to the various settlements in Judea and Samaria (which were often a compulsory ingredient of the overall visit), seemed to remove any fears or preconceptions (about moving to the occupied territories) that many of the more religiously motivated migrant settlers claimed to have previously had. What was interesting about Miryam’s comment and maybe a little surprising too, was just how blunt and open she was in expressing this view.

Until this moment I had been very cautious, not wishing to force any politically related issues into our conversation, as I had not wanted it to become the focus before they themselves were ready. But it was now becoming clear that we would soon be engaging with them. We had already talked briefly about the Green Line, as well as the couple’s earlier ignorance on the significance of this problem. I decided now to ask Miryam and Shaya how they viewed their situation in terms of personal security. Miryam replied, “Setting foot on the land for the very first time, I had no fear, yet there was just something that put me at ease. I don’t know if he can say the same thing maybe, but I felt no fear”. Shaya continued in the same vein by saying that it was better to die in Jerusalem than to be alive anywhere else in the world. They both asserted that it was more dangerous living in Baltimore. The reason, Miryam explained, that people from outside saw Judea and Samaria as an unsafe place for Jews to live, was mainly down to the media, who would “tell you, or exaggerate the worst of the worst”. She continued by saying that the American media were “extremely biased [and] anti-Israel […] to the extent of how it’s reported was not like the reality”. Instead of getting information from the outside media (CNN, BBC, Haaretz etc.) Shaya and Miryam relied either on the Internet, or on talking to people within the settlement. I was about to ask Shaya which websites he would visit when he wanted to get “unbiased” news, when he suddenly mentioned the dismantling of settlements in Gaza as something everybody was talking about. I had planned to introduce that very subject later on, but it felt wrong to now interrupt his speech. Instead I just made a short note in my field diary saying, “It is important to understand what impact it has in the process of socialization when they [the new migrant settler] decide only to be informed by sources from within”. This was definitely an important issue for analysis I noted.
I asked Shaya what people in Kochav Yaakov felt about the eradication of other settlements in Gaza and the West Bank. Shaya started laughing and said, “Well, in a religious Yishuv (community) you find most people say ‘Israel is ours’ [...] If the Arabs don’t like it let them go to Georgia where they were supposed to move to, according to historical [sic]...” I was so surprised by this extreme statement that he could probably see it in my face, as he instantly stopped in the middle of his sentence. Miryam took over by saying, “You know, Israel is ours, including Gaza, including everything.” I took a quick decision not to interrupt, as they continued to explain how the settlers in Kochav Yaakov had been actively involved in many of the demonstrations arranged by the settlement movement over the previous month. Shaya told me that they (the settlers) would continue these activities as a protest against the government’s decision. “And they believe in settling the land and ... not being stopped by anybody,” Shaya added. I asked him how he and the settlers felt about breaking the law of the state, mentioning that I had heard some objections amongst other settlers who disagreed with breaking the law. “I think people that are saying we should obey law and order are getting less, because the rabbis who are saying that you’re supposed to settle the land, are getting more...getting more vocal”. Shaya constantly used the third person when talking about the settlers, as if reluctant to associate himself with either their views or their activities. But the expression in his voice did not reflect such reluctance, so I decided to ask him directly, “Do you see it in the same way?” He did not hesitate and instead answered, “That’s how I see it”. He had then continued, “Oh! Yes we see it that way that...first of all it’s not...it’s not a democracy. It’s...a bunch of people playing democracy, and something needs to change that way because...there’s no representation of the people”.

Shaya had more or less taken over the interview now, while Miryam kept more in the background. I told Shaya that an overwhelming majority of the Israeli population expressed strong support for the Israeli government’s decision to give up land for peace and so remove all the settlements from Gaza. But Shaya claimed that it was just a matter of time before things would change. “Things change daily... in politics, so, it depends on what just happened. You know the day after the bombing Hadera”. Shaya then added something interesting, he said, “But [that’s the opinion of] all the people that we come in contact with, and that maybe because we’re here in Yishuv...” It was as if, for a moment, Shaya was able to recognize that because they
were living in a community, isolated from the rest of Israel and only used to communicating with people from inside that community that maybe their ideas were at odds with those of most mainstream Israelis living outside the settlements. Apparently he did not like the thought, as he quickly added, “But most people disagree with destroying Jewish communities”. I turned to Miryam and asked what they had thought about the issue of Gaza and the dismantling of the settlements, prior to moving to Kochav Yaakov. She replied, “The same thing”, and then added that, “In fact we wanted to wear our orange t-shirts [during our Aliyah flight]”. But it seemed Nefesh B’Nefesh had not approved of this idea, as they had felt it might be interpreted as a political statement on behalf of the organization. This piece of information was very interesting.

I knew from my own research that Nefesh B’Nefesh and the Jewish Agency had, just a year before Shaya and Miryam’s Aliyah, been involved in a press row where a journalist from Haaretz had accused the organization of endorsing the practice of Jewish immigrants settling in the occupied territories. This press row had impacted seriously on my own research, as I have already mentioned in my methodology chapter. I was consequently well aware that from that time on, all the Aliyah organizations had been very conscious of their reputation and had since tried to improve their image by constantly stressing that the work they were engaged in was completely apolitical.

As we continued our conversation, Shaya finally revealed his ideological, as well as his religious position when he said, “I think basically [...] the...philosophies that I...in the last few years have most [...] identified with is [...] those of Rabbi Kahane. You know. Israel produced, historically, biblically and otherwise, and simple as that. Now he (Rabbi Kahane) didn’t even agree with having Arabs being [full] citizens of Israel. I’m not sure what would be the best way [...] here, for the Jewish state, and not for a secular, another nation. We don’t need another nation we need a Jewish state”. I have to admit that I found Shaya’s statement quite astonishing. We had been talking for more than an hour and a half and not in my wildest imaginings had I anticipated that he would identity with one of the most radical ideologues within Zionism. Rabbi Kahane is a man who has been almost unanimously condemned by
most members of Israeli society. His Kach party has been declared racist and it was banned from the Knesset in 1988. What is more, the Kach movement eventually had to be completely outlawed, after one of its members, Baruch Goldstein, massacred twenty-nine Muslims at the Cave of the Patriarchs in 1994.

In his response, Shaya hesitated over Rabbi Kahane’s views on the expulsion of Arab-Israeli citizens. Later, when I asked him directly if he wanted the Arabs to be expelled from Israel, Judea, Samaria and Gaza he replied, “That’s hard, hard to say because I can’t imagine a way in which that would happen. If your question is, would it be best or would I like to see Israel become a theocracy, a Jewish theocracy yes, I would like that”. I continued by asking him how it would be possible to create a theocracy when the vast majority in Israeli were against the idea. Shaya replied, “I can’t seem to get a handle, as I look at these polls and stuff, I can’t seem to get a handle on, they are, they are, it’s not black and white, there are lots of people in the middle and so it’s hard to say. But Israel, there’s no reason why a secular person could not exist and live within a theocracy, because theocracy would just be taking Torah law and using it as civil law. And, that way Jews of course, the Jews would be full citizens and others wouldn’t, which I don’t know how you would work that out in modern terms, so I don’t know that it’s ever going to be possible, I mean the Muslims can’t handle, can’t manage to have a, a well working theocracy and I don’t think, I don’t know if the Jews could have a well working theocracy but, theoretically I would like to see it.”

I now understood that Shaya and Miryam were living in a fantasy world, utterly deluded by their deep desire to live and breathe in a purified spiritual and biblical environment inhabited solely by Jews, but at the same time they both still recognized that this was only a dream, a fantasy. This at least was what I thought up until the point when Miryam continued by saying, “I think that...the atmosphere – not just here, but in the States, is...very much the belief is in general that...the end of days is coming [...] or we are living in the approach”. Shaya nodded, adding, “In the footsteps...” and then Miryam continued, “In the footsteps of the Messiah”. Now husband and wife were talking over each other, making comments like, “things are changing”, “things are speeding up” until Miryam eventually expanded on this volley of sound-bites, “But
there seems to be...there’s signs...that are...that are there. I’m not well-versed in all the details of what people are saying and, you know, believe, but from a biblical standpoint there are, there do seem to be signs...” In a way it would have been very easy to dismiss Miryam and Shaya’s story as just an atypical or marginal case. And indeed, the cassette this interview was recorded onto did in fact stay confined to a drawer alongside other cassettes marked ‘unique’, for a long time. These were all recordings I had discarded due to an overwhelming sense that they were too extreme, or lacked sufficient content to be presented as representative cases for this research project. And for some time Miryam and Shaya’s story seemed just another interview with one or two rather odd people obsessed by crazy and deluded ideas. The problem was that, as time passed, the drawer of similar case studies began to fill up. And even though Miryam and Shaya do, to a certain extent, have extraordinary backgrounds (their involvement in Christian messianic movements was something only a very small percentage of the migrant settlers I had interviewed actually shared), it is still the case that a significant number of those settlers did espouse similar political ideologies and religious beliefs. And as such, Shaya and Miryam’s stories were, ironically, a now significant and representative part of my empirical research.

As Shaya, Miryam and I continued the interview; it became very clear that their motivation for moving to Israel was interlinked with the whole idea of the world drawing to an end. Shaya explained, “We’re saying that we must go to Israel. It’s the only way; it’s the only place to be. Some rabbis have gone as far as saying: You don’t really have a God unless you’re living in Israel.” Miryam had then added, “I’m...totally convinced that we need to be prepared and that...you know the age of Messiah...People need to come here in order to full...I think fulfil that...that destiny and that things are gonna get bad all over the world...And we’re already seeing little snippets of things that are occurring”. I felt that I now understood Miryam and Shaya’s thinking when it came to the question of making Aliyah. Many modern Orthodox Jews (including some who do not subscribe to the Messianic faith) see moving to Israel as the fulfilment of an orthodox duty, and this was clearly true of Miryam and Shaya. What I was unsure of was whether the husband and wife’s specific choice of moving to Judea (the occupied territories) was to be understood within the same context. My hesitation here was prompted by their own contention that, prior to the pilot trip with Tehilla, they had never
considered moving to the other side of the Green Line. Shaya then suddenly claimed that the reason they had not previously considered moving to the West Bank was, as he explained, “We didn’t know what the Green Line was about and we didn’t realise...we didn’t know what the claims were about Judaea and [Samaria]. You know that...that people want us to go back to the ’67 borders. And some: even to the ’48 borders”. The couple claimed that once they had arrived in Israel, and had at last begun to understand the religious implications of the land issue, only then did they fully realize that their choice of moving to, what they considered to be a biblically legitimate part of the Holy Land was and had been the right decision. Both kept emphasising the view that it was very important to live out here and that Jews should come in numbers and settle the land.

The following and final part of our conversation was to return in greater depth to some of the issues related to Shaya and Miryam’s perception of their personal security, which we had as yet only touched on. At first, they more or less repeated what they had already told me, that both felt safer here in Kochav Yaakov than they had ever felt in America. Shaya explained how well protected the settlement was and how happy he felt, knowing that there was an army base nearby and that the community was safely guarded twenty four hours a day. He continued by adding, “And so, very, very well protected, there’s nothing, nothing happens here that people don’t know about. So in that sense it’s more, it’s safer in that most other places in the world. Because you also don’t have the crime here, because everyone is so conscious about the terrorists so, so I don’t, so now that we know how things are and we know that there is no reason for being any more fearful here than anywhere”. What Shaya had expressed so succinctly here, mirrored exactly what I had heard from an overwhelming number of other American migrant settlers, which was essentially that living in a guarded (gated) community here in the West Bank gave them a sense of security which none had ever experienced back in their country of origin. At the same time Shaya was playing out the ritual that I had observed so many times before, and with so many other settlers, that you should never expose your fear, as it might be taken as a sign of weakness. To admit to ever being afraid seemed to be something of a taboo amongst the settlers I had met during my research. (See analytical chapter.) But suddenly Miryam seemed to flout this taboo as she said, “There’s certainly a, a degree of caution, it’s
always in the back of your mind.” But a second later she had regained control and added, “But you can’t let it overtake you”.

I wanted to bring our discussion of personal security into a broader political framework by talking about the rights of Palestinians and their resistance to Jews settling their land. First Miryam told me that, because of her fear of being attacked by Palestinian terrorists, she had to admit that, in her heart, she felt it would be nice if they weren’t there. However, in addition to this, she was also convinced (from a religious point of view) that the land belonged to the Jews as it had been given to the Israelites by God. But then she had continued, “I don’t want them to die or fall off the face of the earth, I just want them elsewhere. And as far as terror, because like I do, he may disagree with me, but I, I tend to…I separate the Arab people from the terrorist groups, which are different. And, the more that we give in to the fear, the more they win. I think it’s a, it’s an intellectual, psychological warfare almost more than anything else. Yes there is specific acts and buses and suicide bombers and, you know, but on the whole, creating chaos is a, is their tactic, creating fear and once people give in to that and they exhibit their fear, they win. It, it’s not just the murdering, or the killing, or driving the Jews away or such acts, it is the psychological warfare that a person from Iran, who said he wants to wipe all the Jews off the face of the earth, it was a...terrorist type of remark. I mean it was, it was meant to rile up the people”. It was obvious that Miryam had thought a lot about the rationality behind the warfare as undertaken by some militant Palestinians, and it was interesting to hear her analysis: an analysis, which I found pretty sophisticated coming from a person who lived with the constant threat of terror. She continued, “And so I mean I, I need to study that more in depth to get a good grip on it. But I think that you know when, when people become agitated and aggravated and knee-jerk reactions to things that are happening, that’s when you know they have succeeded in, in stirring up, and then things get out of hand and, and the world’s opinion of us crazy settlers you know become worse, it’s a reactionary thing. So yeah, terrorism is real, it sure is, but, we have to be level-headed about it and understand what their tactics are, you have to know your enemy”. What she had in fact tried to explain was that the settlers had to behave and not provoke the situation, as bad behaviour on the part of the settler population would increase the poor image they already had in the eyes of the world. Again, Miryam’s analysis was quite extraordinary in its depth when compared say with her husband’s or indeed that of many of
the other more radical settlers I had previously met. She expressed a more thorough understanding of the mechanisms embedded in such a conflict. What she did not address though, was the basic question of how to handle the conflict of land interest, when two separate peoples claim a right to the same soil. I highlighted the fact that the Palestinians (understandably) also believed they had a right to the land, as they had lived there for centuries while the Jewish people had still been living in the Diaspora. I have to say that Miryam’s reaction to this observation was very different to what I would have anticipated.

Throughout my conversations with migrant settlers, many had questioned the notion that Palestinians had any historical attachment to Palestine. These settlers usually claimed that the vast majority of Palestinians only settled in Palestine after the Jewish immigration. Many believed in the myth, perpetuated by a substantial number of the first Zionist generation, that “Israel was a land without people and should therefore serve the people without land”. But Miryam responded in a very different way when I stated that the Palestinians had a natural claim to the land, as she said, “Yeah, well they have”. She had then added, “I think that from a political point of view, from the governmental point of view, from a human, human, humanistic point of view they are right [...] but from a Bible-believing, Torah-observing person as myself, they don’t belong here. That’s it, and is it prejudice, yeah. It is bias, yeah. But I believe what the Torah says”. This was the clearest and most straightforward: the most honest answer, I had yet to hear from any of the nationalist, Orthodox migrant settlers I had interviewed to date. Here was a woman, who, from a biblical standpoint, was clamming that the Jewish people had an exclusive right to all the biblical land of Israel. For Miryam and Shaya, this included all of Judea, Samaria, Gaza and even part of Jordan.

I confronted them with the fact that even many rabbis disagree with this specific interpretation of the Torah. And I then continued by pointing to the fact that the state of Israel had been established almost entirely by secular Zionist leaders, within a predominantly secular, Zionist movement, and that it had been through the strength of this secular state and its army that Israel had been first established and then later maintained. I asked Miryam and Shaya if it wasn’t perhaps somewhat ironic that all this had (in their opinion) been
accomplished through the will of God, and yet it had been secular Jews who had carried it all through. Shaya replied, “Well it may be ironic, but it’s, it’s typical for the way Hashem (God) does things. He uses everybody and anybody of his creations to get something for them and it was necessary because to, to have people who were farmers and labourers and you know who weren’t spending their days studying Torah, it was necessary to have them do the physical work to get it ready, before the religious people could come in, so it makes perfect sense to me that Hashem would do it that way, rather than miraculously. Because, and I usually use the word magical here, because to think that something is going to happen, more like magic than it is God, God’s way of doing things, he does things using people. And putting things in certain people’s hearts to, to go do something one step at a time.” Miryam took up the theme and added, “Yeah, but they still believed in Hashem, they believed God’s inheritance was Israel. Regardless of the political structure, regardless of the religious structure, or their beliefs [...] even a secular Jew, who claims to be a Jew, who claims that there is a god, whether you know he worships or not, the very fact that he acknowledges that God exists is already on God’s side and, and, and I, I, if it wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be here today. And so I am grateful to the Zionists, secular or not, because they are the ones that laid the foundations for the rest of the world Jewry to come to the land of Israel, somebody had to prepare the way. In a way they were like a, a secular Elijah.” We had reached a point in our conversation where I now felt I had achieved a sufficient understanding of Shaya and Miryam’s thinking; for them, God’s hand could be seen everywhere and in everything. History, politics and relationships between people. Humanity’s destiny and even the will of the people themselves: all should be seen within the framework of God’s will. This was a deeply rooted belief that both husband and wife shared.

So at last we had reached the end of our conversation. I could have raised many more questions, but already felt I knew what their answers might be. I finished the interview soon after. We exchanged a warm farewell as I left, and then I took the bus back to the big city of Tel Aviv: that sprawling centre of secular Israel, a place where I felt so much more at home.
CHAPTER 5E - SUMMARY OF THE FIRST ANALYTICAL PART

As this chapter draws to an end, let me summarize the main points from the four case stories. I will be using the model from the methodological chapter, identifying the main components within the three identity markers: the religious identity marker, the nationalistic identity marker and the political identity marker. The nationalist and the political identity markers will be summarized together, as in this particular context they can be seen as two sides of the same coin. The influence of institutions and organizations and their contribution to the shape of the migrant settlers' identity markers will also be incorporated in this section. As outlined in the methodological chapter, this will enable us to see what characterizes the religious, nationalist and ideological standpoints of these migrant settlers, as well as give us a comprehensive insight into how homeland-related institutions and organizations exert their influence in shaping these standpoints.

Moreover I will also outline the migrant settler “sense of security”. This to see if there are any more general patterns that might explain how an individual’s “sense of security” corresponds with that of the general trend in the Diaspora population, as outlined in the previous chapter. In regard to this question the analysis will be taken a step further, as the content of the life story interviews will enable us to understand how security, when seen through the prism of ontological security, also asserts its influence on Diaspora motivation to settle in the West Bank. Last but not least I will draw together the main features of each of the biographical narratives, in the hope that this might lend an understanding of what sort of Diaspora narrative is more likely to incline an individual towards becoming a settler in the West Bank.

