2   Settlement as Suburbanization

The Banality of Colonization

David Newman

THIS CHAPTER ANALYSES the planning dynamics of the West Bank settlement network since its inception almost fifty years ago. In particular it concentrates on what has been described elsewhere as the process of suburban colonization (Newman 1996, 2005, 2006). In particular, the chapter will show how even the success of Gush Emunim and the settlers' movement resulted from the ability of settler leaders to adapt to (and strategically exploit) the process of rurbanization and suburbanization that the Israeli society was undergoing at the time. As such, the settlement process is seen as constituting a colonization banality, through which political and ideological objectives have been implemented by latching on to the banal, and often bureaucratic, procedures of the national planning process as a means through which settlements are established in the first place and become part of the public and municipal networks that enable both the growth and the functioning of these communities over time. The chapter focuses on the settlement network, excluding East Jerusalem, comprising, as of 2015, almost four hundred thousand residents of these communities, enjoying the same system and network of public services as experienced by all residents of Israel inside the Green Line. This overview essay of the settlement network seeks to explain the dynamics behind the establishment and functioning of these communities over time and the extent to which they constitute a highly organized system, vastly different in character to the image often displayed of small hilltop communities, populated only by groups of settlers imbued with a radical ideology.

The chapter addresses and revisits the planning mechanisms and agencies through which this network came into being and underwent expansion and consolidation over a period of forty years. The central argument is that even the paradigmatic, ideological settlers, those who inspired the Gush Emunim movement and their settlement organization, Amana (which remains a legal development agency until today), were successful because they strategically positioned themselves in relation to the trends of suburbanization. The earliest settler leaders were always conscious of the fact that in order to succeed, they had to seek a balance between their ideological and political objectives on the one hand, while working with the state system of planning and development on the other (Newman 1986). To this end, they successfully latched on to the processes of suburbanization that were beginning to emerge in Israel during the 1970s and 1980s, understanding that the West Bank was in a prime geographic location, in relatively close proximity to the major metropolitan centers of both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and that the demands of the changing employment market could be put to use in such a way as to encourage many potential settlers to come and reside in these new exurban communities, even if they were not part of the ideological hard core of Gush Emunim national religious activists.

It is important to note at the outset that the planning agencies were by no means the sole facilitator of settlements—at the end of the day, colonization remains a political process aimed at expanding Jewish control over a region that, the settlers desire, should eventually be annexed to the State of Israel rather than ceded as part of any peace agreement. But the vast literature of the past forty years has tended to focus on the ideological and the political, while largely ignoring the technical and planning mechanisms that enabled the settlements to be physically constructed and which provided the necessary functional frameworks through which they could be administered. It is the purpose of this chapter to focus on these agencies as means of supplementing much of the political analysis that appears in previous research.

By latching on to the changing socioeconomic trends in Israeli society and the progressive shift in planning paradigms, which rejected the previous models of rigid centralized planning and the binary distinction between urban and rural in favor of a functional continuum that filled the gaps in between, Gush Emunim were therefore able to attract many other potential settlers who, while less turned on by a religious and ideological perspective, were nevertheless prepared to settle beyond the Green Line if it was seen also to be advantageous to them in economic and quality of life terms.

This chapter also shows that the establishment of a strong municipal hierarchy, parallel to the system of regional and local councils that operate inside Israel proper, enabled the settlement system to become an integral part of the national system of local government, even if normal civilian law does not formally apply to the West Bank, which, with the exception of East Jerusalem, has never been formally annexed by the State of Israel. The heads of the local and regional councils are no different in terms of their functions, salaries, access to government resources (especially the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for local government) than any other municipal authority in the country. But, unlike the rest of the country, they are also represented by a nonformal political lobby, in the shape of the Settlement Council for Judea and Samaria, continuing their dual strategy of formal co-optation on the one hand, along with extragovernmental political lobbying on the other.

