2 The Politics of Lifeworld Colonization in the Occupied Golan

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Introduction

Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights deploys multiple techniques of sovereign power. As in other settler colonial contexts, the control of land – over territory, resources and bodies – was secured first by the large-scale displacement of a native population then followed by the marginalization of remaining, mostly Druze, communities. The contributions to this volume reveal the scope of settler colonial practices in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, focusing on the period of de facto annexation; that is, the application of Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration to the territory mandated by the 1981 Golan Heights Law. Annexation is an act that violates international legal norms prohibiting the acquisition of territory by force. Indeed, it was in these terms that the UN Security Council declared the Israeli Golan Heights Law 'null and void and without international legal effect' (UN Security Council Resolution 497). However, annexation was enacted in practice through Israeli domestic law, switching the occupation regime from military to civil government. Despite Israeli efforts at normalization, a key argument running through the chapters of this book is that this annexation has intensified settler colonization in the Golan Heights, which is experienced by the Jawlani people as institutionalized injustice.

Settler colonialism is a political-economic formation featuring the appropriation of land and resources through territorial conquest and settlement: across centuries, settler colonial enterprises have displaced and devastated indigenous populations (Choi 2016; Veracini 2010). Settler colonial logic is shot through with violence, with the physical uprooting and material dispossession of indigenous peoples matched by an erasure of their cultures (Bourdieu and Sayad 1964; Mbembe 2003: 25–30). The symbolic violence of settler colonial uprooting can intensify social pathologies tied to more general processes of state development and capitalist accumulation. While scholarship on contemporary settler colonialism, covering subaltern/ indigenous studies and other critical perspectives, is aware of its diverse forms of domination, the links to these wider political-economic processes are arguably less well understood. They point to a need to treat Israeli settler colonialism in the occupied Syrian Golan not simply as a state of exception, reducible to a Zionist project of ethnic cleansing, but conjoined with other state and market processes which have transformative consequences for the Jawlani people and their land.

Within critical social theory there is a broader idea of colonization to denote certain pathological tendencies within advanced capitalist societies, most notably, the *lifeworld colonization thesis* of the German philosopher and sociologist, Jürgen Habermas (1987). Expressed simply, lifeworld colonization describes the harmful encroachment by political power and market-led exchange on the integrity of ordinary human life – those areas of culture, society and personality which generate shared values and meaning. To what extent is lifeworld colonization, elaborated on below, relevant to understanding the effects of settler colonization in the occupied Golan Heights? More specifically:

1. How are settler colonial processes affected by market and bureaucratic logics?

2. How do settler colonial processes contribute to lifeworld colonization?

3. What are the political implications for those communities resisting settler colonialism?

These three research questions are not simply abstract enquiries, for the goal of critical social theory is to explain and evaluate processes which impact on everyday lives and livelihoods, uncovering new possibilities for self-determination. In this chapter, I argue that the lifeworld colonization thesis offers a useful starting point for examining how settler colonial practices interact with, and intensify, processes of political and economic domination for occupied peoples, though this framing must reckon with the material and symbolic violence of settler colonialism.

The lifeworld colonization thesis

For Habermas the lifeworld is the taken-for-granted stock of background knowledge which facilitates everyday social interaction. Reproduction of the lifeworld takes place through shared processes of interpretation which shape cultural knowledge, social integration and the socialization of individuals. Modern life, Habermas argues, involves a rationalization of the lifeworld, such that its structural components (culture, society, personality) become differentiated and more reflexive: cultural traditions are openly questioned, societies are integrated by more abstract norms (e.g. law) and individual personalities draw on more diverse identities (Habermas 1987: 140–48). However, to function as practical knowledge, the lifeworld still provides a largely taken-for-granted horizon for communication. Think, for example, about how many individuals keep dogs as pets without reflecting on the cultural traditions and social values that mark dogs as companion animals, or without questioning the instrumental breeding of dogs for desired traits, such as appearance, docility or aggression. To question the idea of the dog as pet makes little sense for those whom this is part of the natural order of things. In many societies dogs are treated as akin to family or community

members: for people under occupation, dogs and other companion animals may indeed support precarious human lives and highlight wider relationships of injury and care (Johnson 2019).