LAURA BEN DAVID

SUMMARY: RELIGIOUS IDENTITY MARKER

Laura had an essentially religious orthodox family background mixed with some classical orthodox traits and other features of the modern orthodox strand. As a child she attended a Jewish school that emphasized the religious orthodox framework. While growing up, Laura’s peer group mainly consisted of other Jewish religious orthodox kids, some of whom were
members of the religious youth organization Bnei Akiva, whereas others like Laura did not have any particular affiliation with Jewish youth organizations. Laura and her family were members of a classical religious orthodox congregation in New York.

At the age of nineteen and after finishing college, Laura - like her older siblings before her - decided to go to Israel to attend a very religious, classical orthodox yeshiva in Jerusalem. After a year she returned to New York where she soon met her future husband, who like her was a strictly orthodox religious Jew. In their new home they kept kosher according to Halakha and as a consequence of their religious beliefs, observed all the Jewish religious holidays as they had indeed both done prior to their marriage. Furthermore, they attended synagogue on a regular basis and were both members of the local orthodox religious congregation. When they later moved to Florida their religious life continued unchanged.

All through Laura’s life she and her family had maintained a close and devoted relationship to their rabbi. As in many orthodox communities, especially the more classical orthodox congregations, Laura and her family considered themselves devoted followers of the chief rabbi of their congregation. The rabbis in such communities are the most important authority figures, someone that members of the congregation would regularly seek advice and help from. Much in line with how Jewish, religious orthodox congregations functioned in previous times.

**SUMMARY: NATIONALIST POLITICAL IDENTITY MARKER**

Laura’s home was, as she herself describes it a *pro-Israel home*, where the attachment to the Jewish state was both profound and outspoken. Over the years, her parents repeatedly talked about making Aliyah and one of her sisters had been, according to Laura, on the brink of doing so. As a child, Laura regularly went to Israel with her parents and siblings as tourists, and furthermore, Laura and her sisters were encouraged by their parents to travel to Israel and attend a yeshiva after leaving school.
According to Laura, for as far back as she could remember, Israel had always been very “close to her heart”. And she had known from when she was very young that she would one day make Aliyah. While living in New York and later Florida she and her husband would follow the news about Israel and, particularly after the First Intifada, Israel was propelled to the top of their interest. It was in fact in connection with the First Intifada that Laura and her husband first started to talk seriously about making Aliyah. Eventually after many years, and after her husband had had his company declared redundant, they finally decided it was time to make Aliyah. This was in 2002.

It was not until after she and her family had made Aliyah that Laura first started to become consciously aware of the ideological and political implications of moving to a settlement. And it was certainly not until after they had settled in their community in the West Bank that Laura began to become more political and nationally radicalized. In fact it is fair to say that the family's original motive for moving to Israel had been a simple desire to live in Israel in a Jewish cultural environment. Again and again during our interview Laura would emphasize that they had never originally intended to move out to the other side of the Green Line.

BIOPHICAL NARRATIVE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY

It would not be right to assume that a woman like Laura was driven by unconscious feelings of insecurity when deciding to make Aliyah to a settlement. In fact, as already emphasised, one could not even say that Laura and her family had any specific desire to go to the occupied territories at all. Security, when understood as something concrete and conscious, first became a factor once the decision to move had been made. At that point Laura, and not least her friends and family back in the States, became very outspoken about the presumed gravity of the security situation. And that naturally became an important factor for the eventual formation of her narrative, just as is the case for the rest of the settler population who, in one way or another, are constantly informed by issues of security. This, on a very concrete day-to-day level, but also as a discourse that tends to inform almost everything in a subconscious manner in the settlers' lives.
Although Laura’s motivation for moving to a settlement was not directly informed by security issues, as understood in the context of ontological security, it should not also be assumed that this deeply-rooted, existential anxiety did not inform other parts of Laura’s life. In fact I would claim that Laura did indeed have a sense of insecurity, one born typically of living in a modern, stressful society: a society that she viewed as extremely fragmented and loaded with pressure and demands. In short, a life that never gave her the sense of satisfaction, stability and harmony that she so craved.

This emotional dissatisfaction was very understandable especially if one looks at it through a gender perspective. Here was a modern Jewish religious woman who felt strongly obliged to have a successful, professional career, whilst at the same time conforming to what was expected of a good, orthodox religious wife and a good, all-sacrificing Jewish mother. These contradictory obligations and demands often collided with one another in her previous diaspora life in New York and later in Florida. In that sense it was the modern, westernised lifestyle that engendered feelings of insecurity in Laura.

Another insecurity factor, which also came to influence Laura’s diaspora life, was when Israel came under increased international pressure and criticism during the First and later the Second Intifada. The crisis in and around Israel, a country so dear to Laura’s heart, really had quite a profound influence on her. Not directly of course, as she did not feel insecure for her own life, but more in consequence of what she perceived as a profound treat to her own people, her own flesh and blood, and in that sense also an indirect threat to herself and her own family. Later this feeling of insecurity would become even greater, and this time as a result of what happened during the terror attack of 9/11.

AVI HYMAN

SUMMARY: RELIGIOUS IDENTITY MARKER
Let me start with the case story of Avi Hyman. Firstly, Avi’s religious background falls within the strand of modern religious orthodoxy. Throughout his upbringing his parents emphasized the importance of not assimilating. This type of deeply-rooted desire for one’s children to remain within the religious fold is very common, not only within Jewish religious families and communities, but also amongst most religious or ethnically close-knit communities the world over. As a consequence Avi’s parents decided to move from a small town in Scotland to central London where they would be able to raise their children in close proximity with other Jews. From a very young age Avi and his siblings were sent to Hebrew school and took additional Torah lessons privately. At the age of five Avi began attending a Jewish primary school that was able to supplement the Jewish religious teachings of modern orthodoxy, which his parents were already nurturing in the home. At school, Avi’s religious education was undertaken by qualified religious orthodox teachers. The Jewish curriculum comprised a broad range of Jewish subject areas such as Hebrew and Limmudei Kodesh, as well as a reading and understanding of the Siddur, Chumash, Rashi, and Mishna etc. The main thrust here was to give pupils an orthodox religious education in accordance with Halakha.78

During secondary school, Avi continued with an orthodox Jewish education, though here he was for the first time introduced to another kind of orthodoxy, namely classical orthodoxy. This mixed orthodox environment did not have much impact on Avi, as he continued to uphold the modern religious strand he had been taught at home. As a youngster Avi became a member of the modern religious Zionist organization Bnei Akiva. Here he attended bible lessons in addition to being taught Jewish and Israeli history. After a few years he changed to another Jewish organization, Betar that had less focus on religion.

At the age of nineteen Avi left his modern orthodox religious home to attend a yeshiva in Israel. His choice of yeshiva would forever seal the religious direction of Avi’s life. Very much

78Limudei Kodesh refers to education in subjects such as Torah, Talmud and other religious texts. Halakha is the collective body of Jewish religious law including biblical law and later Talmudic and rabbinic law as well as customs and traditions. Siddur is the Jewish prayer book. Chumash is the five books of Moses. Rashi or Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki was a French, medieval rabbi famous for his authorship of the first comprehensive commentary on the Talmud, as well as his comprehensive commentary on the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible). The Mishnah or Mishna was the first significant, written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions referred to as the "Oral Torah".
in line with his own upbringing, Avi’s choice to move into a very strict, modern orthodox environment seemed a logical progression as this religious institution constituted the ideal synthesis of all the educational as well as homeland-related youth institutions of his past.

The atmosphere and values of the religious boarding school, with its theological teaching and prayers held from early morning until late at night, seemed only to intensify the strong religious beliefs already within him. And the fact that the yeshiva was located in a very religious neighbourhood of Jerusalem, in the Jewish land of Israel, only confirmed for Avi that making Aliyah would be a natural continuation and fulfilment of his Jewish religious obligations, in accordance with the religious education he had received right through from early childhood up until he would eventually leave London.

**SUMMARY: NATIONALIST/IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY MARKER**

Moving on from the religious identity marker to the political-nationalist identity marker, we witness an almost parallel development in Avi. Here everything stemmed from his grandparents’ history, with his grandfather’s close involvement in the Betar youth organization and passion for the thoughts and writings of Vladimir Jabotinsky. Avi’s mother also demonstrated a strong interest in the Jewish state, and was deeply immersed in Zionism. From a very young age Avi was familiar with revisionist Zionist ideology and his parents made him attend Hebrew lessons to learn the language spoken in the Jewish state of Israel. Over the years both his parents would often speak about making Aliyah, but the realization of this dream was yet to happen, though the family had visited Israel as tourists on several occasions, right from when he and his siblings had been young.

The primary school attended by Avi and his siblings emphasised a strong commitment to the Zionist idea, and actively promoted itself as a Jewish Zionist school. Israeli Independence Day was celebrated and Israeli history was a crucial part of the school’s curriculum. Israel and Zionism were as close to the school’s heart, as was its religious education. The promotion of
Zionist ideas and the emphasis on the connection between the Diaspora and the Jewish state was profound.

As already highlighted, Avi became a member of Bnei Akiva at a very young age. The central aim of this Zionist youth organization is based on modern nationalist religious ideology with a particular emphasis on the promotion of Aliyah. Lessons in Jewish and Israeli history are compulsory for all members. Such extensions to Avi’s Zionist education were at least partly supported during his time at high school. A mixture of orthodoxy was part of the school’s fabric, as was its mix of Zionist and non-Zionist teachers and pupils.

Avi’s involvement in the Betar organization is a clear indicator of how he gradually became more and more committed to the Zionist cause. The general outlook of this organization was again one of strong, revisionist Zionist ideology, based on activism and the promotion of Aliyah. Throughout the years of his membership and subsequent leadership, Avi became a driving force in radicalizing the organization.

The connections between Betar and the settlement organizations in the West Bank were extensive, so much so that the annual trip it provided for the young Betar members was to a Hilltop in the territories. Here the youngsters would learn the life of the settlers. Other activities undertaken by Betar members took the form of demonstrations promoting their extreme nationalist Zionist ideas.

As a natural extension of his years working for the Betar organisation in London, Avi decided to become a yeshiva student at one of the most well-known and radical religious yeshivas in Israel. This religious boarding school promotes the nationalist ideologies and religious teachings of Rav Kook. A short but comprehensive summary of the school’s basic values would be: strict modern orthodoxy; Jewish lands are sacred, in accordance with the Bible; we are living in messianic times; and, Jews should be actively working for the coming of the Messiah. In consequence of these basic values, the school has an active involvement in the
extension of the settlement enterprise and strongly supports the promotion of a greater Israel that includes all the land prescribed in the Bible. Avi had by now reached a culmination of his religious beliefs by becoming a core member of the young guard of the extreme religious nationalist Hilltop youth. And his Zionist convictions had become so entrenched by this point, that the old belief of *Galut* (see Chapter Three) with its inherent negative connotations regarding the Jews of the Diaspora had now become a cornerstone of Avi’s thinking.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY**

The final theme to be scrutinized in the case of Avi Hyman draws on the concept of security, as dealt with in Chapter Two. The use of Saussure’s *thick signifier* via Jef Huysmans, in combination with Catarina Kinnvall’s concept of ontological security and Anthony Giddens’ thinking on existential anxiety, will be the main inspirational sources used in this section. In my methodological chapter I posed the following analytical question in connection with this issue: how does security play into the individual’s formation of identity? And this should be borne in mind in context of this examination.

At the beginning of our interview I asked Avi to give me a short account of his family background. In response Avi chose to begin with the expulsion of his mother’s family from Egypt. Consequently, it was immediately clear to me that Avi’s biographical narrative would be spontaneously contextualised - in an effective and logical way - within the greater context of the Jewish people’s history of persecution. This would be Avi’s personal way of tackling and overcoming the role of being yet another victim, in a history of endless Jewish oppression. If one translates this narrative of rising against and overcoming the history of victimization into the framework of ontological security, then we have a narrative that is essentially being used to nullify the insecurity of being or becoming a victim. Victimization constitutes the symbolic gap, the void into which one can fall, whereas, the ideology of religious nationalism is the tool by which one can free oneself from the dangers of victimization: this operates both in the context of dealing with one’s own anxieties of personal victimhood, and also (as we see in the case of Avi) anxiety concerning victimization of one’s people. Avi’s way of overcoming his
insecurity about his people was to become a soldier of freedom, a Hilltop Youth, to be one of
the chosen ones who will help clear the way for advent of the Messiah.

Avi explains this in a number of ways during the interview. For example, he says: “if you sit on
the fence you fall”, clarifying with the example of Holocaust victims walking into the gas
chambers voluntarily, or Jews who over the centuries have not resisted when taken to the
slaughterhouse or forcefully converted to Christianity. Avi’s own narrative seeks to establish a
negation of this passivity: he is a young man of action; a man liberated from fear, who resists
the return of sacred Jewish land; a man who defies anti-Semitism and directly opposes things
like the imprisonment of Jonathan Pollard79. His dream was to become a soldier in the army,
defending and protecting his people. When he was turned down in this, he was devastated
and (perhaps because of this) decided to become a soldier of the hilltop instead. As he
explains at the end of the interview: “living on a hilltop is doing what I can do for my nation,
yeah”.

JAMIE BEN DAVID

SUMMARY: RELIGIOUS IDENTITY MARKER

During his childhood, Jamie’s religious Jewish background was, so to speak, nonexistent.
Before he was born his mother had abandoned her own religious background, following her
own mother’s suicide, and had from then on decided to completely sever ties with both her
family and her religious Jewish background. In fact her decision was so resolute that she even
kept her religious upbringing a secret from both her sons. For that reason there was no
religious presence in Jamie’s home, or his upbringing. The only reference to his family’s
Jewish heritage that Jamie could recall was his mother’s constant insistence that he and his
brother were in fact Jewish. Later Jamie discovered that he did in fact have a religious
orthodox cousin who had been attending a yeshiva in Jerusalem, but it wasn’t until after
Jamie’s decision to become religious that he finally made contact with that part of his mother’s
family.

79 Jonathan Pollard is an American scientist convicted of spying for Israel.
The only religious knowledge Jamie had picked up as a child was from biblical stories in school. Jamie did not have contact with any religious organizations or institutions until the day that he decided to become religious. But from that time onwards, he would read the Old Testament repeatedly and in that way became intimately familiar with the stories of the Bible. His religious education was to a large degree that of the autodidact, but when it came to specific interpretation of Jewish religious rules he would seek advice, both from his religious cousin and also online from a rabbi he had found on the internet. He would consume all the religious literature he could get hold of, learning mostly from the traditional religious texts like the Torah, Gemara and the Tanach. At some point, soon after his religious awakening, he began looking for a synagogue. But the reform synagogues he visited didn't appeal to the kind of religious feelings that he had. It wasn't until later, once he had moved to Israel, he found an orthodox synagogue where he felt at home.

**SUMMARY: NATIONALIST POLITICAL IDENTITY MARKER**

As was the case with Jamie's nonexistent religious upbringing, so was the overall picture of his relationship with Israel and Zionism. One might almost say that prior to the outbreak of the First Intifada, Israel did not exist in Jamie's world. And even after that, it did not really have any significant impact on his life or way of thinking. That is why it was a complete surprise when the mother of one of his friends told him suddenly that she was sure he would one day end up living in Israel. In Jamie's own words, "a seed was planted".

When the Second Intifada began it coincided with Jamie's religious and also Zionist awakening. It was very much through reading a specific book of fiction, which told the story of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust and the birth of Israel, that Jamie had been first introduced to Zionism and Israel. Up to this point, the only previous knowledge of Israel he could recall was that they'd had an impressively strong army. As Jamie recalls it from an episode in the library, this was the first time he had learnt about the history of Israel, and this moment opened a new chapter in his life, one in which he was preoccupied with Israel and Zionism. Later, this led to the idea of his making Aliyah.
Jamie’s political and nationalist understanding and beliefs were still undeveloped at this point. In fact one could not say he had any specific take on Zionism at all. The only thing he could say at that time was that for the first time in his life Jamie now had a specific and whole-hearted cause. This cause was basically to move to Israel and become a part of the Jewish people and their history, in a land that, according to the Bible, was given by God to him as one of the chosen people.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY**

In a way, Jamie’s biographical narrative is the showcase narrative as it is informed by insecurity from the very start. Born to a single mother, who was barely able to take care of him and his older brother, Jamie had a very troubled childhood, where he always got involved in fights with other kids. Later he became an angry young man, with no sense of direction. The only person he looked up to was his older brother, who in his eyes started as a big success but ended up poor and a drug addict, unable to take care of himself. Until the day he decided to become religious and a Zionist, Jamie’s life was mostly marked by dissatisfaction, sadness and darkness. Though he had a wife and a child, he essentially felt miserable and lost. During our conversation he repeatedly told me that he had been a completely different person in his previous life. A person I wouldn’t even be able to recognize. Jamie’s analysis of his own earlier life was that because he had been brought up by an unstable mother and without a father, he basically lacked the discipline that one needs in life. In addition to this Jamie also mentioned that he had a strong interest in weaponry, something he had had from a very young age.

Following his religious and nationalist awakening, everything had, according to Jamie, completely changed. He was now determined to become a righteous person and his way was through religion. The other important goal in his life now was to become a true defender of his newly discovered people. And because he had been turned down in his quest to become a soldier in the Jewish army, an army that he so admired, he had volunteered instead to serve in the border patrol, where he took part enthusiastically in all the operations he was needed for.
Religion and Zionism had become the substance that could fill the void, the means to dissolve his deep feelings of anxiety and help his lost soul home again. This was the thing he had been looking for throughout his life: a substitute for his missing father; a self-discipline that had always been absent and, if he was strong enough, perhaps also the means to go back and save the brother and mother who so needed him.

MIRYAM AND SHAYA HEILICZER

SUMMARY: RELIGIOUS IDENTITY MARKER

To sum up the religious identity markers for the Heiliczer couple is not an easy task at all. Their religious journey took them from being entirely secular; to being members of various Christian religious sects; to having an obsession with Christian messianic ideas (to the extent that they created their own congregation); to rediscovering their Jewish inheritance and becoming orthodox Jews; to finally embracing the orthodox messianic, radical rightwing ideology of Rabbi Kahane, in a journey that very few would take. When that is said though, it is still not uncommon to find quite a few migrant settlers with similar life journeys.

What is clear from their interview is that both have early childhood memories of religious grandparents, who observed the religious lifestyles they had brought with them from Eastern Europe, where they had originated. But both Shaya and Miryam’s immediate families had set aside most of their religious heritage, and embraced a more American secular lifestyle, one which became the trademark not only of their lives but also those of most Jewish Diasporas of their generation. During his childhood, Shaya’s parents had a connection with the more conservative Jewish strand and he was also a member of a conservative Jewish youth organisation called the United Synagogue Youth. But his childhood and young adulthood were not religious as such. In the case of Miryam, religion played an even smaller role in her past, as her mother had never made any attempt whatsoever to incorporate religion into their home life. So it was only through their grandparents that both husband and wife had any real sense of religiosity. During the first part of their marriage they didn’t demonstrate any religious
interest. The only thing they did do as a young couple was to get married by a rabbi, but even that wasn’t a religiously felt act as such. They never kept any religious holidays, nor did they become members of any synagogue or Jewish congregation during their marriage. It was only after they had divorced that Miryam tried to find comfort in the Jewish congregation, though without any success at all. After a couple of tries she gave up and later found her spiritual needs being fulfilled through various Christian sects. Until his reunion with Miryam, Shaya made no attempt to become religious.