Revisiting the colonization through suburbanization thesis (which first emerged during the 1980s in the studies by Portugali and Newman 1986, and Reichmann 1986) with a perspective of forty years, a time period within which there are three generations of settler families, many of whom have lived in the Occupied Territories for their entire lives, allows us to deconstruct a series of myths that populate the discourse on settlements—some of which have also been used by the settler movement to portray the growth and expansion of settlements as part and parcel of an altruistic and ideological project. These include:

- The notion of *pioneering* and the idea that West Bank settlement is the true continuer of the earliest pioneering of the Zionist movement fifty years earlier.
- National planning aimed at widespread *population dispersal* and the idea that settling the West Bank contributes to the decentralization of the country's population away from the densely populated metropolitan center of the country.
- The *political argument* that the West Bank settlements have been a political and ideological movement that has constantly challenged government and has had to work beyond the frameworks of governmental and municipal support.
- The myth of *settlement freezing* and the idea that some Israeli governments have frozen all new settlement expansion as part of peace negotiations when in fact the partial slowdown in settlement expansion (when that has happened) has resulted in settlement consolidation and strengthening.
- The often-heard argument that all of the settlers who came for economic, rather than ideological, reasons could be *relocated back into Israel* as part of a peace agreement and would therefore be prepared to experience settlement evacuation for appropriate compensation, while enabling the ideologically motivated to remain in situ.

This chapter will argue that much of the settlement process can be understood through an analysis of the banality of colonization, through which the political settlement project has been translated into the terminology of house prices, employment, and mortgages on the one hand, and municipal and local government services on the other. This played a major factor in attracting tens of thousands of settlers to the West Bank, including many people who, while not ideologically opposed to settling beyond the Green Line, would not necessarily have moved to isolated, remote locations in the interior of the region. The geographic proximity factor, which explains the process of suburbanization, is the main reason why over 60 percent of the settlers residing outside East Jerusalem live in relatively close proximity to the Green Line, in concentrated settlement clusters. It is these concentrated "clusters" that have become the focus for much of the border nego-

tiation discourse that attempts to redraw the boundary as part of a future peace agreement, taking into account potential land swaps between Israel and a future Palestinian state. During this period, transportation infrastructure has undergone significant improvement, thus bringing even larger areas of the West Bank into closer proximity to the central metropolitan region (proximity being measured by time and cost of access, which erodes the obstacles of physical distance), enabling the suburbanization process to extend over a greater geographical area.

The Geographical Factor in Settlement: Location, Location, Location

Since the onset of the West Bank settlement project, and especially through the first two decades, the settlement leaders and ideologues have attempted to portray their actions as constituting the "true" continuation of the Zionist settlement activities of the early part of the twentieth century. During this period, many remote rural communities were established throughout the area of mandate in Palestine as a means of gaining control of the land.

The early kibbutzim and moshavim served a double purpose. On the one hand they were part of the socialist and cooperative Zionist experiment of creating communal communities that experienced a "return to the land" based on agricultural self-productive labor. But equally their dispersed locations were aimed at expanding the territorial control on behalf of the Zionist project, later to be transformed into an independent state. The ideological hegemony of the rural cooperative settlements extended through to the post-State period for the first two to three decades of statehood. Despite the fact that the rural agricultural cooperatives never contained more than 5–6 percent of the total population at its peak, this was in sharp contrast with the political power enjoyed by this community within the leadership of the Zionist community and its governmental frameworks, especially through the hegemony of the Labor-Mapai political elites.

The settler movement always portrayed itself as the continuer of the pre-State pioneering activities around which there was, at the time, consensus. It was important for them to be seen as constituting part of the Zionist enterprise, an enterprise that, Gush Emunim argued, was now bereft of idealism and the torch of which would now be taken up by the ideologically motivated generation of national religious settlers in the West Bank. Thus, despite the fact that the West Bank, especially those areas settled by Gush Emunim (as contrasted with the unsuccessful attempt to settle the Jordan Valley with traditional rural agricultural cooperatives within the framework of the Allon Plan), was located in the geographical center of Israel/Palestine and that roads and technology enabled ease of access and communication, the settlers always portrayed the region as remote, isolated, and "unsettled" (by Jews) and themselves as the modern day pioneers who were taking up the challenge of the pre-State settler pioneers.