Separate from the rationalization of the lifeworld is the core argument, put forward by Habermas, that its communicative reproduction is systemically degraded under advanced capitalism; that is, under a state-regulated market economy. The thesis of lifeworld colonization is that runaway systems of market-led exchange and governmental decision-making disrupt social integration, creating a 'pathological deformation of the communicative infrastructure of the lifeworld' (Habermas 1987: 375); that is to say, unrestrained market exchange (profit maximization) and administrative interventions overwhelm people. Rather than relating to each other in more or less autonomous terms as workers and active citizens, individuals increasingly assume the passive roles of consumers and bureaucratic clients. Political and economic systems are experienced as holding overbearing and unchecked power over the lives of ordinary people. This generates, he argues, three major social pathologies (Habermas 1987: 140–43):

1. Loss of meaning: commodification and bureaucratization suppress the lifeworld reproduction of culture, overwhelming the capacity of actors to make sense of new situations. This may lead to the unsettling of collective identities as cultural knowledge loses its continuity and coherence for everyday life.

2. Anomie: commodification and bureaucratization displace lifeworld-enabled forms of social integration, such that individuals experience a fragmentation of collective identities and a loss of solidarity with other community members.

3. Psychopathologies: individuals face serious threats to their mental well-being from disturbances to their sense of self. A reduced ability to cope with the proliferating,

exacting demands issuing from market and bureaucratic systems results in experiences of alienation and other forms of psychological harm.

These are complex cultural, social and psychological processes which open up various avenues for research across multiple disciplines. However, several methodological implications are clear for applying the thesis of lifeworld colonization to situations in which market exchanges or bureaucratic measures are experienced by individuals as unsettling and harmful. Examining damaged lifeworlds invites a substantive focus on *specific pathologies and the socio-political reactions to them*; for example, political alienation, contested educational settings, economic exploitation, and the degradation of valued environments. Empirical access to the meaning-rich structure of lifeworlds typically requires *qualitative methodologies* (e.g. narrative interviews, participant observation, oral histories and hybrid archives) that can capture the cultural texture of everyday lives. At the same time, as demonstrated this book, these empirical investigations are best based on a *co-investigation model* in which diverse representatives from the communities studied take a major role in shaping the scope and practices of research.

In settler colonial contexts, the idea of lifeworld colonization may be analytically useful insofar as it helps us identify, and explain, the extent to which settler colonial processes harness market and bureaucratic logics. Settler colonialism as a governance structure features sharp asymmetries of material and ideological power, so we would expect lifeworld colonization to be intensified for indigenous inhabitants, creating antagonistic conditions for political exchange between those communities and the settler state. And this politics is likely to feature protracted struggles over the collective identities of subordinated groups, invoking such markers as place, nationality and faith. However, there is a theoretical question as to whether the lifeworld colonization thesis fully captures the structural effects of Israeli settler colonialism. For a self-professed critical intellectual prominent in public

debates, Habermas untenably refused to comment on Israeli politics (Limone 2012), while the relevance of the theory has been questioned in non-Western cultural contexts (Bailey 2013: 3). Although it shares many institutional properties with European democracies, Israel's 'illiberal democracy' or 'ethnocracy' is not the Western model of welfare capitalism analysed by Habermas: its military expansion and settlement of occupied territories rests on an ethnic particularism at odds with constitutional commitments to democracy and other universal values (Harel-Shalev and Peleg 2014; Yiftachel 2006).

Similarly, it is also justified to query whether the account of lifeworld colonization given by Habermas can grasp the systemic damage to lived experiences from forms of domination which may not simply arise from money and bureaucratic power, but also reside already in the lifeworld, such as subordination based on gender, sexuality and race (Fraser 1985; Simpson 2019). In the occupied Golan Heights, there are also complex relationships over the reproduction of the Druze religion in Jawlani society; for example, the erosion of the authority of religious leaders over social and cultural norms, and how this impacts political leadership (see Chapter 3). To be sure, the lifeworld colonization thesis does not claim to register all forms of symbolic change to persons and communities, nor does it assume that lifeworlds are 'innocent' of internal forms of domination. It claims to identify specific vectors of harm damaging everyday subjectivities through overbearing processes of market and political power. The central question here is whether settler colonial rule aggravates these pathologies of lifeworld colonization.

A convergence of settler colonialism and lifeworld colonization in the occupied Golan Heights?

The theoretical reservations above counsel against an uncritical application of the lifeworld colonization thesis in the Golan Heights, yet there remains a genuine analytical need to

establish how wider circuits of commodification and state control impact on a Jawlani population marginalized by annexation. Responding to the research questions listed in the introduction to this chapter, I present three broad findings that suggest a significant convergence of settler colonialism and lifeworld colonization in the occupied Golan Heights: (i) the settler colonial skewing of market and bureaucratic logics, (ii) the intensification of lifeworld colonization under settler colonialism, and (iii) a major political role for identity-based resistance.