The husband and wife’s eventual embrace of the Jewish orthodox lifestyle was in fact a gradual process that took place over many years. It took a spiritual search of nearly forty years before they eventually found Judaism again, not only re-discovering the religion of their grandparents but going further than this and adopting a stricter interpretation of the Jewish religious orthodoxy than their ancestors. It was in Boston that they finally abandoned their flirtation with Christianity and made a fresh start by moving into an orthodox Jewish neighbourhood and becoming members of the orthodox congregation, something not even their own parents had been members of when Shaya and Miryam had been children.

**SUMMARY: NATIONALIST IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY MARKER**

As far as the interview reveals, the Heiliczer couple had no specific ideological and/or nationalist Zionist convictions during their lives in the Diaspora. During his childhood, Shaya remembered his mother did in fact feel a very strong attachment to everything relating to Israel, though not within a specific Zionist ideological strand. However, Israel was certainly a part of the agenda in his childhood home. Also, the youth organisation he had belonged to was in fact a Zionist-orientated organization where Israeli cultural activities, such as dance, were nurtured.

In Miryam’s case there was no connection whatsoever to Israel. As with Judaism, nobody besides her grandparents had any affiliation or affection for their Jewish background, neither in religious terms nor cultural or Zionist terms. During their marriage Shaya and Miryam
never discussed Israel and there was no interest in making Aliyah or to maintain any kind of
affiliation to the Jewish state. Israel was not a part of their consciousness, neither during the
first part of their marriage, nor during their many years of involvement in the Christian
environment. It was in fact after the outbreak of the Second Intifada and their recent return to
Judaism that Israel first became a factor in their lives. And it was through their rabbi that
making Aliyah became a serious issue for husband and wife. In the last couple of years Shaya
started to become more and more interested in Israel, though not primarily in a political or
secular sense, more a religious, spiritual manner. He had been introduced to Israel through
the religious orthodox society, and here he encountered the late Jewish religious extremist
Rabbi Kahane and his philosophy on Judaism and the state of Israel. According to Shaya, he
grew more and more inclined to embrace the ideas of the late rabbi.

In Miryam’s case, ideological or theological Zionist thought didn’t seem to play any significant
role. It was because of certain rabbis who had been visiting their congregation, that she
became interested in Israel. And making Aliyah was a purely spiritual decision for her, not a
political one as such.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY**

As with Jamie, the narratives of Shaya and Miryam can be seen as typical when viewed
through the lens of ontological security. What we see in the case of Miryam is a classic
example of the single mother with two daughters, failed by her former husband’s mental
illness. An illness that eventually tears apart their marriage, leaving her vulnerable and lonely,
and in search of a community that might bring some relief to her troubled life. Being firstly
rejected by her own community (the synagogues who only wanted her money) she eventually
finds comfort and peace in the midst of a religious sect, amongst people who, like her are also
in need of strong leadership and the warmth and solidarity of a community: a womb to retreat
into, a re-discovery of the symbiosis and closeness of a lost parent. This is the person who
never feels completely fulfilled, a woman with a constant sense of insecurity, in search of
healing, and willing to indulge in whatever might bring some tranquillity into her life. A
spiritual searcher in disguise, or rather: a searcher for the security, stability and continuity that never seems to come.

Or in the case of Shaya: a haunted man who during his early twenties suffers a mental breakdown following three years as an officer in the American Navy. Being on the ocean, away from his wife and daughters, lonely and vulnerable, and with a fragile psyche that eventually cracks under enormous pressure. Subsequently leading a devastated life of total isolation, far away from loved ones, who cannot deal with his weakness. Until eventually, after being reunited with his former wife, he finds a place not only within the family, but also within a community that is more than willing to embrace a fragile man seeking rest for his troubled mind and life. This is the person who, feeling he has finally got his head above water and is able to breathe again unaided, eventually sets off once more looking for a new refuge for a tortured and tormented soul. Once again, this is the searcher who seeks comfort and rest for his mind and soul: the wandering Jew, whose journey will never end.
CHAPTER 6

ANALYTICAL CHAPTER

In the introduction I stated that one essence of this research lies in an understanding and elaboration of sameness and belonging that is what I hope to qualify now in this chapter of analysis. Sameness and belonging is at the heart of my assessment. Choosing to become a settler in the West Bank, especially since the outbreak of the Second Intifada, is something people only do if they have a very particular take on life. Or to put it more concretely, to move into a settlement following the outbreak of the Second Intifada, one must share some of the basic values, or at least have some sympathy with the cause of the settlement enterprise. The sheer danger of moving into "enemy land" is just one of the more clear-cut examples of this. And this is of course exemplified by the people in this research: all have lived safe and secure lives in the Diaspora, with the prospect of continuing such lifestyles in their native lands of North America and Britain.

Sameness in the sense of belonging is at the heart of it - I propose - and in this context belonging should be taken to mean: where the individual migrant settler positions him or herself in political, nationalist, religious, and/or cultural terms. Ultimately these positions will be informed by an individual's direct experiences, experiences that will have taken shape throughout that person's life. Issues such as family upbringing; educational and organizational affiliations; and not least, personal experience of hardship and traumatic events will all be taken into account.

As one might have noticed, some very personal psychological issues run through almost the entire collection of interviews. And as one has probably also observed, hardship runs through not only the four case studies presented here, but the other thirty-two life story interviews collected for this research as well. In fact this also applies to many of the other less formal conversations I had throughout my fieldwork with migrant settlers.
This gives us some indication of how personal developments and the ups and downs of life impact, not only on the minor decisions people take during the course of their lives, but on some of their more major decisions as well. There is of course no one to one connection between having, what I will call a "broken narrative" (as a significant number of the migrant settlers seem to have) and a decision to move to the West Bank. But on the other hand, one cannot help but notice the coincidence between the two. And for that reason I have chosen to adopt what can be understood as a dialectical, theoretical approach, including an analytical model for dealing with the two issues, namely: the structural influences on the process of becoming a migrant settler, and the influence of the individual's personal and psychological development. I will return to this question of broken narratives later in this analysis.

But first let me start by recapping the theoretical and analytical premises set out at the very beginning of this research. The basic assumption made for this study was that identification is a prerequisite for human social life. "Individual as well as collective identity is an inter-actional product of ‘external’ identification by others, as they are of ‘internal’ self-identification. Identity is produced and reproduced both in discourse - narrative, rhetoric, and representation - and in the practical, often very material consequences of identification" (Jenkins 2005:176). Individual identity is simultaneously moulded and shaped throughout all the processes of a person’s life (the secondary identification phase), but some processes can be said to be of a primary identification category, for instance selfhood, gender and to a certain extent kinship. These are assumptions I elaborated on in the theoretical chapter, namely that primary identification is established during an individual’s childhood, whereas secondary identification takes place in succession to that. Once a child grows up and begins engaging with the wider world, their life comes to increasingly resemble that of the adult, "with its strategies, its games, its stratification and its rules" (Jenkins 2005:67). As Richard Jenkins explains in a reference to Frederik Barth:

- "Identification is processual, part of the ongoing organization of interaction of everyday life"
“The analytical emphasis falls on the social construction of identities in the interaction at and across the boundaries that they share with other identities, and upon processes of recruitment.”

“Collective identification and its boundaries are, thus, generated in transaction and interaction and are, at least potentially, flexible, situational and negotiable.”

“Identification is a matter of ascription: by individuals of themselves, and of individuals by others. Collectively, the same holds good: group members identify themselves and are categorized by members of other groups.” (Jenkins 2003:106).

These are the central assumptions informing the theoretical and analytical points of departure of this thesis.

The analytical fields to which these assumptions ascribe have already been mentioned, but let me briefly recap. The first concerns the interaction between the Jewish Diaspora and a whole collection of groups: be they ethnic, nationalist or political, including any organizational or educational institutions, which migrant settlers might have been affiliated with before or after making Aliyah. The second is the relationship between the Diaspora and the “host country”, here understood as the migrant settler’s country of origin (the USA or the UK): the country where the migrant settler was born raised and lived up until deciding to migrate to the West Bank. And lastly, the final field of inquiry: namely the relationship between the Diaspora and the "home country". It is within this triangular relationship that the forthcoming analysis will take place. And this in accordance with the writings of Judith Shuval.

Finally I will use this opportunity to reiterate the four themes this analytical chapter will engage with: religious identity; political-nationalist identity; diaspora organizations/institutions and homeland-related diaspora organisations. And finally in addition to the four themes the field which takes account of questions related to the field of ontological security which were presented in both the theoretical chapter two and the subsequent chapter three field of inquiry. And at the conclusion of this analysis I will discuss
the relevance of using a theoretical framework of social types, and why it is an appropriate and innovative way of understanding the empirical data collected for this research.

**RELIGIOUS IDENTITY**

As one has probably noticed already, the case studies presented in Chapter Four reflect a representative cross-section of the various religious perspectives to be found in my empirical material as a whole. This should not however be construed as implying that the case studies exactly represent the varying positions of the entire migrant community that has settled in the occupied territories over recent years. Indeed, the fact is that nobody in this field of research has yet to conduct any surveys that adequately clarify this question. Therefore the only accurate claim to be made here is that the chosen representations must be regarded simply as variations of religious voices, amongst those migrants settling since the Second Intifada; and that these religious voices do not necessarily speak for the entire field. As mentioned in the methodological chapter, the material does not cover all religious or non-religious strands amongst the Jewish Diaspora population making Aliyah. Clearly, the most classical ultra-orthodox segments (the group of non-Zionist religious Jews and the Haredi community are not part of the material, nor are the secular, conservative or reform segments. In fact, if one looks at the migrant settlers’ current religious beliefs, the material only really covers the modern religious, plus a minor sample of the ultra-orthodox Jews of various sects. A reasonable assumption though, is that the vast majority of migrant settlers who have settled in the West Bank since the outbreak of the Second Intifada do in fact come from the modern religious orthodox strand of Judaism. Judging from the many contacts I made, including: various representatives in the absorptions centres; the settler organization, AMANA; the Jewish agency; Nefesh B’Nefesh; and also other private contacts in London, New York and Denmark, only a very insignificant number of migrant settlers come from other religious strands. One factor that might slightly undermine that conclusion and which deserves mention is the group of classical orthodox Jews who reside on the West Bank and who have their own Aliyah organizations. These organizations may have helped a number of classical orthodox Jews move to the West Bank. But due to my not having had any contact with these
organizations, I am unable to account for the numbers of migrant settlers from this specific group.

RELIGIOUS IDENTITY – AMONGST MIGRANT SETTLERS WITH WEAR OR NO RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

But even though the vast majority of migrant settlers come from orthodox backgrounds, there are a significant number of migrant settlers in this research who have a non-religious profile due to their having had none or very little in their upbringing, or to the educational or organizational affiliations of their childhood or adolescence. What is interesting is that when one takes a closer look at the older generations represented in the selected case stories, their religious path resembles that of the general pattern witnessed amongst the mainstream American and British Jewish Diaspora. As outlined in Chapter Three, American and Western European Judaism have undergone tremendous changes over the past three or four generations. While the first generation of East European, American and West European Jews brought with them their forefathers’ strong religious beliefs and traditions, and continued at least in part to maintain those traditions, the following generation (their sons and daughters) very rapidly changed these religious life patterns. One could say that they became generally more secularized in their behaviour, with some even losing their faith and others keeping just a few religious traditions and definitely in a less orthodox way. Many even decided to change their religious outlook and become members of either conservative or reform congregations: a trend very similar to that of their non-Jewish compatriots who were also gradually becoming more secularized during this historical period. Again, also a development that in many cases mirrored the group of Jews who settled in the United States and Western Europe.

When the older generations (as in the case of Shaya and Miryam), revisit nostalgic memories from their childhood, they tend to transmit it in terms of loss, or a feeling of emptiness: a “void inside” as Miryam explains. Here she encapsulates what seems to be the key element in her and Shaya’s later religious spiritual journey, and indeed that of other secular couples. Indeed, the expression “void inside” seems to echo the broader experience of other elderly migrant settlers who have in recent years returned to the faith. Miryam and Shaya are in many ways
exemplary spokespersons for this particular group, when they recall fond memories: a grandfather wearing a tallis, swaying forward and back during prayers in the synagogue; or a mother sitting outside the house, serving yeshiva students after a long day of study. Such vague and nostalgic reminiscences of the religious traditions of their own kinfolk are precisely what Miryam and Shaya use as a stepping-stone or base on which to build, or perhaps re-build their sense of spiritual Jewishness. And after a lifelong spiritual journey, spent amongst various Christian and messianic sects, and over a period of more than twenty years, they eventually return to what was not even their own point of departure, but that of their grandparents. What should be noticed here is essentially a return to a primary identification of kinship: a sense of kinship which, for Miryam, is interpreted as "the hand of God that always catches" her when times are rough. The return to a "place of belonging" is also what informs Shaya as he yearns constantly towards Judaism throughout their spiritual journey. Even the couple’s love affair with Christianity is in fact not that arbitrary. Many surveys demonstrate that integrated or assimilated Jews in the American Diaspora both adopt and find inspiration in many aspects of the majority society, be they traditional, cultural, religious or secular trends; and therefore Miryam and Shaya’s flirtation with Messianic beliefs and Christian traditions should be understood within this context.

To sum up, in the case of Shaya and Miryam’s religious identity and its connection to their sense of belonging, one could argue that it was basically triggered by a deep insecurity: by a life traumatised and battered by mental illness and loneliness, which constantly required new strategies for survival. Their basic survival strategy became that of returning to an idealised landscape of the past, or at least a landscape they perceived, or identified as one where feelings of security and safety once prevailed. Here the primary identification marker of belonging within the Jewish religious community came to their rescue: a new familiar home, a return to a childhood lost. On the other hand, even though Shaya and Miryam’s life does seem in many ways quite unusual, it still conforms to the patterns of other middle-aged and elderly migrant settlers. Their family’s religious path does to a large extent reflect the general historical development amongst both Jewish people and other religious groups. Emerging from a background of very religious or orthodox parents and grandparents, their own generation was then caught up by modernity and a life of secularization. For most Jews this
development eventually led to assimilation or a much less rigid religiousness, but for a significant minority - and this is by no means a purely Jewish phenomenon - a revival of religious life became desirable.

In Jamie’s case we saw quite a different process at work, as his decision to become religious was not overtly gradual; rather it was a deliberate, strategic move to change the course of his life. This should of course not be misunderstood as the sum total of his religious process, as he himself highlights in his interview. There are many interesting points to be made regarding the case of Jamie and Debbie; for now though, I will leave Debbie out as she was only marginally involved in the interview. With Jamie we can again see the primary kinship attachments of early childhood coming to the fore. Here we have a completely secular individual, who at a certain point in his life makes the radical change of becoming both religious and Zionist at the same time. Jamie had, as we can see from the interview, a very turbulent childhood with a single mother who in turn had many difficult issues to deal with in her own life, and because of which she came to neglect her own sons. Jamie’s mother’s rejection of her own religious and family background, which came as a consequence of her own mother’s suicide, is, I would claim, the main key to unlocking Jamie’s “chosen” strategies in life. Jamie’s unsettled childhood and lack of self-esteem, plus his continued presence in the shade of a "successful" brother and constant conflict with his surroundings, precipitated a deep craving for limits and direction. Jamie’s choice to re-invent himself through the secret religious history of his own mother is interesting. In many ways it is this internalization of his mother’s emotional problems, her desires and her failings, that in the end provides the vehicle for re-inventing himself rather than religion per se. Jamie’s case closely resembles the process of a born again in its radical and sudden appearance. A visit to the library and a book of fiction was the simple trigger, he explains; and apparently this was all it took to ignite, fuelled by a combination of anger, sorrow, rejection and lack of confidence, and coupled with a strong instinct to "survive" mentally. This is a classically recognizable feature of the born again. After Jamie’s decision to become both religious and a fierce Zionist, he began a process of "awakening". Not an awakening to reality, but rather to a dream invested with the value of an inner treasury: a stronghold where he could belong: a place of purpose, composure and direction, where he could have clear and realizable goals: a space where all his inner savings
and resources, as well as his desires, could be utilized and enacted. The Jewish people’s history of suffering seemed to resemble his own personal and family sufferings, and because of this he felt at home.

One of the interesting aspects of Jamie’s case, and this also applies to a significant number of the other case studies, is that the awakening, or re-awakening of their Zionist feelings coincided with the outbreak of the Second Intifada. Israel’s political situation and the perceived deterioration of its security was for many of the migrant settlers an eye-opener: a galvanizing experience, and as a consequence many started to rally behind Israel. We see this clearly with Jamie, but the stories of Laura, Avi and the Hellizers reflect the same tendency. In fact almost all of the migrant settlers interviewed during my fieldwork emphasised that whenever Israel was under pressure they indeed felt the need to publicly demonstrate their support for the country.

For Jamie and Avi, as well as some of the other angry young men represented in the empirical material, rallying behind Israel was undoubtedly a concrete way to vent some of their inner aggression and frustration: aggression which often came as a consequence of mixing personal psychological problems with a political, nationalistic fight for something close to their hearts, namely their support for Israel.

For Jamie, as well as some of the other born again profiles within my material, embracing a strict religious framework that could offer structure to an often very chaotic inner life, was in fact a positive strategy that pre-empted their being thrown towards more marginalized positions like crime or drugs. And once they became migrant settlers, the gap occasioned by missing fathers or some other absentee authority in their lives, was frequently filled by the IDF (or in Jamie’s case, the Border Patrol) providing them further with a strong symbol and authority figure. Indeed Jamie is still clearly living in a state of adrenalin, as are many of his fellow migrant settlers. I would contend that these are the basic elements for understanding both Jamie and other migrant settlers of a similar psychological profile.
It is interesting to note that the timing of the religious awakening of many of these youngsters coincided with the general religious resurgence amongst certain religious Jewish sections in not only Israel, but also the rest of the Jewish Diaspora, something I highlighted in Chapter Three. In addition it should be noted that the extensive and passionate interest in Israel generally, which incidentally Jamie shared with Shaya, Miryam, Laura and Lawrence, as well as all the other migrant settlers in this research, needs to be seen in its broader context, i.e. the fact that, in the aftermath and collapse of the Oslo negotiations and the subsequent terror attacks, plus the start of the Second Intifada and 9/11, Jewish religious organizations were able to mobilize a large section of Diaspora Jews in support of the country. Again it was the religious and particularly orthodox Jews who were at the frontline, especially in support of those political and religious segments in Israel who were at that time taking a more hard-line approach to territory, defence and other issues relating to religious beliefs.