The long-term success of establishing new settlement networks is dependent on their locations relative to employment opportunities, accessibility, and the price of land. The use of the suburbanization model to attract new and potential settlers to the settlements, using slogans such as "five minutes from Kfar Sava" expressed the geographical reality whereby the settlements were located within the exurban belt of the two major metropolitan centers of Israel: Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The West Bank was not a remote isolated region, such as the Galilee or the Negev of the 1920s and 1930s and, as such, settlers could relocate their place of residence from a crowded expensive three room apartment in Kfar Sava to a spacious detached housing unit in one of the new settlements, without having to worry about alternative employment opportunities. The notion of commuting communities had, until the 1970s, been perceived as anti-ideological within the hegemonic Zionist settlement ideology—you were either an urbanite who lived and worked inside a town, or a pioneering agricultural laborer who lived and worked within one of the rural communities. In this respect, the idea of "rurban" or "exurban" communities (such as *yishuv kehilati*) deviated from the traditional, rigidly centralized planning framework—emphasizing instead the inherent locational advantages of the West Bank.

The Gush Emunim ideologues of the 1970s and early 1980s were aware that the mountainous and densely populated West Bank did not lend itself to the sort of agricultural communities that were typified by the kibbutzim (and a lesser extent by the moshavim). They were equally aware that third-generation Israelis were no longer interested in the "pioneering" challenge of cooperative and communal communities and were seeking alternative, less rigid, less centralized forms of living in an Israel of social and generational change.

The earliest Gush Emunim challenge focused as much on the nature of the settlement communities that would be appropriate for the political objectives to be met as on the goals of colonization per se. They latched on to a societal demand for changing the nature of the planning hierarchy and the authorization of alternative modes of settlement planning as a means through which their colonization objectives could be met. The location of much of the West Bank, within relatively close proximity to the Israeli metropolitan centers of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, lent itself to the establishment of both rurban communities (which partially adopted the community models of earlier settlements, but without any form of economic collectivism) and suburban communities numbering thousands of inhabitants as an alternative to the crowded and expensive housing market in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

The younger, proactive generation of settler leaders demonstrated its ability to acknowledge the changing social and economic patterns that were transforming the Israeli society: the definition of a new model of settlement, the *yishuv kehilati*, was the product of this awareness. From the West Bank, the Gush Emunim–inspired model of rurban communities quickly slipped back into Israel itself. The *mitzpim* (hilltop small Jewish settlements) project in the Galilee in the late 1970s and early 1980s latched on to some of these new settlement ideas, thus legitimizing concepts of rurbanization within the formal planning frameworks—the *yishuv kehilati* was formally recognized by Israeli planning authorities in 1981. During the subsequent two decades, the loosening of the rigid planning dichotomy was further reflected in the construction of low density, detached housing neighborhoods within the towns, as well as the gradual transformation of many of the rural communities (especially the moshavim) into suburban commuting communities where fewer and fewer of the residents were engaged in either agriculture or cooperative modes of communal living. Today, the "rural" landscape is unrecognizable from that which existed in the late 1970s when Gush Emunim presented their first regional settlement plans. It has undergone an exurban transformation of a type that could not have been imagined at the time but which, in retrospect, is no more than could have been expected from a society undergoing rapid internal social and economic change along the classic Western patterns of evolving human landscapes and settlement patterns.

A crucial factor in the consolidation of the settlements over a period of forty years has been the ability of the settler leaders to harness the pragmatic realities of these changing social and economic aspirations of the Israeli population with the ability to play the ideological card in portraying the West Bank as a "remote" area when in reality it was never anything but a natural geographical extension to the suburban expansion of the metropolitan core of the country. This "natural" suburban extension had, to all effects, been prevented from taking place prior to 1967 because of the existence of the border separating Israel from the West Bank. This explains the historical growth of the Israeli metropolitan core in a linear north-south strip along the coastal plain, rather than the normalized model of exurban concentric rings that would have expanded in an easterly direction into what was the West Bank, but was prevented from doing so by the existence of the border separating Israel from this neighboring region.