1. *Settler colonial skewing of market and bureaucratic logics*

In the lifeworld colonization model, money and state power regulate social relations instrumentally, which become more detached from lifeworld processes of linguistic communication and mutual understanding (Habermas 1987: 154). Colonization occurs through the encroachment in everyday lives of capitalist economic and bureaucratic systems. In advanced capitalist societies, these market and state logics acquire a growing hold over individuals, although neoliberal capitalism features a turbocharged commodification throwing off regulatory constraints. The evolution of the Israeli economy mirrors neoliberal changes in the global political economy, with a major drive towards market liberalization from the mid-1980s. While influenced by these ideological shifts within Israeli capitalism, settler colonization in the Golan Heights has followed a more primitive model of capital accumulation. Its *skewed institutionalization of market and state governance* is founded on the state-orchestrated appropriation of land and other resources, allied with settlement subsidies and commercial incentives for those moving into the Golan Heights from Israel. In contrast, the remaining Jawlani population, prevented from travel to Syria, was pushed into wage labour within the settler economy or otherwise forced to seek alternative livelihoods within a constricted local economy.

In economic terms, therefore, the Israeli occupation of the Golan enacted a form of primitive accumulation, in which capitalist market expansion is realised by seizing land and assets from populations treated as economically unproductive (Bin 2018; Harvey 2013). To be sure, geostrategic defence served as the immediate justification for the conquest of the Golan Heights, and the first Israeli settlements were defensively dispersed across captured Syrian territory. Settlement activity accelerated in the period following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, including the planning and construction of Katzrin as an urban centre (Kipnis 2013: 157-60). Primitive accumulation in the Golan Heights involved the state-sanctioned appropriation of natural resources and other assets by para-statal agencies (Jewish National Fund, the Settlement Department of the World Zionist Federation). In July 1967 Military Orders No. 20 and No. 21 authorized, respectively, the unhindered acquisition of 'abandoned' private property and government property. Military rule (1967 to 1981) facilitated early colonization, with state support for Jewish settlements and infrastructure development, although the number of Jewish settlers fell short of settlement planning targets (Kipnis 2013: 144). De facto annexation marked a significant change in the regime of primitive accumulation towards greater freedom for Israeli market actors to invest in and steer economic development in the Golan. Economic activity increased after the collapse of peace negotiations between Israel and Syria (1993-2000), which removed uncertainty over possible withdrawal by Israel of at least some occupied Syrian territory. For the Golan, the Israeli turn to export-oriented neoliberalism in the 2000s saw expansion of agriculture, tourism, high-tech industry (e.g. Katzrin Industrial Park) and oil exploration.

However, Israeli neoliberalism is still heavily steered by state preferences, notably a national security paradigm that views colonization of occupied territories as critical to the sovereign realisation of a Greater Israel (Kampf 2018; Mandelkern and Shalev 2021). Thus, the protracted conflict in Syria prompted Israel to boost settlement activity and economic

investment in the Golan Heights. The 2014–2019 regional development plan featured the creation of 750 farming estates for settlers on 30,000 dunums (3000 hectares) of annexed land, supported by state investment in agricultural training and water infrastructure (Al-Marsad 2014). In summer 2018 the Syrian government regained full control of the eastern Golan Heights and the border with Israel, but the Israeli government remained concerned about the presence of pro-Iranian militias and Hezbollah within or alongside Syrian military forces deployed in the region. Addressing the United Nations Security Council in April 2020, Syria's representative to the UN reasserted the right of the Syrian Arab Republic to reclaim sovereignty over the full Golan Heights.

US recognition in March 2019 of the occupied Golan Heights as Israeli sovereign territory emboldened plans to deepen its domestic economic integration consistent with national industrial policy. The territory is at the heart of a renewable energy drive tied to Israeli support for investment in green technologies. In January 2020 the Israeli government announced NIS 250 million of state investment to develop northern wind turbine farms consistent with the operational needs of the military (Halon 2020): objections from the Israel Defense Forces had previously stalled the construction of wind turbines. The largest planned wind turbine development is in the Golan Heights, with a number of public and private Israeli companies developing wind farms which will feed electricity to Israeli settlements and to the national grid. One major wind farm project, planned since 2013 by the Israeli company Energix with support from the Israeli Committee for National Infrastructures, is due to be located on Jawlani agricultural land and the site of the former Syrian village of Sahaita. According to Al-Marsad – an Arab human rights NGO in the Golan Heights – Energix had, by 2018, persuaded about forty Jawlani landowners to sign lease agreements (Southlea and Brik 2019: 17–20). Broader consequences of the wind farm development are projected to be restriction of the expansion of adjacent Jawlani villages and the destruction of agricultural

land, which will further undermine Jawlani economic self-determination in the Golan (Southlea and Brik 2019: 47–49).