**RELIGIOUS IDENTITY – AMONGST MIGRANT SETTLERS WITH STRONG RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND**

Let’s now turn to the section of migrant settlers that were mainly raised in strict religious families. And let us examine a significant characteristic that they all share: during their childhood and youth, they all experienced close affiliations with homeland-related diaspora organizations and Jewish educational institutions. For the moment I would like to disregard Lawrence and concentrate on those case stories more resembling those of Avi and Laura. In these cases there seems to be coherence between their religious behaviour, lifestyle and values and that of their parents and grandparents. Both Avi’s and Laura’s path is indicative of this religious consistency, as throughout childhood they and their families seemed to adopt a distinct, segregationist strategy by keeping within Jewish circles. Although some similarities can be traced here, this strategy should not of course be confused with that of the ultra-orthodox society in America and London, who almost completely cut off all ties to the modern society in which they reside. Both Avi and Laura only attended Jewish schools during their childhood. Both as a boy and a young man, Avi spent his entire education in modern-religious schools, while Laura joined the strictly classical orthodox schools. Both schools of thought offered strong religious traits that could supplement and buttress their own family’s values.
and lifestyle. All through their upbringing they both had solid religious foundations and it would be fair to say that, even though both Laura and Avi were living in a Christian secular society, the only circles they directly encountered were those of their own Jewish faith. Their schools, the orthodox congregations, Jewish youth and study groups, their close friends and peer groups: all were Jewish. Both felt utterly at home, like fish in water. This particular path of segregation is in fact shared by a very large group of the migrant settlers interviewed for this research. And one could say that there is a general behavioural trend amongst many members of close-knit communities, as they often embark in boundary maintenance (as was also mentioned in the theoretical Chapter two). There are a variety of reasons for this, but primarily it is a way for communities and other groups to optimize their probability of long-term survival, especially in a world where individualization has become an increasing problem for many faith-based organizations. If one takes a closer look at the reality of, for instance, the Jewish religious diaspora, there is no doubt that all figures point in the same direction: Jews abandon religious communities and religious life in great numbers and assimilate instead with the majority society in which they live.

Considering the case studies of Laura and Avi more specifically, we can take a closer look at the ways in which this process of boundary maintenance continued to play out once they had moved on from their respective families. The first time Laura moved out from her secure, familiar surroundings was when she went to live and study in a yeshiva in Israel. But this so-called new environment was not that unfamiliar to her, as her siblings had been there before, and the religious environment there was also quite similar to what she had experienced at home. In the case of Avi we see an almost identical path, if one considers it from the outside. Being Jewish and observant was paramount to him, as it had been to his parents also. But at the same time a thread of uneasiness is noticeable throughout his interview; one can sense a feeling of awkwardness and disappointment regarding his own environment. This is reflected in Avi’s repeated criticisms of what he calls his "apathetic friends", or when he says that the high school was not what it presented itself to be. And also when he calls his tutors "stupid ultra-orthodox teachers". It seemed like Avi was preoccupied with what he disliked about his own circle, though not in a way that involved him questioning the foundation itself religiously, more in the sense of criticising his compatriots for not taking things as seriously or as far as
Avi wanted. In fact in many ways he could not tolerate what he saw as a lack of seriousness in his schools, and he repeatedly denounced the apathy of his peers. It was not easy at first to grasp what was making Avi so edgy, but in the end I realised that I would have to look elsewhere, and finally, after a thorough reading of his particular interview, I realised that the key to understanding him was his illness. And, in line with some of the other migrant settlers interviewed for this research I would also need to take the theme of broken narratives into account in his case. I will return to this later by offering a psychoanalytical interpretation using Jacque Lacan, but before I do, we must look into several other issues that could support this interpretation.

According to the theoretical foundation used in this research, identity is never fixed and its formation is an ongoing process, taking place within a context of narration. If one takes a closer look at not only the case stories presented in the third chapter of this thesis, but also the other life story interviews conducted for this research, one consistent feature is the fluidity and incompleteness of the migrant settler’s identity. This should not be understood as if there is no consistency in these people’s personalities; on the contrary, many of them are very strong characters.

**POLITICAL-NATIONALIST IDENTITY**

In analyzing the political-nationalist identification markers, and understanding how these have become a part of people’s narratives (both individually and collectively), it is important to underline that, in the context of why diasporas choose to become migrant settlers, the religious and nationalist/political identity markers are – in the majority of cases - completely entangled. This of course resembles what we saw occurring in the previous section.

**POLITICAL-NATIONALIST IDENTITY – AMONGST MIGRANT SETTLERS WITH POLITICAL-NATIONALIST BACKGROUND**
Let me start this section however by considering the migrant settlers who were born into a life imbued with Zionist and/or religious ideas. And let’s use the content of the interview with Avi as an example. The foundations of Avi’s political, ideological and nationalist approach are quite apparent when reading his case-story interview. His strong Zionist attachment was, as we have heard, already cemented while he was still a child. In the interview, he phrases it in the following manner: “Jabotinsky was almost bread and butter in my home”. The fact that his own grandfather had been a member of Betar, a right-wing Zionist youth organization founded by Jabotinsky in the Twenties, is in many ways a story in itself. Avi’s parents both wanted to move to Israel, but as with many other diaspora Jews, ended up staying in their host lands where they had raised their children. And so the dream of making Aliyah was inherited by their son who, from a very early age, knew that Israel was his destiny. Every aspect in Avi’s life seemed to reinforce this notion, with his family upbringing, the schools he attended and the youth organizations he later became a member of. All these diaspora institutions and organizations were ones that strongly emphasized his and his family’s deep connection to the Jewish state. Avi’s involvement with Betar, an organization that overtly nurtures the ideological, activist and emotional “connectedness”\(^{80}\) between its members and the homeland, became an especially influential component shaping his political-nationalist outlook.

What characterises the group of migrant settlers that Avi belongs to is that they have all been brought up in a national-religious environment. Participating in diaspora-related youth organizations and attending learning institutions with clear objectives of creating a close connection with their perceived homeland. The Jewish Zionist organisations in the Diaspora constitute a significant part of the youth organisations in the Diaspora as a whole, and many Jewish youngsters will have had encounters with these organizations at some point during their upbringing. Just to give the reader an idea of scale here, the Zionist youth organization of Bnei Akiva has more than hundred and forty thousand members worldwide. And the other Zionist organizations account for at least another twenty to thirty thousand members in total (Rose 2005). With a global Jewish population of around twelve million, this number is by no means insignificant.

\(^{80}\) As documented earlier in chapter 5 in the section dealing with Avi’s involvement with the organization.
But let’s return to the empirical material of this specific group of migrant settlers and employ Avi’s narrative as a tool to understand how and why they came to be engaged in homeland-related issues and activities. And let’s also take into consideration the broader historical and political context in which this engagement has taken place. As one might note, Israel was (during the 90s and the turn of this century) going through a very turbulent period of political instability, with a constant crisis in security and an unstable diplomatic situation. As a consequence the Jewish Diaspora in general was on constant alert, and for several reasons. As mentioned in Chapter Three, there was an extensive mobilization of support amongst certain Jewish sections in the Diaspora. This was in response to the growing international criticism of Israel and its handling of the peace negotiations, as well as its treatment of Palestinian civilians living in the territories. The heated debate that followed created the perfect arena for people like Avi, a strong Zionist and territorial maximalist nationalist[^81], to express their views and frustrations. In his interview Avi mentioned various issues that the Betar organization had been dealing with during his term as chairman. These were issues such as the growth of anti-Semitism in Europe, the Pollard affair, and also what Avi felt was the unjustified international criticism of Israel. All important issues, which created deep anger amongst the core group of right-wing Diasporas sharing Avi’s views. The intense pressure within the surrounding environment (especially in the UK where the media is very critical of Israel) became an important factor in strengthening the bonds between groups of Zionist hardliners. And one must also consider the growing pressure from within the Jewish community itself, especially amongst political moderates and left-wing Israelis, who on several occasions publicly demonstrated their frustration with the various Israeli governments, notably in response to Benjamin Netanyahu’s delaying tactics and further expansion of the settlements[^82], and also during the first term of Ariel Sharon’s government, which pursued an extremely harsh policy regarding the Palestinian Intifada. There was a distinct climate of resentment and bitterness amongst right-wing diaspora Jews at these times. It was an atmosphere of frequently hard confrontations and bitterness, and there is no doubt that it had a profound effect on people like Avi. In short, one could say that the political events taking place during

[^81]: Territorial maximalist nationalist is a substantial part of the ideological foundation of both revisionist Zionism as well as the religious-national Zionist ideology.

[^82]: The former and present Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu (1996-98, 2009-) and his delays on the peace negotiations.
this period (a period by no means yet over) created a general feeling of anxiety and uncertainty amongst this group of core diasporas, or *long-distance nationalists* - to use another concept from my theoretical tool box – and that it was within this "space of anxiety" with its strengthening of the bonds between hardliners, that a political radicalization took place. One could even argue that such a space of anxiety affords some of the most fertile conditions for radicalization on both sides of the political spectrum.

An additional and in fact crucial stage of Avi’s radicalization process (and that of other migrant settlers in this category) came when he decided to join one of the most radical yeshivas in Israel. Here, for the first time, Avi met and lived with people who shared the same religious-nationalist ideology as him. I will return in more detail to the learning environment in the next section, but would like for now just to emphasize the particular synthesis here of extreme, maximalist hard-line Zionist nationalism with strict, but modern, orthodoxy, and which for the very first time made Avi and other diasporas of his type feel completely at home, both ideologically and religiously. Here were people of his own kind: idealistic youngsters, and dedicated, activist rabbi teachers. These were people that he could really admire, and this, plus the location (Israel and the occupied territories), offered the perfect package, containing everything he had dreamt of during his life in the Diaspora. Avi’s story might be one of the more extreme cases, but the number of migrant settlers joining yeshivas, who had similar religious Zionist backgrounds and direct experience of Zionist youth organizations, comprise up to 10% of those collected for this research. And, if we look at the numbers of migrant settlers who later joined the Hilltop Youth movement, that figure rises to almost 75%.

In contrast to the category of migrant settlers examined in the section above, Laura’s political-nationalist Zionist consciousness and development took a completely different course during her life in the Diaspora. It is important to emphasize that the main difference between the two groups of migrant settlers basically originates from different religious Jewish environments within the Diaspora. Avi’s background was completely typical of the modern orthodox family with its very strong emphasis on Zionism, while Laura’s more resembled that of the classical orthodox family. However, it should be highlighted that in contrast with many other classical
orthodox families, Laura's had a strong emotional connection to the Jewish state, but not - and this is the important difference - not in an activist, political way. But let’s take a closer look at some of the more significant features of Laura’s story, as it is very indicative of the migrant settlers of more classical orthodox origin.

Even though Laura always felt a strong attachment to the Jewish state, something she shared deeply with her parents, her desire was much more driven by hers and her husband’s dream of living in an orthodox religious Jewish community. This was in contrast to the nationalist-religious Zionist aspirations that drove Avi. Throughout Laura’s life, there seems to have been an emphasis on maintaining the religious orthodox lifestyle that was the foundation of everything she had experienced in her own family upbringing. It was during the First Intifada, in the mid 80s and early 90s that Laura and her husband first started to think seriously about making Aliyah. And the main reason for this, as she explains, is to be found in the fact that for the first time Israel was experiencing fierce criticism from an almost united international community and press. Criticism, which strongly opposed both the extensive settlement enterprise in the occupied territories and also the severe use of force to oppress the ongoing Intifada. The reaction from the Jewish Diaspora was rather mixed at the time. Diaspora Jews in the centre, liberal and left wing joined in with their own criticisms. Some were enraged when the then Minister of Defence, Yitzhak Rabin ordered Israeli soldiers “to break their [the stone throwing Palestinians] bones with clubs, instead of shooting them.” It should be noted though, that the latter part of the wording of this sentence was frequently omitted from the many press reports. For many people outside (as well as within) Israel, Jews and non-Jew alike, this kind of excessive and brutal use of violence was the last straw. The consequent outcry, which came in reaction to Rabin’s order, had the effect of drawing out those sections of the Jewish Diaspora who were most pro-Israel, to rally behind the Israeli government. It was in the wake of these events and in solidarity with Israel, that people like Laura, Lawrence and many other Jews started to re-evaluate their position in the Diaspora. As one might have noticed, the story here resembles that of Avi and Jamie with just a shift in time of ten or fifteen years. In more than half the interviews collected for this research, it was clear that the migrant settlers explicitly recognised the harsh criticism from the international community during the First and Second Intifada as being the trigger for their making Aliyah.
A glance at the Aliyah figures for the period following the outbreak of the First Intifada do not show any rise in the influx of migrants from the US or the UK. In fact there seems to have been a slight decline, especially initially. By contrast, the figures from the period after the Second Intifada show a moderate rise. However there is no evidence that this growth had anything directly to do with the Intifada itself. Instead one has to see it in connection with various campaigns, as well as the upgrade in the professional service and support following the establishment of Nefesh B’Nefesh (see Chapters Three and Four).

Another important factor in Laura and her husband’s final decision of making Aliyah, as mentioned by Laura, was the position and influence exerted by the rabbis in the Diaspora. Similar stories were told by a number of other migrant settlers including Shaya and Miryam. As pointed out in Chapter Three, an increasing number of diaspora rabbis have in recent years started to promote Aliyah amongst members of their congregations. This phenomenon seems to be closely connected with the much tighter relationship between Israel and the Diaspora and especially the growing mutual influence exerted amongst the more religious-nationalist modern orthodox communities of both societies. A tendency that has also been reflected within the classical orthodox community, as mentioned in Chapter Three.

As one might have noticed, after moving into the settlement of Kochav Yaakov Laura became one of many former diaspora Jews actively promoting Aliyah. In fact today part of Laura’s income comes from work encouraging people from the Jewish Diaspora to live in the West Bank. For her and the other migrant settlers, the Diaspora has once again become the Galut with all its attendant negative connotations, much in the same way as it was for the early Zionist and Israeli leaders up until Israel became consolidated as a state and Aliyah ceased to be as important.

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83 CBS, Statistical abstract of Israel, 2009
84 Galut (From Hebrew) means; exile
An important final point here is that about ten percent of the migrant settlers interviewed for this research mentioned they had not originally planned to settle on the West Bank, and that their original thoughts of making Aliyah had not been influenced by their national religious ideology. In fact some of them did not even know much about this religious strand within Judaism. But for the moment let us continue with the case of Laura and her family as their story is an interesting example that sheds light on others. In Laura's own words, "we did not make Aliyah because of 'ideological' reasons". This was something she underlined several times during our interview. Explaining that what they were looking for originally, as a family, was a religious orthodox close-knit community in Israel. It was only on account of the pilot trip mediated by the two Aliyah organizations Tehilla and Nefesh B’Nefesh that the family finally decided to join a settlement. I will return to the issue of these organisations later, but just to point out here it was, according to Laura, only once the family had settled in Kochav Yaakov that a religious-nationalist glow started to burn inside them. What is important to notice here, besides the influence of the organizations mentioned, is the very strong emphasis on wanting to live in a small community. The strong desire to live in small communities is not a new phenomenon in Israel. One only needs to say “kibbutz” to summon the most important and celebrated form of community in Israel: a community known all over the world and one frequently admired as one of the foremost progressive forces in Israeli history. There are in fact many similarities between the two types of communities, though to many they of course represent two very different political discourses and two distinctive different interpretations of Zionism in Israeli society. I won’t go into a longer discussion of the extensive differences between the two here, as this is not the purpose of this research, but I would like to emphasize the strong desire to live in a close-knit community shared by both groups. And as a former volunteer, who has lived in kibbutzim for a period of more than two years, I can recognise many similarities between the two communities. Let me give a few examples. First of all, the settlement movement of today has in many ways become one of the strongest and actively political engaged forces in Israeli society, a position once formerly held by the kibbutz. Here we are talking about influence in a variety of areas including politics, the military, state and local bureaucracy. Another similarity is a feeling of being the true pioneer, of being part of an avant-garde, something many settlers have highlighted during my fieldwork; these feelings being cemented by strong bonds and the sense of a common goal, not to mention deep friendships and notions of self-sacrifice for a higher purpose. One could
argue that the settlements of today seem to offer the same kind of attraction for people within the modern religious segments of the Diaspora, as did the kibbutzim for the left-wing, progressive diaspora Jews of the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s.

When reading the entire selection of life story interviews, one can clearly detect - at least from the empirical material - that almost all of the migrant settlers of this research have undergone some kind of recent political radicalization. This process seems to have taken place within the last ten to fifteen years. To understand why this radicalization has occurred, we need to examine two areas of inquiry. The first area to been scrutinized is on the psychological level; analyzed through the biographical narratives presented in Chapter Four and extensively examined in both this and the previous chapter.

The other area of inquiry is this development’s broader historical context. And here it is interesting to note that, during the same period, there have been a number of parallel developments in Israel and in the Diaspora: developments and events that have had an effect on both societies. Let me try to sum up the most important developments. Firstly, as I explained in Chapter Three, we have seen a general rise in religiosity amongst religious people in Israel as well as in the Diaspora. If we link this tendency to the increase in nationalism amongst the classical orthodox segment, a development that has mainly come about as a result of the growing number of classical orthodox people now residing in Israel, we might achieve a better understanding of the dynamics taking place. As a consequence of the increase in migration amongst the classical orthodox, this segment now shares many of the same national interests as the rest of the Jewish people residing in the country. Naturally, the classical orthodox Israelis, just like the rest of the Israeli citizens, also feel the pain and insecurity that came as a consequence of the rise in terrorism: a phenomenon which has been growing ever since Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups intensified their suicide campaigns following Israel’s and the PLO’s signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993. Another important key to understanding why Jewish classical orthodoxy has become more and more concerned with nationalism is that they have been moving in growing numbers into communities in the occupied territories on the West Bank. There are many reasons for this
development, but the most important is closely linked to another subject touched upon earlier in Chapter Three, namely the economy.

As one can see we are dealing with a very complex field of inquiry when it comes to understanding why a growing number of Jewish Diasporas - within certain religious segments - have become radicalized over recent years. If we interlink the above mentioned developments with the fact that Israel has been involved in a number of open conflicts with Hezbollah in Lebanon and recently with Hamas in Gaza, and has as a result been under fierce criticism from the global media, we can see how this might have indeed contributed to, or even initiated a process of radicalization amongst such groups in both the Jewish sector in Israel and also the Jewish Diaspora abroad.

POLITICAL-NATIONALIST IDENTITY – AMONGST MIGRANT SETTLERS WITH NO OR WEAK POLITICAL NATIONALIST BACKGROUND

Let me now turn to a further category of migrant settlers presented in the empirical data of this research, namely the group of diasporas who barely had a Zionist, or even in some cases a Jewish upbringing: a group of people who were either born Jewish or who in later life decided to become Jewish and who in the course of their lives started to identify more strongly with Judaism and consequently to support the Zionist cause. And let me use the case story of Jamie as an illustration. To understand the broader implication of Jamie’s personal narrative and to see it in the context of the other migrant settlers of this research, let us for a moment consider his journey as emblematic of the born again religious Jew or in the context of what Sheffer calls the “dormant diaspora”.