The policies put into practice by right-wing governments to promote West Bank settlement have also dispelled another myth of the Israeli planning objectives, namely the dispersal of the country's population away from an overcrowded metropolitan center into the remote and peripheral regions of the country, such as the Negev in the south and the Galilee in the north. Successive governments promoted the colonization of these areas through the provision of cheap land, low interest mortgages, and a range of other benefits to entice new settlers, directly competing with similar benefits that were offered to residents of the country's true peripheries in the Negev and the Galilee, in an attempt to strengthen existing communities and to prevent continued out-migration or to attract new residents to these regions. The result has been unfair competition between the "real"

periphery within the national consensus, to the "new" periphery that was outside the political consensus and which is geographically located in the exurban regions of the metropolitan core.

Government policy favoring the exurban West Bank resulted in a situation termed "double centrality" in which a geographical center was strengthened even further by the package of economic benefits and conditions. Why would someone opt to relocate to a "real" periphery such as the Galilee or the Negev, when one could receive the same benefits by relocating just beyond the metropolitan core region within the suburban commuting belt? The notion of double centrality draws on notions of "double peripherality," which were first discussed by geographer John House back in the early 1980s in an attempt to explain the developmental problems experienced by settlements and communities in geographically peripheral and borderland regions, where the locational attributes were exacerbated by additional social, economic, and educational peripheralities. The promotion of suburban middle-class communities in the West Bank, a geographically central region, is the exact opposite of the double peripherality and explains why this region is so attractive to anyone who does not oppose relocating in the West Bank for political reasons—in which case, no amount of benefits and cheap land will induce them to move.

Tied in with this is the fact that land prices in the West Bank, especially in the earlier phases of the settlement project, were significantly lower than those in the metropolitan core. In a seminal article, Hebrew University geographer and planner, Shalom Reichman (1986), presented the first analysis of the impact of the "line of price discontinuity" on the expansion of the suburban belt beyond the Green Line. Under normalized forms of suburbanization, the price of land has gradually decreased from the inner city centers and the central business districts out toward the suburban and exurban areas. A family then decides to optimize its decision to reside in the inner city or suburb based on the price of land, expected quality of life, travelling distance, and cost of commuting to their workplace.

But in the case of the West Bank, the political impact of the Green Line resulted in a sharp price discontinuity in place of the normal gradual decrease in land prices. Moving eastward from suburban areas such as Kfar Sava (in the 1970s and 1980s), a price per acre of land would undergo a sharp fall rather than a gradual decline when crossing the Green Line. As such, the notion of five minutes from Kfar Sava, which was so strongly promoted by the Likud governments of the early 1980s, kicked in as soon as you crossed the line—a sharp binary discontinuity rather than a gradual decline in the land market. This artificiality of land prices was brought on by political factors and resulted in those areas within the West Bank, but in closest proximity to the Green line, as being the optimal place

for residential relocation, based on the combination of cheap (very cheap) land and relatively short commuting distances.

The construction of houses is but a small part of the problem involved in the creation of new communities. The price of land varies from region to region, but the cost of bricks and mortar is the same everywhere. What is not the same is the access to employment opportunities. Governments throughout the world, not just in Israel, who have attempted to bolster or revitalize peripheral regions have never been successful at creating long-lasting employment opportunities and preventing out-migration and depopulation of remote communities, regardless of the housing conditions.

It is the inability of successive Israeli governments to invest in long-term employment opportunities in the periphery that partially explains the failure of the country's development towns, most of which were established in the country's periphery during the 1950s as a means of absorbing poor immigrants and of encouraging population dispersal away from the country's metropolitan center. But within a short period of time, the more able and ambitious migrants were moving away from these peripheral locations in search of economic opportunities in the metropolitan center.

In the small piece of real estate that is Israel and the West Bank, this has begun to change in recent years, as the substantial improvement in transportation infrastructure (road and rail connections) has eroded the friction of distance between the periphery and the center. This has transformed many of the development towns into a new form of suburbia, enabling some residents of the Negev and the Galilee to remain within their communities and commute to the main employment centers; indeed, the country has by and large become functionally integrated into a single-city state, where the Gush Dan (Tel Aviv) region provides the employment opportunities for the rest of the country, which, in turn, has become transformed into an extended suburb of the single central metropolitan core. Since land and housing prices are so significantly cheaper in the Negev and the Galilee (and the West Bank), greater accessibility to the center is beginning to have a new impact on the development of these regions, based on the commuter-exurbia model rather than a reliance on local employment opportunities.

Since the early 1980s, and the earliest Gush Emunim settlement plans, the West Bank has always enjoyed these locational advantages and this explains the ability of the settler leaders to attract tens of thousands of settlers who are not necessarily turned on by the ideological or political challenges of the West Bank, but have opted for the economic and residential advantages of improving their housing conditions while remaining within the suburban belt of commuting opportunities. The transportation and road infrastructure in the West Bank has also experienced significant improvement during the past two decades, so that those areas

previously considered as too remote and too interior have now been drawn into the expanding exurban reach of the metropolitan center. Thus the opportunities of the suburban belt have become self-perpetuating as the friction of distance decreases, along the classic models of suburbanization and commuting zones.

Municipal and Organizational Structures: The Duality of Functional and Administrative Systems

Despite acting as an ideological opposition to successive governments, the settler leaders have successfully developed a parallel strategy through a process of co-optation within the formal planning and municipal agencies, without which new communities and settlements are unable to receive public resources, to obtain zoning and planning permits, or to provide such essential public services such as welfare, education, garbage disposal, infrastructural development, as well as formal representation within governmental and planning agencies and committees. All of these activities are essential civilian activities that, by international law, are forbidden from taking place in those areas categorized as "Occupied Territories." As such, many of the permits and transfer of resources formally take place through the additional agency of the Civilian Administration (an administrative body dependent on the Ministry of Defense) but, in reality, are no different in nature to those that take place inside Israel that are directly authorized by the regular governmental and civilian agencies.

The most important of these agencies has been the municipal and local governmental framework, which is part and parcel of the local government structure of Israel. This is based on a system of cities, local councils, and regional councils (depending on settlement threshold size and the ability to operate as an independent free-standing community) that is exactly the same as that which operates within Israel. The respective municipal authorities are not differentiated from those inside Israel and take part in the nationwide umbrella organization of municipal authorities when they lobby central government for additional resources. They are all equally subject to the same local government legislation, subsidiary to the Ministry of Interior.

In addition to the normal municipal functioning, the West Bank settlements are also organized through a political lobby, the Council for West Bank Settlements (*Yesha* council), which lobbies on their behalf to government and to other agencies, which municipal authorities are forbidden from doing. As such they operate with parallel governmental and extragovernmental agencies, enabling them to compete for resources over and beyond the normal governmental budgetary transfers.

This system of political duality operates within a number of spheres, not least the echelons of highest government. Over the past three decades, residents of West Bank communities have become increasingly involved in national political life and are currently one of the most overrepresented sectors within the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) through membership in a number of right-wing parties, but never in a settler party as such. The most significant of these is the Bayit Yehudi (formerly Mafdal) Party, whose leader Naftali Bennet (not a West Bank resident) is one of the most extreme prosettler ministers in the present government and has recently proposed formal annexation of some of the settlements to Israel, as well as the "Israel Our House" (Yisrael Beteinu) Party headed by the current Minister of Defense, Avigdor Lieberman, who is a resident of the West Bank. The former housing minister and current Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Uri Ariel)—who has influence over national construction policy including the issuing of building permits for West Bank settlements—and the speaker of the Knesset (Yuli Edelstein) are both West Bank settlers. The government set up in 2015 was even more right wing than its predecessor, with many key functionaries residing in the West Bank and acting as an informal lobby on behalf of their own communities. At the same time, the nongovernmental leadership has continued to promote the settlement project as a political and ideological project that challenges any government policy aimed at slowing down, or freezing, the construction and expansion process. It is hardly surprising that the immediate response to any terrorist attack on Israelis within the West Bank is an immediate demand by the settler leaders to a responsive government, to expand settlements, often named after a resident who has been killed in act of violence.

The freezing (forced cessation) of settlement activity is one of the myths that have been promoted by the political lobby. On numerous occasions during the past twenty years, successive governments have announced a "settlement freeze" as a price that has to be paid for entering into political negotiations with the Palestinians, usually after a period of pressure on the part of the third party—the United States of America. This is, as expected, opposed by the settlement leadership and is portrayed as a dangerous step on the way to future territorial concessions and enforced settlement evacuation. Regardless of occasional settlement freezes, however, the settlement population has continued to grow almost unchecked; indeed, settlement freezes have almost entirely applied to the establishment of new settlements, rarely to the expansion and consolidation of existing settlements, within which the major growth has taken place.