It is difficult to place Jamie’s Zionist vision and beliefs squarely within what we understand as the grand narrative of Zionism, whether that be the variety of “mainstream” national narratives, the public discourses created during the history of Zionism, or the creation of the independent Jewish state of Israel. By contrast, it is quite easy to frame the nationalist ideological positions of some of the other migrant settlers within the concrete Zionist
framework mentioned above: Avi’s revisionist-religious-nationalist ideology; Shaya’s adoption of Meir Kahane’s racist, fascist ideology; the very messianic, spiritual understanding adopted by Miryam; or the more recently discovered, religious-nationalist ideology of Laura and Lawrence, all can be placed somewhere within the grand narrative, whereas Jamie still deviates somewhat from the norm. In the end I discovered the reason for this was the fact that Jamie’s Zionist attachment is still very much unfixed. Zionism was, or indeed is, still just a freshly discovered, pleasant dream for him: like a love story just embarked upon. In keeping with this, Jamie expressed himself with passion and hunger, saying things like “I was starving for it” and “the Zionist fire was just alive” and using emotional reflections like, “it blew me away” and “it was like, boom!”.

For Jamie, Zionism and religious Judaism were [when interpreted within the framework of a biblical understanding of Judaism] very much one and the same thing. Rather as Miryam found a form of shelter in the religious churches and sects that she attached herself to in the Diaspora, so Jamie too found a comfort zone, or refuge. Zionism and Judaism offered him a new and unfurnished “home”, complete with quite distinct walls, floor and ceiling. And it wasn’t until after Jamie had moved into the settlement of Maale Adumim and later become a volunteer in the border police, or perhaps not even really until a year after our interview, when he and his wife had finally moved to the settlement of Ofra that he really started to complete the furnishing of his new spiritual home.

What is striking is that despite Jamie’s recent awakening he still, at the time of our interview, seemed to be having difficulties finding his place within the more radical Zionist movement of settlers, just as many other migrant settlers like him do. Unlike those migrant settlers who have been born and raised in Zionist families, the born again seems to find his or herself constantly negotiating between their own identity and their new surroundings. In the case of Jamie this psychological trait seemed to have left him very open-minded about different interpretations of Zionism, and also more tolerant of other Jewish religious and non-religious segments. There is also however, a darker side to this openness as the born again seems to be more vulnerable to influence and of being manipulated by people during the process of "shifting" identity. A closer look into Jamie’s process of transformation reveals the way in

85 The first Jewish settlement in the West Bank, built in 1975
which some of the rabbis he encountered on the internet might have influenced his perception and interpretation of Judaism.

What is also interesting in Jamie’s interpretation of Judaism is that it is built mainly on the Old Testament. Again and again, migrant settlers make reference to ancient places of religious significance, as though they have just acquired a topographical time map with which they are, “thereby identifying with [their] collective past [like it] is a part of the process of acquiring a social identity, and familiarising members [and places] with that past,” (Zerubavel 2003:3). At one point during my visit to Laura’s house I had a brief conversation with her husband Lawrence. As we were walking in their garden he suddenly started to point out various sites on the horizon, places he assured me had historical, religious significance. Then he started to mention the flora around us, and was again able to make specific reference to various bible texts mentioning each one of the plants, trees, flowers etc. In connection with these references, he then started to point out places and to list their significance according to the Bible. I must admit that his account of the immediate world around us was fascinating and I was somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of knowledge he had. This episode with Lawrence was by no means extraordinary, but it was the first time I experienced it and that is why I remember it so clearly. Time and again I would meet settlers and migrant settlers who all seemed experts in either botanic and/or biblical history as well as locations described in the bible. And it is indeed a very common phenomenon for people, groups and nations, to feel that by the naming of places and the framing of localities within their own past, present and future, they take possession (Azaryahu & Kellerman 1999).

THE PROCESS OF RADICALIZATION AMONGST MIGRANT SETTLERS, THEIR PRESENT OUTLOOK ON THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT ON; BORDERS, ACTIVISM, VIOLENCE ETC.

A lot of the information I gathered regarding the political and ideological views of the migrant settlers came during the section of the interviews where we discussed the present political situation in Israel. In regard to this, it must be said that this information was naturally informed by the significance of more recent events, and that this would naturally account for
some of the very harsh words used. But, at the same time, one could also argue that this in many ways shed light on some of their more deeply felt opinions and values. While the interviews with Laura and Avi took place before the evacuation of settlers from the Gaza Strip, most of the other interviews conducted took place shortly after the demolition had taken place, and it was clear that everyone I spoke with was very upset by the whole situation and many felt or feared that they would be the next on the list.

If one takes a broader look at the migrant settlers’ wishes and dreams, in the context of future borders for Israel and how they should be attained, one will notice that there are both similarities and differences. In general one can say that the predominant, maximalist, Zionist approach, envisioning a Greater Israel, is espoused by all the migrant settlers interviewed. A general opinion was that the borders should stretch even further than those of Israel, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank. Taking into account the fact that these migrant settlers generally locate themselves within the religious-nationalist camp, these visions are by no means a surprise. And in that respect the political views of migrant settlers in general, at least once they have made the decision to move into a settlement in the occupied territories, resemble those of the mainstream settler community. More than half the migrant settlers concurred with the notion that we are living in messianic times, but while Avi takes an activist position, by enthusiastically engaging in political demonstrations etc, most of the others tend to be more defensive and passive in their attitude. Most of them have attended some of the recent pro-settlement rallies, but only when other members of their settlements have been involved. I will return to the issue of group dynamics within the settler community later in this chapter.

All of the migrant settlers agree with the idea that you should never harm or lay a hand on another Jew. The sense of connectedness with the Jewish people and Israel is still very strong amongst the newly settled migrant settlers. As pointed to earlier, this is not very surprising, as identification with the Jewish people is one of the most important notions characterizing diasporas, who have over the years established a very strong attachment to not only the Jewish state but also to their kin across the world. In the case of Jamie, an additional and
almost *sacrosanct* idealization of the Israeli army was something he in fact shared with almost everybody interviewed.

It is interesting to note that the most deviating cases are the two young, single men from the Hilltop settlements. These two are much more ambivalent when it comes to the subject of unconditional support for the Israeli state, especially when the politics of the Israeli government does not correspond with their own political views. There is in fact an interesting and quite contradictory side to (especially) Avi’s general attitude towards other Jews. On the one hand, as highlighted in his interview, Avi professes to have a very strong sense of connection with Jewish people. But on the other hand, he talks throughout his interview in very derogatory terms about anyone not sharing his convictions. There is a prevailing arrogance to Avi’s personality: an arrogance that reinforces his sense of being "one of the chosen ones" and which is illustrated by the example of his becoming the youngest leader of the Betar. Avi regarded himself during his youth as the most courageous and proactive of his Jewish friends and peers, and his eventual becoming a part of the Hilltop Youth, a tribe containing almost “the chosen of the chosen ones”, was a culmination of this.

At the same time we must also consider the far-reaching significance of Avi’s poor health, a weakness that he has always had to compensate for with the above-mentioned arrogance: a compensation for a body that let him down and which kept him from becoming a soldier in the IDF, the biggest dream of his life. This may in fact be one of the most significant reasons why Avi finally became so politically radical, and why he ended up joining one of the most idealist, extremist movements in Jewish history, reaching as far back as the Zealots, a Jewish religious and political movement who fought the Roman Empire during the first century after Christ: a movement that people from the Hilltop Youth like to be compared with, and whom they use every opportunity to draw similarities with. If we take a look at the group of migrant settlers who share at least some if not all of the very radical ideology of the Hilltop Youth movement\(^\text{86}\), one cannot help but notice their fanatical commitment and determination to

\(^{86}\) Hilltop Youth is the term commonly used for several nationalist youth groups in Israel. The groups are influenced by religious Zionist ideals. Their philosophy is a mix of contempt for the Israeli government and a desire for a restored Jewish monarchy.
fulfil their dreams. They often had very strong personalities, but also anger buried deep within their hearts. They always spoke as if willing to sacrifice everything for their cause; and their belief in their own and their group’s ability to change things was very high. The dominant feature though, was their self-righteousness and self-assurance. They always felt they were right, that they knew better and more. Their idealism was in fact frequently so apparent that one could see it in their eyes. They were terrifying and fascinating at the same time.

**HOMELAND-RELATED DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS**

As one has probably noticed, the homeland-related diaspora organizations play a significant role in quite a number of cases. In fact the majority of migrant settlers, whilst still in the Diaspora, had a very strong attachment to Jewish Zionist schools, as well as to Zionist organizations in general. This is where foundations of attachment to Israel are often laid, and this was certainly the case with Avi, Laura, Lawrence and partly Shaya. The entire body of material collected for this research points to the conclusion that more than half the migrant settlers interviewed have, during the course of their lives, been affiliated with such organizations to one degree or another. It is important to distinguish between two groups of migrant settlers here. The first group are those who throughout their life in the Diaspora had been part of what Gabriel Sheffer terms “the core of the Diaspora” (Sheffer 2003:53), meaning that whilst in the Diaspora they had belonged to that part of the Jewish community working towards “preserving the ethnic character of the [Jewish] Diaspora”(Sheffer 2003:53). The overwhelming majority of these migrant settlers had been actively involved in one or more Zionist organizations and often from a very young age. The second group chiefly comprises those migrant settlers whom I earlier described as born again, religious, migrant settlers. For obvious reasons, people falling into this category do not have such an intense and long-lasting connection with the Jewish community in the Diaspora, and consequently do not have more than a tenuous connection with diaspora organizations. Inevitably most migrant settlers within this category only have a short history of involvement with the Jewish Diaspora environment. Taking this into account, the following analysis will focus mainly on the first group of migrant settlers, when considering Zionist diaspora organizations, and only include
the migrant settlers of the second category when or if they can show some record of connection to the organizations under discussion. For instance Shaya, who as a child was affiliated, but later, cut his ties to the Jewish community, only resuming later, after many years. Or in the case of Jamie, Debbie, Miryam and others: all of whom only made contact with Aliyah organizations very close to the date of their departure.

The main endeavour of diaspora organizations is specifically to create and maintain close bonds between the Diaspora and the homeland, so whenever the homeland is in need of support they will be able to mobilize their kinfolk all over the world (Shain 1994). The Jewish Diaspora, as also mentioned earlier, is a champion in this field. The massive flow of financial resources, the political lobbying from prominent and influential Jewish groups, the flow of intellectual and religious ideas, and even more significant, at least in the context of this research, the flow of human resources as used for consolidating and strengthening the Israeli state.

In former days this flow of resources did not usually have any receiving name attached. In general one could say that Jewish Diaspora resources were aimed at the Israeli state *per se*: donations for state institutions, universities, hospitals, cultural centres, museums, planting of trees, old people’s homes, and religious institutions etc. But in recent years this pattern has changed, as more and more resources are allocated directly, from specific interest groups in the Diaspora to people, groups and organizations in Israel that share ideology and visions with the donor organizations. This tendency is symptomatic of the increased polarization amongst both Jews in the Jewish Diaspora as well as in Israel, as we have seen.

One very clear sign of change in donation patterns can be traced by walking through almost any settlement in the West Bank. Synagogues and cultural centres, security and educational institutions, etc, often have signs above or next to their main entrances where one can read the names of the benefactors. These are often engraved in stone or on a metal plate and are very visible to the users or visitors of these buildings. The direct donations to the settlement
enterprise are extensive, but no comprehensive study of the financial flow from private donations has yet been made. Almost all of the settlement homepages have a special link where people can donate directly. Often specific projects are listed and the costs outlined, so that anyone considering making a contribution can see exactly what the donations will be used for. One of the most recent initiatives, set up by the settlement organization of AMANA, has made it possible for private buyers in the Diaspora to either finance or obtain their own property in the settlements (Haaretz March 3, 2007). In summary, the general change in patterns of donations from the Diaspora to Israel has been more in favour of non-state actors, with the consequence that even actors in opposition to state policy have been able to affect policy in quite concrete ways. And the settlement enterprise is just one of these areas, which have in recent years been effectively privatized.

Another general pattern that has in recent years become more and more evident amongst homeland-related diaspora organizations is the increasingly activist approach; rallying behind Israel in times of growing international criticism, as well as an increase in meddling in internal Israeli political, cultural and religious affairs. This tendency comes partly as a consequence of a change in attitude amongst the Israeli elite, who during the same period have shown a bourgeoning interest in Jewish Diaspora affairs. As highlighted earlier, this change of attitude from one of indifference or even open hostility towards the Jewish Diaspora has changed, and particularly amongst the Israeli elite: politicians, entrepreneurs, organizational leaders, intellectuals, and artists, as well as many others gradually becoming more inclusive and partnership-minded towards the Jewish Diaspora. This has been of course, to create allies, supporters, partners and associates, both to strengthen their own domestic positions, but also to be able to operate on a much more global scale, thus enabling all parties to consolidate or even expand their powerbase, in the diasporas host countries as well as the homeland itself. For both the homeland-related diaspora organizations and their counterparts in Israel, such relationships are seen as mutually beneficial.

**HOMELAND-RELATED LEARNING INSTITUTIONS**
This same tendency of polarization also seems to characterize some of the learning institutions and organizations within the Diaspora. Instead of emphasizing unity amongst Jews and Israelis, these institutions have in recent years been increasingly more interested in promoting their own specific political and/or religious agenda. Historically, this is not a completely new phenomenon as political Zionist organizations have always promoted their own visions. But the political and, to some extent, religious gap between various groups within the Diaspora has during the last twenty to twenty-five years widened even further.

There has always been diversity amongst religious Jewish movements, going back over time, but since the Jewish Haskalah (the Jewish Enlightenment), which took place during the late-eighteenth century this tendency of schism and polarization has been on the rise. One of the most debated issues amongst these different religious factions over the last century has been the issue of the Jewish homeland, in the context of recognition or non-recognition of the Zionist enterprise, and later of the Israeli state. I outlined some of the main differences between these approaches in Chapter Three but hopefully, by taking a closer look into those religious or semi-religious organizations and institutions actually mentioned by the migrant settlers, we will be able to examine what might be described as a very motley picture. During their time in the Diaspora, as well as later whilst studying in Israel prior to actually making Aliyah, Avi and Laura were in close proximity to both pro-Zionist and anti-Zionist organizations and learning institutions. In Avi’s case, he made the decision to leave a non-Zionist yeshiva shortly after being enrolled, deciding instead to join a hard-core religious Zionist yeshiva. Once there, he continued on the track that eventually led to his becoming a Hilltop Youth. While Laura, with her more traditional, ultra-orthodox background, decided to stay in a non-Zionist yeshiva for her year of studying in Israel. Yet, apparently this did not influence her strong sense of connectedness with the Jewish state and neither did it impact negatively on her desire to one day, make Aliyah.

However, in the other cases collected for this research, the main picture is that more than three quarters of the migrant settlers interviewed, were affiliated whilst in the Diaspora, with one or more Zionist organizations and/or pro-Zionist learning institutions. Debate on the philosophical, theological and religious principals, in context of support or denunciation of the Jewish state was in fact never mentioned by the migrant settlers, nor was these issues ever
debated within the Diaspora institutions themselves. One could say that the more recent tendency was in fact for the vast majority of affiliated religious or political Jewish organizations in the Diaspora to be demonstrably supportive and in favour of the Jewish state. This tendency becomes even more marked when Israel is under security pressures, as previously mentioned. What is more; these tendencies do not only apply to Zionist organizations with a natural pro-Israeli agenda, but also to organizations that do not have a clear policy in this regard. This is in accordance with what appears to be the main tendency amongst today’s diaspora organizations, where the overwhelming majority have become more emotionally connected and more inter-related generally with the Israeli state.

**ZIONIST YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS**

Let’s now turn to those migrant settlers who have had encounters with Zionist organizations over the years and see what direct or indirect influence these organizations have on their members: both in terms of their attitude and also their identity, in the context of politics, religion and culture. Such influence should naturally be examined in connection with their attitudes towards Israel, the question of promoting Aliyah and their views on settling in the occupied territories. The underlying question does of course relate once again to the general issue of organizations providing and producing identification markers for their members. As we can see in the case of Avi, the membership of Betar played a crucial role in his political and nationalist radicalization process and also bore a considerable responsibility for steering him towards the ideology of Jabotinsky and eventually, via his stay in the yeshiva, for him becoming a part of the Hilltop Youth movement. Youth organizations are in fact some of the most important and powerful institutions for creating bonds in the Diaspora. And the main reason for this is that they, like educational institutions, often deal with youngsters from the age of eight to eighteen. During this period, important developmental processes are taking place, and it is typically at this formative stage that individual frameworks are established and important identity markers fashioned. It is also during this period that the individual defines some of the fundamental preconditions of the framework on which their personal biographical narratives will be built. This should not of course be understood as implying a one-to-one relationship between membership of such an organization and an individual’s
wholesale adoption of that organization’s values, worldview, ideology and religious outlook. The fact is that it is difficult to achieve a solid understanding of to what extent these values are transferred to the individual from the organization, but it is safe to say that an imprint, or at the very least some kind of trace is likely to be left in the consciousness of the actors involved.

The various organizations dealt with in this analysis have been selected as they were all mentioned in the life-story interviews conducted amongst the migrant settlers of this research: organizations like Betar, Bnei Akiva, and the United Synagogue Youth etc. All these organizations, as mentioned earlier, engage in what Richard Jenkins terms “people-production” (Jenkins 2003). People-production is a term Jenkins uses when referring to modern organizations in general. Much as Michel Foucault shows repeatedly throughout his extensive body of work, how various modern organizations actively contribute to the production of people. Zionist youth organizations and also homeland-related learning institutions should in this research be seen as organizations with people production at the core of their agenda as their basic aim is to influence people, both members and non-members, in a specific direction, be that political, religious, cultural or some other arena. So the question then becomes: how do these organizations structure their work on the ground in order to best maximise their production of people, who will be keen and able to rally behind the Zionist idea, to the degree that they might one day be willing to actually migrate to Israel itself. In this analysis I will draw attention to two tactics in particular, which are employed by most Zionist organizations. The first is their use of young people as teachers, and the second is their provision of a wide variety of camps for members. Both of these should be seen as a part of a joined-up strategy to optimize achievement of the aims of the organization.