To a certain extent, settlement freezes have been part of a process of progressive consolidation of the settlements. The first years of rapid settlement growth in the late 1970s and 1980s were characterized by a rush to create as many small communities, dispersed throughout the region, as possible. This process reflected, to a certain extent, the preferences of individual settler groups, which aimed at creating their own small community within which they desired to express their own "unique" way of life without recourse to a larger body of residents telling

them what to do. This, however, gave rise to functional and administrative problems: few small communities reached the minimum economic thresholds that were necessary for stand-alone economic sustainability—even allowing for relatively high levels of public subsidization. On the other side, it was important for the settlement planners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the settlements over and beyond the immediate short-term political objectives. They were also keen to show that settlements were self-sustainable and would not continue to be an excessive and disproportional burden on the public purse, even if they believed that this was justifiable in order to attain their political objectives. In addition, longer term political objectives, aimed at creating an irreversible territorial situation, required less artificiality and subsidization and more internal growth.

As a consequence, the so-called settlement freeze, while politically unpalatable to settlers, enabled the planners to focus on the expansion and consolidation of the existing communities into larger settlements with a minimum threshold size, which enabled their functioning as independent communities and the transformation of some of the smaller settlements into fully fledged townships and independent municipalities. The growth of the fully fledged townships enabled demographic growth on a relatively small area of territory, as contrasted with the widespread dispersal of smaller communities throughout the region. The former, such as Kiryat Arba, Emanuel, Beitar Illit, Efrat, and Ariel—contain the bulk of the settler population and are organized as independent standing local councils (along with the large suburban communities) while Ariel has also obtained full "city" status at the top of the local government hierarchy. Some of these towns, notably Emanuel and Beitar Illit, have been populated by ultraorthodox spillover from Jerusalem and Bnei Brak, as their populations grow exponentially and they are unable to afford the cost of housing in the major cities (see Cahaner, chapter 7).

The smaller, more dispersed communities are organized, as in the rest of Israel, through a system of regional councils. But they are structured differently in the West Bank in that, while they provide services to an aggregate of settlements located within their jurisdictional area, they are not responsible for the open land areas between the settlements. Nor do they deal with the Palestinian villages and townships that fall within their municipal area. These latter are catered for through the Palestinian Authority or the Israeli Military Administration. There is therefore a dual and parallel system of municipal administration in a single territory, whereby neighboring Israeli and Palestinian townships are organized through entirely separate systems of local government and do not share resources or size thresholds in their respective provision of public, welfare, or educational services. There is perhaps no other single characteristic of the settlement network that, at one and the same time, reflects the banality of colonization (the functioning of local government and the provision of public services) alongside the artificiality of a system that separates neighboring communities into a system of territorial and spatial duality.

Settlement and the Border Discourse: The Suburban Paradox

Settlements have had a major impact on the border discourse. "Facts on the ground" are of considerable importance, regardless of the moral, ethical, or legal dimensions of the argument. The relocation or forceful evacuation of over 350,000 settlers and their communities (a figure that does not include the residents of East Jerusalem) appears to be unachievable. It therefore requires a demarcation of a border in such a way as to maximize the number of settlers who could remain in situ and offers land swaps as compensation to the Palestinian State/Authority. These are not new ideas. The idea emerged as long ago as the early Track II discussions that took place in Rome, as far back as 1990 (pre-Madrid Conference) and were also considered as part of the Beilin–Abu Maazen negotiations, which took place in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the Oslo Accords in the mid-1990s. But since that time, the settler population has increased threefold, resulting in a spatial situation that no longer lends itself to a "clean" cut and minimal settlement evacuation.

It is often assumed that the settlers who have moved to the West Bank for economic and quality of life reasons will be more amenable to accepting economic compensation on the part of the Israeli government if and when there is a peace agreement that necessitates settlement evacuation and relocation back into Israel proper. They will be less inclined, the argument goes, to oppose a decision taken by the Government aimed at withdrawing from all, or a significant part, of the Occupied Territories. Nor will they wish to be perceived by the rest of Israel as being the obstacle in the way to the implementation of a peace agreement that challenges the democratic foundations, and reputation, of Israeli society.

While this argument has never really been put to the test (the Gaza precedent is an inappropriate frame for any comparison), it has a basic inbuilt geographic and structural contradiction that lies at the very heart of the suburbanization thesis posited in this chapter. It is the major settlement blocs, those in closest proximity to the Green Line, which have a higher preponderance of economic or quality of life settlers who have latched on to the suburbanization process and could therefore be more susceptible to relocating for adequate compensation when, in reality, under any redrawing of the lines they could remain in situ and be included inside Israel. Wherever the line is redrawn, there will always be a significant number of settlers, located in the interior of the region, who would have to be evacuated (assuming that the territorial solution does indeed require clearly delineated compact and contiguous territories without exclaves or bypass roads of any sort). It is these settlements, such as Elon Moreh, Kedumim, Shilo, Beit El, and Ofra,

that constitute the heartland of the ideological and religious settlers who, by most assumptions, will refuse to evacuate under any conditions—with or without compensation.

This is the built-in structural paradox of the suburbanization thesis as it interfaces with the political objectives of settler colonization, namely that those who have been less impacted or influenced by the economic considerations will continue to constitute a major obstacle on the path to drawing future borders. In other words, while suburbanization has served to bolster the overall demographic numbers, it has created a reverse geography inside the West Bank—those who would relocate back to Israel in return for compensation may not need to under a redrawing of the border, while those who remain beyond the border will never agree to peaceful relocation—regardless of the amount of compensation offered to them.

Concluding Comments: On the Banality and Myths of Settlement Colonization in the West Bank

This chapter has revisited the West Bank settlement project with a retrospective of forty years and has placed the political objectives of the project within the framework of planning mechanisms and agencies. It has explained the relative "success" of the settler movement by showing how its leaders were able to latch on to the trends of suburbanization and exurbanization to promote settlement in a region that is geographically close to the metropolitan center of the country. At the same time, this chapter has shown how this process has taken place against a background of a series of myths that have been used to sell the political message of the settler movement—such as settling the periphery, the dispersal of population, pioneering under difficult conditions, settlement freeze, and the potential for settlement evacuation. For forty years, the settlement movement and its leaders have successfully employed a dual strategy, one operating within government and its formal agencies, the other operating as an extragovernmental political lobby, an argument that was made as early as the mid-1980s (Newman 1986). Almost fifty years of unceasing settlement activity has demonstrated the effectiveness of this dual strategy.

Colonization through suburbanization is the essential banalization of the settlement project, transforming settlement into a series of daily life activities, such as cheap housing, easy commuting distances, better quality of life conditions, such that for all those who are not opposed to the settlement project, the potential for relocation to the West Bank is not considered a dangerous or threatening political endeavor. It is for this reason that while the settlement movement has not achieved its ultimate objective of formal de jure annexation of the region, they have created enough realities on the ground to substantially prevent any move

toward the first stages of conflict resolution and associated Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank through the demarcation of mutually acceptable borders.

References

Newman, David. 1986. "Gush Emunim between Fundamentalism and Pragmatism," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 39: 33–43.

——. 1996. "The Territorial Politics of Exurbanization: Reflections on 25 Years of the Jewish Settlement Process in the West Bank." *Israel Affairs* 3 (1): 61–85.

——. 2005. "From 'Hitnachalut' to 'Hitnatkut': The Impact of Gush Emunim and the Settlement Movement on Israeli Society." *Israel Studies* 10 (3): 192–224.

——. 2006. "Colonization as Suburbanization: The Politics of the Land Market at the Frontier." In *City of Collision*, edited by P. Misselwitz, 113–120. Basel, Switzerland: Birkhäuser.

Portugali, Juval, and Newman, David. 1986. *Spatial Interaction between Israelis and Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Research report presented to the Ford Foundation, New York.

Reichmann, Shalom. 1986. "Policy Reduces the World to Essentials: A Reflection on the Jewish Settlement Process in the West Bank since 1967." In *Planning in Turbulence*, edited by D. Morley and A. Shachar, 83–96. Jerusalem: Magnes.