Members of the above-mentioned Zionist youth organizations are, as already hinted, taught by other young people. In fact it is not unusual to find an age gap of just a few years between teachers (or “madrichim”, as they are called in Hebrew) and their students. The madrichim have often participated in leadership courses offered by various Zionist organizations, where they have been trained for this kind of pedagogical work. I will return shortly to the subject of how they have been trained, what they have been trained in and, last but not least, who
exactly is behind their training, but for now I will concentrate on the narrow age gap between members and teachers. One important consequence of this narrowness of this gap is that the relationship fostered between teacher and student is often equally close. Such closeness in many ways represents an optimal precondition for learning: a perfect seedbed for cultivating the knowledge, information and values deemed important or desirable by the organization itself. There is nothing extraordinary or dubious about this, as it is essentially the way all organizations and learning institutions in society work. What we do see here though is that this potentially provides special interest groups: political, religious, and cultural alike, with an important tool, that of generating individuals who are ready to mobilize in the course of the interests of the homeland. This is, to a large degree, what happens amongst well-organized Diasporas all over the world, and the Jewish-Israeli Diaspora is no different. I will not go into detail about the specific learning tools used by these organizations, as this would distort the broader picture I am trying to make in this research. One thing I will mention though, as it is useful in understanding why some members of these Zionist youth organizations become interested in making Aliyah later in their lives, is the use of trips to Israel for the youths of the organizations. Just like the Betar organization in London, almost all Zionist youth groups, whether they belong to the more right-wing nationalist camp, like Bnei Akiva; the labour oriented organizations, like Habonim; or the centre-right organizations, like the United Synagogue Youth, all use trips as an important component in creating bonds between its members and to the homeland. Such trips are naturally set up in various ways, in accordance with the interests of the specific organization. In the case of Betar, as mentioned by Avi, the participants engage in simulations of taking a hilltop just like the Hilltop Youth, in real life. Other aspects of the Betar Israel tours include visiting various settlements, touring Shomron and visiting the Jabotinsky museum in Tel Aviv. The entire itinerary in Israel as planned by Betar underlines the ideological stand taken by the organization. Other organizations like Bnei Akiva put their emphasis on a combination of modern orthodox religious learning and what they describe as “work”. The motto of Bnei Akiva is “Torah Va’Avodah” (Torah and Labour) and the ideology of the organization can be best summarized by a paragraph on their homepage:
“A clear way of life that includes the fulfilment of Torah and Mitzvoth in the fullest sense, while placing a special emphasis on the application of the ideas learned from the Torah in our daily lives. The person of Torah Va’Avodah yearns to build reality according to the Torah and its directives. He is aware that every age brings with it new practical challenges, and lends a hand to meet them. The person of Torah Va’Avodah chooses his occupation, activities and place of residence, not according to his own personal pleasure, but according to the challenges of building and developing the Torah, the nation of Israel and the Land of Israel”.87

As one can see, the ideological foundations of the relative organizations are built upon basic principals drawn from specific interpretations of Jewish religious belief.88 These ideas are then combined with strong elements of nationalism, where religious Jewish life becomes an integrated part of the nation building process where its members are thought to best contribute by making Aliyah and living in accordance with the religious principles prescribed by the organization.

When Bnei Akiva members, in various countries across the Diaspora, decide to take part in trips organized by the organization, they enrol for a year in a religious kibbutz. Here they get the chance to experience a modern orthodox religious life in a close-knit Jewish community where they can work and take up religious studies. Special army programs are offered, and a variety of other events will also be offered during their stay in Israel. Here they will meet people from all parts of Israeli society, and participate in various religious and nationalistic events. The participants gain a thorough insight into the specific religious environment of modern orthodoxy in Israel, which has very close ties to the main branch of Bnei Akiva Israel. The ultimate aim of the trips organized by Bnei Akiva is to convince diaspora members to make Aliyah. Other Zionist diaspora organizations with different political and/or religious beliefs organize similar trips, though tailored inevitably to suit their own positions. However, fundamentally they all share the same basic aim: either to convince young Diasporas to move

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87 See Bnei Akiva’s homepage
88 In fact a very modern interpretation of Judaism which originated during the early days of Zionism, taken from some of the first Zionist religious rabbis during the mid-nineteenth century.
to Israel, or to at least strengthen the bonds between the Diaspora and what they perceive as the natural, God-given homeland of the Jewish people, Israel.

It is impossible to measure exactly how successful these organizations have been over the years, as no comprehensive research has been conducted as yet. Seen in a broader perspective though, only a relatively small percentage of youngsters who have been affiliated with Zionist diaspora organizations do in fact end up making Aliyah. On the other hand, if one turns around the research examining numbers of Olim (people who have made Aliyah), one finds that a very significant percentage were in fact closely affiliated with Zionist youth organizations in the Diaspora during childhood. The criteria of success here should of course not only be measured by the rate of migration. These organizations also contribute in various other ways by generally strengthening the bonds between the diaspora youth and Israel. Another important contribution naturally concerns the influence these organizations exert politically, religiously and culturally on the broad range of Jewish youngsters who were affiliated with the organizations mentioned here during their childhood or youth. Again it is important to highlight the difficulty in assessing both what and to what extent these organizations have on the individual as well as the broader section of its members. Judging from the many conversations I have had with Jewish youngsters across the Diaspora, youngsters who have been affiliated with various Zionist youth organizations, it is impossible to give a clear and comprehensive assessment of the impact these organizations have on shaping the political, religious and cultural identity of the young Jewish generations in the Diaspora; this, both in connection with shaping the identity of the individual member, as well as that of the broader section of youngsters who have been or still are members. As underlined earlier, there is no guarantee of a direct and unequivocal correlation between the input of political, religious and cultural information, as engineered by an organization, and the output as measured in connection with the worldview subsequently taken up by its members.

SECURITY
As a consequence of my material, I decided at an early stage in my research to take a closer look at the question of security within the framework of Kinnvall concept of ontological security as outlined in the theoretical and methodological chapters. The fact that this issue had been repeatedly highlighted by all the actors involved seemed to necessitate an appropriate response from me as a researcher. For my part, I was naturally also concerned (in a very real sense) by the issue of security, as during my fieldwork I would spend quite some time on a daily basis travelling in and out of the territories. Particularly during my first trip, the question of security and danger was a constant companion, something I have already touched upon previously in this thesis. But what is security? And how should we understand its use? When reading through all the interviews with the migrant settlers, it was interesting to note that they in fact used the concept in various ways, depending of course on what we were discussing at the time. I was often astonished by the quite contradictory ways many of the migrant settlers had when talking about the issue. And reading about the area in the broader material for the field of inquiry revealed even further aspects, which I knew I would have to look into when making my analysis. But let me first list the various ways in which the migrant settlers discussed the issue of security. In the case of Avi and the group of hardcore Zionists, all of whom had a religious-nationalistic activist background and approach, security had many faces. First of all, it seemed almost taboo with them to even think about one’s own security, at least if thinking about it would in any way influence the manner in which one chose to live. Avi and the other migrant settlers of this category were very keen to point out that nothing should interfere with their way of life; this attitude was in fact shared by many outside this group, but the vehemence with which this group stressed it was more pronounced. At the same time however, this group was also the most vocal when speaking about Israel’s security problems. Whenever Israel was under pressure or criticism from media, politicians or academia, this group was always the most active and outspoken (in the Diaspora), frequently raising Israel’s security situation in defence of all kinds of suppression of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Another interesting feature was that it was this group of migrant settlers that was the most fascinated with weapons. Jamie was just one of many (especially American) migrant settlers who seemed to have some kind of love affair with weapons of all types.
If we consider the group of migrant settlers in Laura’s category, those with a predominantly more classical orthodox background, not to mention a more feminine perspective, we find security on the personal level a more important consideration, at least in comparison with the category previously scrutinized. Laura and many of the other female migrant settlers were very protective of their families and especially their children. Migrant settlers from within this category would repeatedly point out the advantage of living in a safe and secure environment, a protected community where families were free of violence, crime and other kinds of threat. In many ways a lifestyle that resembled that of the middleclass in America who chose to live in a gated community, or in the case of the British where surveillance have become the normality of life in Britten. There was a general assumption amongst almost all categories though, that life outside their community was much more dangerous. Laura, Jamie and Avi all talked about the danger of being in Israel’s larger cities. Even life in the Diaspora was frequently presented as unsafe and dangerous. Anti-Semitism was of course one of the more frequent issues that would crop up during interviews. Another issue was a pervasive fear held in response to the many Arabs who had in recent years settled in Europe (this was especially the case with migrant settlers of British origin). These Arab communities were often regarded as an enormous and increasing threat to not only Jews but also Europeans in general. Arabs were in fact frequently singled out as the main problem currently facing the Jewish Diaspora, and this has probably been exacerbated by the many news stories in the Israeli press on this issue. 9/11 was another subject repeatedly raised by all the migrant settlers I met, as was a general anxiety regarding the increase of terrorism all around the world. The assertion that Israel constituted the last outpost or final frontier to an undemocratic, uncivilized and savage Muslim world was a very common theme, as was the notion of the settlers playing a central role in the safeguarding of the values of the West. Such themes were prevalent amongst the settler population in general, but more particularly amongst the migrant settlers.

Every migrant settler I spoke with during my field trips to the West Bank would mention the shock and disbelief they had met on telling their family and friends about their desire to move into a settlement. This reaction (migrant settlers, reassured me repeatedly) was a consequence of people’s misperception of what was really going on in the West Bank. It was, many of them assured me, important to be able to set the record straight. But this was not
always an easy task, as they had to juggle their stories somewhat. Firstly, it was of the outmost importance to reassure potential candidates (people that might consider moving into a settler community) that the security situation was fine and there was no reason to be anxious about living there. However, at the same time, the migrant settler narratives often contained stories about the dangers other settlers had been in over the years: telling stories about Palestinian attacks on settlements; about stones hurled at cars; or the danger of buses being assaulted by stone-throwing Palestinian youngsters. It seemed as though the migrant settlers continually had to balance two opposing interpretations of their security situation. On the one hand there was the interpretation offered up for public political consumption, designed to get people from outside to support the ideological cause of strengthening the settlements by extending and upgrading security, and which for that reason necessitated a portrayal of the Palestinians as dangerous, unpredictable and unreliable: the dangerous other. And on the other hand there was the interpretation that emphasized the (potentially) good and often solid relationship with local Palestinians, their Palestinian workers etc. Migrant settlers would often say that it was only the Palestinian leaders that were the bad guys, that it was they who really hated the Israelis, and Jews in particular, many would underline. If regular or average Palestinians had their own say, many would urge, then the conflict could and would be easily solved. The main problem was that the Palestinian people, and especially the Palestinian children, were manipulated to hate Jews as well as settlers. And the ones manipulating them were a small, but evil group of fanatical Muslims, who were the leaders. Arafat and the leaders from Hamas would often be singled out as such fanatics.

Earlier in this thesis I dealt with another aspect of security, namely how the various diaspora groups, including the migrant settlers now residing in the West Bank, reacted whenever Israel's security situation was in doubt. Here we saw how Diasporas would often rally behind their perceived home country especially during times of war and conflict, but also during less extreme conditions. Diaspora groups would frequently be very sensitive to criticism coming from their host land, as well as when the homeland was under general pressure from the international community. We saw how Jewish people belonging to the core group of the Diaspora, would actively engage in campaigns supporting their country of origin, and how the influx of money, as well as political and moral support would often increase under such
conditions. For certain diaspora groups we even saw how such pressure could spark a process of radicalization as well as create an atmosphere in which to wake dormant Diasporas.

THE SOCIAL TYPES

The overall intent behind this additional analytical section is to move the previous analysis, which on the one hand dealt with the individual psychological level and on the other tried to incorporate further levels of development (historical, social, political, religious etc.) in both the host and homeland, into what could be described as a psycho-sociological level in which individual features are framed within the context of social type. By using the analytical framework found within the specific strand of sociology, known as social types or ideal types, as inspired by the work of both Max Weber and Oz Almog. This social-type framing will enable me to incorporate all of the empirical, biographical case stories collected for this study, by using what could be described as extracts, or in the words of Weber, "the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena" (Shills & Finch 1997) or as Oz Almog describes it, “the challenge of isolating the 'molecules' of social tissue...[as a means to]...define social type as a human prototype-a sociological summary of the typical characteristics of a particular group or of a category of human beings usually recognized and typed by the public and often granted a nickname.” (Almog Oz, 1999:4)

The main objective here is to clarify the criteria of the selected social types. But first it is essential to summarize the way in which the use of social types should be regarded. Neither Max Weber, nor Oz Almog's use of the concept fully corresponds with what I find necessary for this particular research. In a previous theoretical chapter (Chapter Two) I touched briefly on some of the basic theoretical assumptions leading to my use of social types as a concept that might prove useful for understanding the full range of migrant settlers in the field of inquiry. In this section, I deal more with the basic, empirically grounded selection criteria, as used to differentiate specifically between varieties of personal psychological features, based
on certain preconditions within the mental landscapes of specific Diasporas, who have chosen to become migrant settlers.

Once again, it should be pointed out that the selected categories deal specifically with the group of migrant settlers who have been choosing to make Aliyah to the West Bank since the start of the Second Intifada; if one was to take a slightly more historical look at the migration patterns of diasporas moving to the occupied territories, a whole range of additional categories would need to be considered. The most obvious category here would be economically motivated Diasporas or “the economic settler”, a group I have touched upon earlier in this thesis. During the mid-80s and onwards, this specific category constituted one of the largest groups of diasporas moving to the occupied territories of the West Bank, but since the outbreak of the Second Intifada their numbers have diminished tremendously. Today, economic motivation seems to be secondary to other now more significant motives and consequently this category will be absent from the following analysis. However, that being said, certain features of the economic migrant settler do continue to play a role for a minority of in-coming settlers, but these economic motives will be mostly subordinate to other categories chosen for this analysis.

The four categories of social type chosen for the purposes of this thesis, are naturally based on the interview material collected from the migrant settlers, and are as follows: “The Soldier”, “The Seeker”, “The Born Again” and "The Matriarch". There are an additional group of migrant settlers which I here will name “The Accidental Migrant Settler". The inspiration for this, as mentioned earlier, is not only the four life-story interviews that cover the seven migrant settlers of the previous chapter, but also the entire selection of life-story interviews conducted for this PhD, which includes a further thirty-seven migrant settlers in all. On top of this I have naturally used and been influenced by the many notes and memories of the countless conversations I had with other migrant settlers during my time travelling around the West Bank settlements: some of whom declined to be interviewed for one reason or another, and some whom I decided myself not to interview. Another important source of information was the conversations and interviews I conducted with other scholars, as well as with journalists
and people working in the Aliyah and settler organizations. It is important to note here that even though the selected case stories of the previous chapter seem to resemble archetypes of the social type, no single individual’s case story, nor his or her mental landscape can, or should be viewed in real life as pure social types.

Having said this of course, the classic defining features ascribed to the four plus one categories will nonetheless be visible in the individual exemplary biographical narratives. The reason for this being that the social types selected for this analysis have inevitably derived from the empirical material itself and by extension the attributes or features connected with each type have in turn been partly extracted from the case studies.

Let me now turn to the first of the five categories of social types chosen for this analysis:

**THE SOLDIER**

The classic connotations here are those deriving from the common understanding of the concept and can be summarized like this: a soldier is a man who serves in an army; he is brave, disciplined, courageous, strong, determined and dutiful; he is reliable in times of war; protective of his people; obedient and submissive to his superior; and willing to sacrifice his life for a cause.

**THE BORN AGAIN**

The Born Again is a person who was once living in a spiritual wilderness: alienated from the truth, bewildered, confused, insecure, living in darkness, and often existing in a state of loneliness, sadness and despair. By contrast, when the process of awakening begins, the Born Again becomes: awake, certain, sure, steadfast, feels secure, enlightened, excited, often intoxicated by their recent revelation, sociable, happy and confident.
THE SEARCHER

The Searcher is a person who is driven by an inner conviction that there is a hidden purpose to life and their only goal is to ascertain what that hidden purpose is. A spiritual searcher follows the same pattern but is led by his or her conviction that that purpose is somehow divine. The searcher is always on his or her way: always on a journey. Life is characterized by times of hope and times of despair, times of certainty and times of confusion. There are periods of restlessness, doubt and bewilderment, succeeded by times of harmony, conviction and happiness. Once a goal has been reached, it moves; once the grail has been found, it is false; once nirvana is on the horizon, the fog appears and when the fog has gone, nirvana has vanished. Life is an endless cycle of successive repetitions, at least when you see it from the outside.

THE MATRIARCH/PATRIARCH

The Matriarch has a central position in life, in society, in the congregation, and not least of course, the family. It is a position that, in this particular framework, is seen as instituted by God: a role that has been predestined for women. The role is to be mother, caretaker and householder: to be the person who establishes the basic foundations of religious and worldly life. She incarnates motherhood and, as such, is responsible, reliable, trustworthy, wise, loving and willing to sacrifice everything for her husband and children. The matriarch only exists with her counterpart the Patriarch. The Patriarch is the provider, the authority, the protector of the family and society, the just father and the reliable and respected husband.

THE ACCIDENTAL SETTLER

There is not much to say about this fifth and final social type, beyond the fact that these people were definitely not thinking about becoming migrant settlers during their time in the Diaspora. It was other actors who mediated and facilitated their destiny. This should not be understood as implying that the Diasporas involved were defenceless victims, manipulated in a game controlled by dark forces. No, of course not, but people certainly, who ended up as a consequence of chance or by coincidence if one likes, who of course shared some values in common with the settlement movement: political ideas, nationalistic thoughts, religious
beliefs, or at the very least a desire to live in a close-knit Jewish community. But what we will be mainly dealing with, in the context of this specific category, is who the actors involved in creating this category are, and what their motivation is for doing so.

ANALYSING THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL AS FILTERED THROUGH THE SOCIAL TYPES

“THE SOLDIER”

Let me start by pointing to the specific case story which mostly encapsulated the ideal type of the soldier, namely the biographical narrative of Avi Hyman, and let me supplement the extract examples from his case with other fragments taken from other case stories namely Jamie and Shaya’s biographical narrative.

In the case of the social type “the soldier” many of the psychological features are as we shall see encapsulated in the case of Avi Hyman. Avi’s strong attachment to the Betar organization, the way in which he fully submits to the ideology of Jabotinsky, a vigorous steadfastness which in his younger age left no doubt of his strong commitment to promote as well as to fulfil the objectives of the organizations by working to recruit new members both in the course supporting the homeland as well as for the ultimate goal of getting them to make Aliyah. The soldier-like feature in Avi’s biographical narrative should not only be traced in the specific traits within his personality such as; steadfastness, submissiveness and discipline – just to mention a few - but to the general way in which he has decided to conduct his life. Being at the forefront fighting for the Zionist course, by identifying with some of the most radical and extremist organizations both in the Jewish diaspora but maybe even more after his arrival in Israel where he decided to join some of the most extreme militant movements (the hilltop youth) and organizations (the national-religious yeshiva). Here Avi found his soul mates other Jewish soldiers who would be the true successor of the Jewish zealots (the Jewish religious soldiers) of ancient Jewish history; namely the Maccabean or the righteous that joined the Bar Kochbar revolt (Lustick 1994). But also the true successors of Jews who historically had resisted forced conversion by Muslim and Christian rulers during the medieval times. Jamie
and Shaya highlights some of the same values; Jamie’s fascination of both the heroes in the bible and the Jewish soldiers fighting for Israel’s and the Jewish people in both Israel’s War of independence and in the Second World War and Shaya’s fascination of the militant radical Kahane ideology. In some of the other life story interviews - especially interviews with some of the men - one can find few but similar examples. Here we even find migrant settlers who openly express their fascination and sometimes even sympathy for the most radical and militant settlers like Baruch Goldstein or Yigal Amir. All such examples point in the same direction; “The Soldiers” of the migrant settlers see and believe that their choice to become Jewish settlers living in the West Bank can and shall be seen in the context of the history of the Jewish People and as a continuation of what they believe is both a fight for survival of the Jewish state and its people but also in some cases being instrumental by paving the way for Messiah coming.

“THE BORN AGAIN”

The case that most resembles that of the “Born Again” migrant settler is obviously represented in the case of Jamie. When that is said the cases of Shaya, Miryam and in a different way also the those of Laura and Lawrence all have as part of their biographical narratives elements or traces that points to the very same social type.

Jamie’s narrative is as just mentioned the most arch typical for the “born again”, as his religious as well as political/cultural process of revelation follows the patterns described within the academic literature dealing specifically with the phenomenon of the “born again”. Jamie’s transformation, from being a very confused and troubled youngster, with no sense of direction in life, a complicated and to some extend battered childhood; with a mother who hardly knew how to take responsibility and care for him and his brother; always running into

89 Baruch Kappel Goldstein American-born Jewish Israeli physician who perpetrated the 1994 Cave of the Patriarchs massacre in the city of Hebron, killing 29 Muslims at prayer
90 Yigal Amir the radical orthodox Jew who assassinated former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at a peace rally in Tel Aviv in 1995.
trouble and with a deeply rooted feeling of being disconnection from his cultural and religious background. And then eventually the sudden revelation; like being hit by a lightning on a sunny day, from a clear blue sky. Such stories are frequently heard amongst the group of born again and in many cases these people who believe that they have been experiencing some kind of miracle, in fact believe that it is God somehow have shown them the way, a new way out of their misery. For Jamie the miracle was the discovery of finding out that he in fact was a part of something bigger, a part of a people with a deeply rooted culture and a religion. A people and a nation who had a long and strong shared history. And suddenly came to understand that he could be a part of this people, this nation, this history and this culture. And a history or a narrative which in fact resembled that of his own personal narrative. This revelation finally saved him, transformed his life. And from that moment he realized that everything had changed. This was the transformation from darkness into light, from confusion into clarity. For Jamie that feeling became a feeling of gratitude. Now he understood that he could belong together with a people who had taken a long history of suppression and victimization as himself - finally raised from the abyss of the gas chambers of the concentration camps of Auschwitz, Dachau and Bergen-Belsen. Finally taking its faith into its own hands by changing the course of history and now becoming a strong, self-conscious and powerful nation with omnipotent authority. This was in a way his own narrative told within the framework of his own people. A narrative that in fact empowered him and gave him the strength to take charge of his own life and destination. By becoming a part of a narrative, a national narrative of the Jewish people, and in this case inscribed within the Zionist narrative of the settler ideology, Jamie and many of the other converted cases - and born again migrant settlers had found a position and place in life where they eventually felt they had escaped from a past of imprisonment to the future of freedom within the settlement community.

"THE SEARCHER"

The Searcher should naturally in this case more rightly be called the spiritual searcher as it is within a religious framework this social type should be understood. Shaya and Miryam are naturally the two most clear cut examples of this category of spiritual searchers represented in this research. When that is said, almost 15% - 20% of the sample interviews has traces of elements which can be detected having its origin from this particular social type. The
significant characteristics for the searcher are that he or she has an inner conviction believing that there is a hidden purpose in life. Throughout Miryam and Shaya's life this constant and determined chase for the truth, the hidden meaning or as Miryam expresses it in the interview, finding a shelter in the storm (the messianic church she first became a member of) when times were rough, is a prototype of this sort of search. The married couple who constantly have been changing their spiritual direction throughout their life First by becoming members of several messianic congregations and then later starting up their own divine messianic church for eventually embracing the orthodox Jewish congregation in Boston. Finally they have decided to become settlers in the West Bank and this because they believe we have reached the messianic era and for that reason they want to play an active and constructive role by being a part of the Jewish avant-garde who will help to bring about the coming of messiah. In line with the Searcher, Miryam and Shaya have throughout their life always been on a journey both literally but even more so, on a mental and spiritual journey which has been characterized by periods of despair and hopelessness and then times of certainty and optimism.

In some of the other life story interviews but also during some of my informal conversations with migrant settler's similar stories appeared again and again. In some of the settlements one can met young hippy like settlers, (migrant as well as Israelis) often living in some of the old caravans (used by the settler pioneers). Many of these settlers embrace a very spiritual religious lifestyle, a lifestyle that at least on the surface seem to resemble that of the hippie culture of the 60ties and 70ties, but here of course put into a distinct orthodox religious framework. In this particular segment one finds quite a few migrant settlers who in many ways incarnate the social type of the Searcher. A similar group of youngsters can be found in some of the illegal hilltop settlements (amongst the hilltop youth).

"THE MATRIARCH"

The personality characteristic features found within the social type of the Matriarch is surprisingly very common amongst many of the migrant settler woman which I meet out in the settlement community during my fieldwork. Both during the formal and more informal
conversations many woman spoke about the relief of finding a place, a community, where it was both normal but also appreciated by the entire community to take upon the role of being a mother. This was an environment were raising kids and keeping a household just as in the traditional Jewish family of the past was regarded as something commendable, praiseworthy and valuable. In the interview with Laura she again and again emphasise how important she think it is living in a religious community with strong Jewish values. A place where everybody keeps the Sabbath strictly and commemorate all the many Jewish holidays as prescribed in the bible. As Laura -but also many other migrant settler woman told me - it was often hard and difficult living in the diaspora especially in the big modern cities with the modern busy city lifestyle that followed. There it was hard or almost impossible to find time and energy to engage in the family life by taking the responsibility for a household and kids and being at the same time a good wife. For most families two incomes were needed when living in London, New York, Boston, New Jersey, Manchester or Florida etc. so in fact it was natural that in many of the families I interviewed it became apparent that it was in fact often the woman who had been the driving force behind the families decision to move into a religious community in the West Bank.

Most of the families I encountered during my fieldwork were large families in comparison to families in secular modern societies. Here a husband and wife often had 5-8 kids, which meant that it could be very resource demanding both financially but also very time consuming and emotionally to both have a fulltime career and being the main caretaker of the family. In the settlements many of the woman either had decided to fully engage in being a housewife or if not they would be having jobs sometime part-time jobs or jobs within the settlement which gave them the possibility to fulfil their self chosen role of being a Matriarch according to the characteristics described earlier.

As I mentioned there are naturally a male counterpart to the Matriarch category namely the Patriarch. Characteristics of this social type can of course be found in the data material collected for this research. When that is said no male migrant settler stressed or expressed that their motives for moving into the settlements should be found as a negative reaction to
the stressful modern society. Apparently such a society didn't prevent males who had a desire to undertake the Patriarch role from living such kind of life.

“THE ACCIDENTAL MIGRANT SETTLER”

In a way one could say that the social type of this category isn't in fact a social type as such, as there aren't necessarily any common personality features for members within this category. The reason is that what we here are talking about here is a group of diasporas who actually from the very outset of their Aliyah process had no intentions of moving into a community in the West Bank. Nevertheless this is not entirely an insignificant group by numbers. Exactly how many is in fact hard to know as many of the migrant settlers in this category, after their arrival either will not, can't or avoid describing their move into a settlement as accidental. And sometimes it can even be difficult even for them exactly to understand or analyse why they eventually came to move there. Some of them decided to move there merely because they had close family living in the community. And for these migrant settlers it was in fact accidental as they didn't have any influence on their family's original decision moving there. This group consist primarily of parents to former migrant settlers. A smaller group within this category are people who had contacts, friends living in a community which they wanted to live nearby.

A more interesting and the far largest group of Accidental Settlers are the Diasporas who were persuaded or strongly inspired by various organizations to move into a settlement. Laura and her family are a case that could be mentioned here. Lawrence Laura's husband was originally invited to a Sabbath in Neve Daniel during one of their pilot trips and that became the primary inspirational factor for the family's final move into the community. As I already have mentioned earlier almost all of the Aliyah organisations operating in the diaspora have close contacts with several settlement communities in the West Bank. The result of this corporation is that there has been a steady flow of immigrants from all over the Jewish diaspora who have become migrant settlers. The actual numbers haven't been disclosed to the public. When I asked the organizations directly about how many they knew had moved to the other side of the green line, they claimed that they didn't know. Jewish Agency claimed that they didn't
know the figures either and there were no statistical data in the Central Bureau for Statistics in Israel statistical base. If one makes an estimated count from the entire data material collected for this research the percentage of accidental settlers account for up to 15%.

If one should point to the main factors that makes each of the social types receptive to become radicalised and ultimately to consider moving out to a settlement in the occupied territories I will on the basis of the collected material; that be the case studies, the background material, the exemplary cases etc point to the following elements;

**MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE; CREATING A COHESIVE NARRATIVE FOR SOCIAL TYPES IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD**

The question in hand is how narratives of the social types have been established on a general level and why social types potentially are attracted by and motivated to inhabit as well as establish a sense of secure in an imagined landscape/space which exist in a void in the frontiers. In this case in hand on the West Bank a location not strictly control by the state institutions and state norms.

"The Soldier": The narrative established for the Soldier in the context of migrant settlers is informed and sustained by a dependency on an authoritarian and charismatic leadership and its organisations or movements. A leadership with a clear and focused ideology inscribed in a sacred cosmology. The hierarchy established within such organisations needs to be well defined and their members are meticulously selected (selection procedures are in place in most settlements) to take part in this sacred course. This gives the soldier a feeling of being an integrated part of a greater plan. A plan to be carried out by the demand of the single soldier based on his/hers loyalty, devotion, heroism and courage. The selected soldiers in such organisations or movements needs to believe that he/she are something special, that they are respected, accepted and highly honoured both by their superior but also – and this is important - by their comrades whom they share the vision working for a specific (divine) course. A task they are set to fight for and to accomplish. The soldiers are most likely - but
need not too – to originate from an environment that shares the basic values of such organisation or movement. Such a childhood environment (kinship, family, religious community or political/nationalist milieu) can contribute by fostering or igniting the glow that are truly important for the potential soldiers identity formation. There is as seen in various cases also the possibility that people - with no or weak religious, nationalist or political childhood backgrounds - undertake the social type of the soldier. In such cases features in the narrative complied of the social type “the born again” or for people who have decided to convert might have a fertile ground for developing similar traces in their identity. Here the yearning for acceptance from the group they are eager to join can be the basis for developing the soldier features.

Homeland related learning institutions and diasporic youth organisations as well (as in the cases in hand) religious schools become - for these potential soldiers - a breeding nest for the hopeful youngsters who seeks challenges and who command objectives that they later in life as soldier aspire to fulfilled. Those organisations or movements which are chosen by these youngsters need to have a leadership, teachers, tutors etc that can function as idols whom the pupils or members can look up to. Charismatic leaders are important elements in fostering the Soldier. Activities such as practical training are important ingredients in the development of the youngsters’ body, soul and intellect for the task ahead. The learning environment needs to present a strong vision, to be strictly focused on the set course. Furthermore there need to be a strong unity amongst the group members as well as a strong external “other” a “enemy” that can function both as a vehicle to sustain the unity amongst the group members, but also as a recognisable and well defined object to which both the individual as well as the group will be able to project their subconscious sense of insecurity towards. In that way, by canalizing one’s sense of insecurity, the members will be able to erase the feeling of anxiety, fear and insecurity. Many soldiers or potential soldiers often carries with them scars on their soul, traumatic experiences and/or a low self-esteem or as earlier mentioned, a “broken narrative”. Such people are more inclined to become attracted to more radicalized movements or organisations, as these organisations and movements provides a sense of security by offering a strong sense of unity as well as a “packet lifestyle” embraced by strong discipline, strict rules and a clear vision. A vision that can provide clarity and certainty for the members involved.
The attraction for moving to a frontier area, for the social type of the soldier, besides sharing the nationalist/political and/or religious values of the enterprise, is that these territories or spaces offers an opportunity to live out his/hers desired narrative. Here one is freer to reshape ones diasporic background and become fully integrated with the settler or frontier population. This because the specific space in question is an undefined, un-ruled, contested area that can be perceived as being at the forefront of the frontier separating the other “the enemy”, the savage gentiles from infiltrating and conquering the civilized world. A buffer separating civilization from the barbarians (in the context in hand the imagined philistines). Here the battleground are well defined and the combat a potential daily occurrence. And here the contribution of the soldier, his steadfastness, courage, strength, and not the least his/hers will to sacrifice is perceived needed. Or that is at least how the majority of soldier sees their own role.

“The Matriarch”: The narrative of “will be” Matriarch is often based on a negative perception of the modern urban city lifestyle. A deep felt discomfort with the often very stressful demands put on modern individual woman. A discomfort with the overwhelmingly materialistic values imposed and sustained by the capitalist consumer society. Such society is seen by The Matriarch of only breeding individualism, a place where the individual (read egocentric) life style becomes the core value for most citizens. More and more communities are in these modern society increasingly strained or even disintegrating and the consequences are; a rise of loneliness amongst individual. In the perspective of the Matriarch such an environment leaves many families in situations where the primer demand and expectations is to only look after one self’s and their closest family. Such environments breed social type like that of the Matriarch.

As a response these woman often long for what they imagine is the comfort, harmony as well as intimacy of the old fashion traditional family lifestyle. The close knitted family and
compassioned community life becomes a way out of the deeply felt feeling of being in a trapped life situation. The childhood background of the “will be” Matriarch often contains elements of what they pursue and wish for. A traditional nuclear family with well defined gender roles, a close warm family life loaded with rituals and traditions. There are naturally woman who aspires for the same Matriarchal lifestyle and who doesn’t come from such families. And again such woman- as was in the case of the soldier – often are brought up in families that are broken, battered and disintegrated and with no tradition and warmth whatsoever. Here the yearning for a family life, in a safe close knitted community becomes an ideal setting and location to compensate for what they as children never had. This imagined utopian family life style becomes a life strategy to fill the void (the gap) inside, precisely as Laclau (building on Lacan writings) have explained (see theoretical chapter).

The life course narrative told by the “will be” matriarch - in most but not in all cases – contains nostalgic childhood stories of a close relationship with parents, siblings and that of grandparents as well as other close family members. The environment they were brought up in is often described as harmonious communities where everybody would look after and care about each other. Within these often much closed communities most of their childhood life were lived. These communities often are seen as protection from the world outside which are perceived as hostile and dangerous. Communities of these kinds often promote an isolationist strategy or semi-isolationist strategy by imposing on their members to rarely engage with the outer world. As a consequents members in such communities tend to only engage with people inside the community. The community institution and organisations; learning as well as youth organisations are obliged take on the responsibility of maintaining the communal life style of its members. Being together, learning together, supporting each other is the central core value. Boundary maintainess’ is a therefore a daily occupation for both the members and the community institutions and organisations.

The issue of upholding and maintaining the member’s sense of security in these particular communities of outmost importance as the members often as mentioned earlier see the world outside as an “insecure” and dangerous place. Mixing and socializing with people from the
outside doesn’t happen very often and are for sure not encouraged by the community. Outside chaos prevails and it’s only amongst kin folk one feels truly at ease. Such an isolationist strategy is especially characteristic for minority groups like; religious, ethnic, and sectarian community’s. Some of the communities in hand resemble those communities as Bauman has called “communities of life” but it is strikingly clear that especially the members of “community of faith”.

So what is the attraction of leaving a modern society with its strong emphasis on the materialistic lifestyle, individualism and consumerism, and to exchange that for a community located at the frontiers? The short answer is that these frontiers promise to deliver a place where people and families first and foremost are given the opportunity to reinventing their lives in a new setting. A location that are physically as well as mentally far away from their home, a home that over a long period of time have represented a life that are seen by The Matriarch in the light of dissatisfaction, stressfulness and most importantly as empty of values, purpose and meaning. Moving to a community that enable “the Matriarch” to fulfil her vision of a family life, in a religious setting, were the core values of unity, solidarity, care, and kindness are at the centre and which are shared by the whole community is in fact like a dream come true. And that is in fact how The Matriarch experiences of getting the possibility of moving into such communities. Here the possibility of “fixing” one’s life and become a close and integrated member of a community that are able to deliver on all the imagined goods of the imagined utopia seems truly present and possible. That is at least what she believes. And that is basically why the social type of the Matriarch feels that settling in such a community is an extremely attractive alternative.

Another important factor to be mentioned is that in communities - that are located physically outside the states boundaries the rules and values are solemnly defined by the community members. This gives the potential members a feeling of empowerment. Most of the social types described in this research – and this count especially for the case of The Matriarch – didn’t feel that their previous lives in their homelands gave them the opportunity to fully live the kind of life they were seeking. Consequently this gave them an overwhelmingly feeling of
being disempowered in their own life. As the various communities in the frontiers offers a variety of beliefs systems (modern religious and classical orthodoxy just to mention the most frequent ones), as well as strong values and (not the least) a possibility of living a traditional (read; religious) family life styles, where the single family can choose exactly the right sort of community that fits into their dream, then the motivation of becoming a migrant settler, becomes a true alternative to their past lives.

“The Born Again” social types narrative is hard to describe as it is based on such a variety of life incidences that it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what background these people originate from. The general picture thou are that of people who have had an extremely complicated childhood or youth. Lacks of self believe, low self-esteem, a feeling of abandonment seems to be a common characteristic amongst many in this particular social type. Traumatic experiences which for the most of the individuals have taken place early in their life might be the foundation of paving the way for the desire to re-invent oneself through especially religious and/or sectarian groups or movements. The condition of the potential Born Again social type, previous to his or hers “revelation” often seems to be that of being in a state of anxiousness and depression A feeling of uncertainty and vulnerability combined with a low self-esteem. This coupled with a general existential crisis can lead to - or fertilize the ground for – such experiences of “revelations”. Or put in another manner; the emotional turmoil coursed by a sever identity crisis could unconscious lead to the need or desire of recreating or re-shaping one’s life path. There are thou a group of “born again” were the process seems to uphold a quit different development. A process where the decision to engage as a member in a religious or sectarian organisation or movements has come about in a thoroughly considered manner. Here we often see an individual that slowly gets fascinated with the religious or spiritual beliefs within a chosen religion and feel attracted to the lifestyle of the specific religious group in question. Such persons are often what could be named as the “Converts”. Converts in this particular understanding is not to be understood only as somebody who decide to change fait but also for people who from within a certain religious faith, over a period of time decide to become more and more religious engaged and over time commits them self wholly to a religious life style of orthodoxy. These Converts identity processes
resembles to a certain extend that of the “born again”. And in this context they will be included in what I here have termed the social type of “The Born Again”

Once the “revelation” has set in the individual tends to take on the newly discovered life style, values and believe so much to their hearts that it for outsiders can seem almost as an obsession. The first phase tends to be experienced as a form of clarity, joy and relief for the individual involved. But after a while it can at least for some feel difficult and hard to commit to all of the rules and demands that are required to be obtained, maintain and practised by a “true” believer. In this second phase some “Born Again” often seeks help from friends or professionals. These professionals could be priests, rabbis, imams etc. In recent years a whole industry of books, advisories, internet courses etc have seen the day of light, as was mentioned earlier in this research.

The attraction for the social type like that of the “born again” in moving out to the frontier territories as that of the West Bank settlements, seems to be that these specific places give them the opportunity to start a whole new life. And a life they themselves have chosen. In this new location (space) they feel totally free of their past networks (the likes of their old friendships and acquaintances as well as close and distance relatives) who will and can remind them of their past living. A life the Born Again often perceives as often a truly miserable life. Moving into the frontiers far away from everything, and especially away from the environment they used to live in, gives them a sense of having a new opportunity to re-start their life, a life free of all or some of the problems they had in the past (drugs etc). Another and important attraction for the Born Again is that people in their newly discovered communities often receives new members whole heartedly, and often regardless of how they used to live their lives previously. The fact is thou that it’s very likely that the Born Again often will withhold most information of their past lives to the people in their new community, and here in these communities nobody will no or maybe even care. The community and its members will as well always be helpful guiding the newcomers how to live in accordance with the religious rules and the community norms that are in place in such close knitted communities. Moving into a settlement gives the “born again” a whole new packets, a
possibility to establish new friendships, an often warm and inclusive community, a faith, strict rules in life. Not the least will a community located in the frontiers provide the Born Again with a new clear a “real” other, an enemy that will and can enable the Born Again to forget the disturbance of the enemy within. An enemy that often and for a long time has been the most destroying factor in the Born Again's life.

"The Searcher" can but does not need to have some of the same background features as the likes of the Born Again. Here, amongst this social type, one also finds people with a broken narrative based on sometimes quite disturbed and difficult childhood experiences. This fact characterised a considerable number of the cases in the samples employed for this research. But more so was the feature of knowing and being conscious of - and often from a very young age - the fact that one was what could be described as, "a believer". A believer in the sense that there is an awareness of the presence of something more between heaven and earth that one can see, feel, hear or even understand. The notion of being spiritually curious was clearly also something that "The Searcher's" close relatives and friends were aware of. Most of the people belonging to this social type would tell that they had already experienced very early in life a phase where they believed in God and felt attracted towards traditions and rituals of people they knew were deeply into a religious or spiritual life.

Religious teachers, priests, rabbis, shamans or other spiritual figures have an important role to play for the "searcher". As mentors or guides they offered help to understand and discover what this deeply felt inner emotion and sense of belief entails. But for the searcher there is more to it than for the average believer. Here, "The Searcher", isn't simply satisfied with practising the rituals and the keeping of traditions, or easily fulfilled by the life style demanded, within the framework of the specific religion in question. The Searcher is looking for more, looking for a deeper spiritual understanding of what she or he believes are hidden either in the scriptures or somewhere else. And it’s the longing for the perceived hidden answers that "The Searcher" is constantly perusing. It's the quest for The Holy Grail. A Grail that can save or rather heal what could be understood as an open wound. Here again the void or the gap as described in Lacanian theory maybe helps to explain the essence of "The Searcher".
The Searcher will seek wherever he or she believes the answer can be obtained. Such a search might take place within religious scripts and/or in the practising of religious rituals (like prayers), meditation (the inner self), and the tarot cards or even in nature. Also, the search takes them to what are perceived to be holy places, such as some of the locations in the West Bank (Samaria and Judea). The life of the searcher is often a very complicated affair. It is like a roller coaster. Sometimes hope and clarity and other times despair and bewilderment. Many Searchers will, during the course of their life, seek relationships within religious congregations, sectarian movements and other places where they can find people who are as passionate about finding "the hidden answers". Others will seek solitude and focus their attentions inwards as they might believe that the answer is to be found there.

And once again, security plays a vital role in the foundation for this particular social type. Security understood within the framework of "ontological security" as prescribed by Kinnvall (see theoretical chapter). As Kinnvall rightly explains, "Self-identity consist(s) of the development of consistent feelings of biographical continuity where the individual is able to sustain a narrative about the self and answer the question about doing, acting and being." (Kinnvall 2004:748) But in the question regarding "The Searchers" biographical continuity, it is for sure not in place when living in the Diaspora. In the settlement community they believe they will be able to achieve their aims, as a consequence of being and living in a sacred place. At least this is what they believe. Another important motivation of moving out to the frontiers and becoming a part of a messianic movement with the presumably sacred task of paving the way for the messiah to come, can for a group of Jewish religious searchers, is an important task in completing the puzzle that will reveal the hidden answer. Furthermore, the settlements are comprised of people (other searchers) who fully understand, respect, accept and support the religious path that the migrant settler of the social type of "The Searcher" is pursuing.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

As this thesis draws to its close the purpose of this concluding chapter will be to sum up the final conclusive points from within the entire thesis itself. In the introduction, I set out to find out why members of the Jewish diaspora who maybe living a safe, pleasant and comfortable life in the Unkind USA decide to uproot their life by transferring themselves to settle, in what many regard, as some of the most dangerous places on the planet, the settlements of the West Bank.

From the very start of this research, I decided to look into a number of areas where I suspected that some of the answers might lie. The premise of this research was to base the investigation on the presumption that the formation of identity would be at the core of my analysis. The reason for this was twofold. Firstly, due to the fact that the fieldwork material I had collected, both amongst the migrant settlers through the conducting of life story interviews but also through a significant number of conversations with people (who either knew the area well or were familiar with people who had become migrant settlers) pointed in this specific direction. Secondly, I found that most of the existing research conducted on the settler enterprises were focused on, either the colonial aspect or took a very ideological approach to the field of inquiry. I felt unconvinced by the depth of the explanations offered within these approaches as they, in my opinion, lacked the more individual socio-psychological motivations of the migrant settlers' desire to make their move. Consequently, the need to pursue another path felt validated.

I firstly selected three areas of investigation to be scrutinized, namely the formation of religious, political and nationalist identities. To a large extent, my previous perception that the migrant settlers would, as a minimum for moving into a settlement, at least share some of the beliefs and aspirations of the more ideological and religiously driven settlers. The results of this research have to a large extent confirmed this assumption. If one takes into account the
analysis that led to the establishment of the four social types, The Soldier, The Matriarch, The Born Again and The Searcher, all four tend to at least express the shared basic ideas carried by the founders of the settlement enterprise of Gush Emunim. A religious and nationalist ideology that believes that the land (soil) located in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) inherently belongs to the Jewish people as it is sacred land given by God. As I also mentioned earlier, this interpretation of the Jewish scripts - at least within the framework of Zionism - is in fact a quite a newly founded religious ideology only supported by a minority within Jewish orthodoxy. But there are also deviations from this belief amongst settlers of the four social types. A minority of the migrant settlers tended to associate themselves with the more secular maximalist interpretation of Zionism grounded in Zev Jabotinsky's (and today Likud's) ideology. Here it was primarily the question of security (and not religion) that took the centre stage of their argumentations for why they had decided to move into the occupied territories. In fact, most migrant settlers would point to the question of security as a significant if not the most important element for their enterprise. The last group of migrant settlers represented in this thesis, mostly within the category of the "accidental settler", where there seemed to have been a more vague reason for being there. Either they were drawn to the West Bank because they had family living there or because they saw the close knitted religious communities away from the urban city lifestyle as an attractive alternative to the life they previously had in the diaspora. In such cases, Aliyah organizations often had an important role to play when choosing the community and its location.

**SECURITY**

As I highlighted in the theoretical chapter; seeking people, places and belief systems of belonging, should be understood as something prior to that of differentiation. This was also verified through the material analyzed for this research. People are all through their lives drawn first and foremost towards other people, places or belief systems in the hope of finding someone they can identify with and places they feel secure within. As Kinnvall has rightly pointed out; this is "A common reaction to [...] seek reaffirmation of one's self-identity by drawing closer to any collective that is able to reduce uncertainty and anxiety" (Kinnvall 2002:80). The contemplating migrant settler’s inner urgency to pursue acceptance,
verification and confirmation to that of their own self is at the heart of it all. It was that seeking of security, coherence in ones biographical narrative and consistency in identity that is, as I have discovered through this research, a basic premise of why certain members of the Diaspora decide to become migrant settlers. This is in accordance with the thoughts of Huysmans, Kinnvall and Ericsson who were scrutinized in the theoretical chapter. As Kinnvall explained, "'security' is embedded in a formation of rules which defines it in its specificity and explains how it organizes relations to nature, to other human beings and to the self ".

In this thesis "security" was embedded within the formation of rules that characterized the relation between the individual members of the diaspora with that of his fellow kin’s within the Diaspora community, the various organizations/institutions of the diaspora, as well as his/hers relationship with the host and home country. Ontological (in) security provided the basic fuel that led to the formation of the identity to become a part of the more hard core segments of the Diaspora. And it was also (in) security that led to the desire to engage in homeland related organizations that eventually spurred the individual member of the Diaspora to seek reaffirmation of his/her self making Aliyah to the West Bank community in the occupied territories. The question of what comes first, seeking security or the desire to reaffirm oneself in a community of sameness is, in my opinion, a more philosophical question and in the context of this predominantly empirical study a further examination into this particular question was never the task. The important point here is that the fuel informing the migrant settler’s desire to move to a settlement truly stems from a combination of these two basic elements; identification and insecurity and maybe it’s more appropriate to see them as two sides of the same coin.

The requirement of differentiation takes place in the aftermath of the process of identification as differentiation basically works as mechanism of groups, institutions/organizations, communities and states to preserve the unity amongst its members, as shown in this research. This we saw clearly with a substantial number of the Jewish families and communities in the diaspora as well as in the settlement communities at the West Bank. Here boundary maintenance was a daily premise of the life in the frontiers. Traditions and rituals (in this
context of both religious and political) did work very well in this preservation of unification. Fear for “the other” was another important mechanism as this contributed in sealing the bonds amongst members. This was something again very apparent in both the diaspora communities as well as in the settlements. Here security as Huysmans explains should “... be interpreted as a life strategy that is a cultural practice of establishing a meaningful life...” (Huysmans 1998:234). And this life strategy was as we saw both pursued in the cases of the individuals as well as for the communities in the diaspora and the West Bank. The conclusion on this part could be summed up as follows; Religion and nationalism - especially in their more extreme, fundamentalist forms - “claim to monopolize the sources of self and identity, simultaneously”. Nationalism and religious fundamentalism, and here we might also add some forms of ideologies of nationalism, “may thus be ‘the most salient factor in constructing the external and feared other’, as these provide answers to existential questions of being by supplying essentialized notions of cultural attributes based on totalities and truth. In this sense, they may serve as the most effective common denominator for decreasing ontological insecurity in times of rapid changes” (Kinnvall 2002:90).

The research also pointed to another important identity factor amongst migrant settlers involved. A staggering number of migrant settlers had signs of a broken narrative. Many had childhood scars on their soul either as a consequence of traumatic childhood or youth experiences or because of a difficult life in general. Neglect, parental divorce, sickness (mental and physical), loneliness and hardship were just some of the signs found amongst the exemplary case stories. But also past drugs addiction, death amongst close relatives (parents & siblings) was represented in some of the other cases not presented as exemplary case stories. The psychological consequences varied in fact quite a lot, but the general picture was that a significant amount of migrant settlers carried with them what I have termed a “broken narrative”. And for this reason it’s fair to conclude that there is an increase probability that members of the Diaspora with a “broken narrative” in conjuncture with some of the personal characteristics of the social types analyzed in the last chapter, will be more inclined to subconsciously develop a desire to move to a settlement in the occupied territories.
Another important area of investigation was to find out to what, if any, extent the diaspora organizations and homeland related learning institutions contributed in the process of identity formation leading to members of the diaspora to eventually become migrant settlers. As highlighted earlier in this thesis, the answer to this question was not straightforward. Most children and youngsters brought up in diaspora communities, whom in their childhood had gone to homeland related institutions and/or were members of various diaspora organizations, never even considered the possibility of making Aliyah. The very low statistical figures of Aliyah migration compared to the number of people who have become members of these institutions and organizations over the years are strikingly clear. They show that only quite a small minority of members eventually decide to migrate to Israel. Out of this small minority, it is only a small percentage who eventually decides to settle on the West Bank. Despite this, there is still no doubt that these organizations and movements, for the individual migrant settler, as shown in this research, are in fact very important in laying the foundation that eventually paves the way for these core members of the Diaspora to make the move to the settlements.

Diaspora organizations and institutions, furthermore, play an important role in establishing bonds between the Diaspora and their homeland, as well as, mobilizing resources; financial, cultural and human resources, as a means of support. This was indeed also a very apparent conclusive element in this particular research. Additionally, as a more direct influence, some of the hard-core Zionist organizations, in fact, even engage in homeland activities to the extent that they strongly advocate the idea of making Aliyah, as well as, engage in the preparation of its’ members to make Aliyah. Some of these organizations even have specific activities related to that of the settlement enterprise. These include ideological and/or religious training, as well as trips to Israel and even, in some cases, to the occupied territories. Here, members were taught the practices of establishing and living in a (exercise) hilltop but also a range of other learning exercises was practised.
Another important and essential role played by the more hardcore diaspora organizations in this research, was their close and cooperative relationship with other ideological nationalist and/or religious organizations outside their host-land. These transnational links gave their members the possibility of exchanging ideas and experiences. The international yeshivas in Jerusalem and other places in Israel and the West Bank, with their broad international representation of students, is a result of this transnational linking and the international sister organizations of Bnei Akiva and Betar Israel in Britain, USA and many other countries worldwide and is clear cut example of such cooperation. The same can be said for the vast transfer of financial recourses raised in the Jewish diaspora for the settlement enterprise, as emphasized earlier in this research. The signs of a rise in diaspora engagement amongst communities, organizations and movements and that of Israeli political, nationalist and religious parties, movements and communities both inside Israel and in the West Bank, were also apparent. An engagement which has shifted from a more general support for the Israeli state to that of special interest groups that engage in influencing the future of Israel’s political and religious outlook. Organizations and individual diaspora members represented in this research were definitely clear cut examples of this tendency.

LONG DISTANCE NATIONALISM

The most influential group of Diaspora members to engage in such supporting activities on behalf of their political, religious and nationalist brethren in Israel, is that of the group of hardcore diaspora that in the literature are involved in what are termed Long-distance Nationalism. "The nature of [such] diaspora entities... [is that]...their members tend to become deeply involved in the political affairs of their host countries' homelands, as well as regional and international politics" (Sheffer 2003:190). These members' identities are partly formed or "produced" in the organizations who engage in people production, as highlighted again and again in this thesis. The work of these organizations, which include political, nationalist and/or religious learning institutions, employ, as demonstrated previously, in activities that were directed both to convince its' members to make Aliyah to Israel, as well as, engaging directly by contributing to the formation of the Israeli state in the image of the organizations nationalist, religious and ideological outlook.
Such organizations were represented in this research by Bnei Akiva and Betar but these two are, in fact, only two of many other organizations based in the diaspora who engage in such activities. Most of these organizations have, as we have seen, a tremendous impact on the little group of "hard core" members of the Diaspora, who in a much deeper sense than the majority of organizational members, take up the ideology and beliefs of such organizations. People who decide to join the most "hard core" nationalist organizations are most likely to have grown up within isolationist communities where engaging in homeland related activities are highly prioritized. The group of "hard core" Diaspora members is also likely to come from families who historically have contacts or are closely interlinked with these organizations. If not, members who join these organizations have peers who have brought them along and introduced them to these various organizations. As Sheffer puts it, "It is clear that the decisions to join such entities and act on their behalf, perhaps leading to serious political consequences, are voluntary decisions on the part of the individual and small groups [...] the core members of Diasporas tend to retain deeply rooted loyalties to their homelands and are often ready to act on their behalf" (Sheffer 2003:200-201).

Such organizations though are also influenced by the culture of the host country in which they are located, as pointed out in one of the case stories in chapter four. The consequence of such influence is that these organizations often differentiate in their views and values in accordance with that of their members, the local community, as well as, the host land where they are located. A clear example of such differentiation is that of Bnei Akiva in London (Bnei Akiva in Scandinavia is another example) who are much more inclined to be critical to the more hard core religious-nationalist views of their mother organization in Israel itself.

**POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

As promised in my introduction, I will conclude this thesis by shedding some light on what influence and impact the influx of migrant settlers, originating from the Jewish Diaspora in Britain and the United States to the occupied territories on the West Bank, has on the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. As the number of migrant settlers moving into a
settlement on the West Bank is quite low compared to the number of Israelis who over the years have done likewise, it's naturally important not to overestimate their impact. But let me answer the question by looking at the various elements that, in fact, directly or indirectly can and do impact on the conflict at hand; The influence posed by that of the migrant settlers who have settled in the occupied territories can be divided into four categories;

a) Today we see more and more direct communication amongst settlement communities and the Diaspora communities. As many migrant settlers engage in campaigns on behalf of the settlement community there are signs that certain sectors within the Jewish diaspora are becoming more and more supportive to the whole settlement enterprise (though the majority still seem to have a more critical attitude). This is especially true amongst the classical orthodox and the modern orthodox communities around the world. As dealt with in chapter three, the rise of orthodoxy in the diaspora and the political and religious polarization amongst world Jewry, as well as, the rise of engagement (financial and political support) directed towards political, nationalist and religious groups and movements on the Israeli right, is a clear cut example of their growing support.

b) There is another more direct consequence as the campaign, often led or supported by migrant settlers in the settler community, has become a mobilization factor for getting more members of the diaspora to settle in a West Bank community. This we saw in one of the exemplary cases in this research but also other migrant settlers interviewed for this research were actively engaged in such Aliyah campaigns. Another and very clear aspect dealt with in this research is that of the Aliyah organizations who directly target members of the diaspora to move to the West Bank settlements by offering them services and offers on housing, schools, financial support etc. This naturally doesn't only concern the West Bank, as they also do the same for people who want to live inside the green line, but, to have an active immigration policy that includes territories outside the green line, means that these organizations take an active part in policies that engage in the formation of the Israeli state's boundaries and this does in a very direct way influence the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

c) The socialization process taking place amongst newly settled migrant settlers does, in fact, as shown in this research, radicalize most. The reason is pretty banal, in the sense that, for migrant settlers to fit into the life in their new settlement communities they and their children
need to assimilate into these communities and, therefore, it is obvious that their views (political, nationalist and religious) more and more resembles that of the members of the community. In most cases, migrant settlers, before moving into a settlement, had views that were more similar to that of the often very critical or at least hesitant perception of the settlement enterprise as the members of the diaspora communities they originated from. But after settling it is clear that their views have become more radical, as shown in almost all of the cases in this research.

d) Living in the frontiers also has a tremendous impact on this radicalization process. This is for mainly two reasons; firstly the shear fear factor of living in a location on "enemy land", so to speak, does in fact, in itself, further such a radicalization process. Both because of the frequent incidences of violence taking place on the West Bank but also because settlers in general on an everyday basis, feel criticized and attacked from almost everybody aside from their close associates and sympathizers. Such hostility from the outside world often gives a group/community a strong sense of self-righteousness. In the interview material collected for this research, the migrant settlers often either didn't understand why their presence stirred so much hostility (especially amongst Israelis and Jews in general) neither did many understand what tremendous impact the whole settlement enterprise meant to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. If they did, and more than half the migrant settlers fully understood these implications, they were so convinced both of the importance of their mission (as being a security for Israel and the Jews) or they simply believed that their mission was a sacred assignment sanctioned by God and that politics in such circumstances had to be circumvent. Of course, there were deviant voices amongst a minority of migrant settlers who accepted that if the Israeli state decided to part with the territories they would accept it but only reluctantly.
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