The bureaucratic logic of political integration in the occupied Golan Heights is also skewed towards settler colonial interests, because the Israeli state – including its defence and security apparatus – is invested in consolidating its annexation of the territory and exercising greater control over communal structures of Jawlani authority. Political autonomy continues to be denied to the large majority of Jawlanis who have refused Israeli citizenship since 1981, excluding them from meaningful participation in regional and local decision-making. Indeed, the Isreali annexation of the Golan Heights has produced a distinct political formation of 'statelessness' in which those most of the remaining Jawlanis, who were previously Syrian citizens, are categorised by Israel has having 'undefined nationality' on their identity cards. The statelessness of the Jawlanis in the Golan Heights is an indicator of the symbolic violence of the occupying power, enacting differential rights to settlers and the colonized, whilst at the same time seeking to legitimate and normalize its presence through the civil administration of annexation (Mbembe 2003: 25–26; Ram 2015). The extensive bureaucratic apparatus of 'Israelification' within the territory creates multiple 'client' roles for those consuming Israeli public services in areas such as education, drinking water, emergency services and culture. At the same, though, the ongoing production of 'statelessness' by the Israel is a source of political instability insofar as those Jawlanis refusing citizenship regard other national (Syrian) or religious (Druze) categories as oppositional to the Israeli state (Kastrinou et al. 2020).

This is evident in the politics of Israeli-controlled municipal government. Since 1974, Israel has directly appointed the heads of local councils in the Jawlani villages. An attempt at bureaucratic normalization took place in October 2018 when the four Jawlani villages were included in the round of municipal elections taking place across Israel. While the Israeli

authorities represented this to the Jawlani residents as an opportunity to register their political

concerns (they were all afforded the right to vote), they roundly rejected the elections. The

skewed political logic of annexation was evident in the fact that only Israeli citizens could

stand for election as village mayors. Jawlani candidates with Israeli citizenship withdrew

from the mayoral elections in Buqʻatha and Masʻada, while voter turnout was only 1.3 per

cent in ʻEin Qiniya and 3.3 per cent in Majdal Shams. In Buqʻatha the Israeli authorities

reappointed by fiat the existing unelected mayor (Delforno 2019: 36–37). For the Jawlanis,

rejecting the municipal elections was also a political affirmation of their own community

structures, notably the long-established village *khalwas*, the Druze congregation houses,

which have assumed increased political significance since annexation by serving as a vehicle

for popular mobilization (Fakher Eldin 2019: 81–83).

      The settler colonial skewing of market and political logics in the Golan Heights may

suggest conditions more severe, and therefore far removed, from the economic and

bureaucratic processes claimed by Habermas to drive lifeworld colonization in European

capitalist states. As with other instances of Israeli military conquest (Cohen and Gordon

2018), the seizure of resources and ethno-racial classification of land seem to bear little if any

resemblance to the liberal market systems governed by Western democracies. However,

Israeli settler colonialism is a major historical variant of what Ince (2018) calls the

constitutive violence of capitalist market relations – a structural property not captured by the

lifeworld colonization model, which analyses a late stage of European capitalism detached

from its bloody genesis in colonial expansion and racial domination. The occupation then

annexation of the Golan Heights by Israel lays bare the 'capital-positing violence' of

primitive accumulation (Ince 2018: 900) – the use of military-political coercion at the frontier

to enact the capitalization of social relations through resource dispossession and the economic

subordination of the Arab population. Thus, while there were arguably higher levels of

'unregulated' state violence enacting primitive accumulation during the first years of military occupation (e.g. population displacement, direct seizure of resources and destruction of civilian objects), the later shift to civil rule and market-led investment in the annexed Golan Heights represents a *consolidation* rather than reversal of primitive accumulation. Under annexation the state-driven project of settler colonization has intensified, bolstered more recently by the fragmentation of Syria and US recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan.

2. *The intensification of lifeworld colonization under settler colonialism*

The Israeli military invasion in June 1967 marked a violent rupture in the lives and livelihoods of the rural communities in the Syrian Golan. In the 1960s there was already heavy militarization, with frequent Syrian-Israeli border clashes prior to the June 1967 war. The massive devastation caused by that war, including the displacement of the majority Sunni Muslim population, is carefully documented elsewhere (e.g. Murphy and Gannon 2008). While settlement in the Golan was not a motivation for the military capture of the area and some Israeli political leaders were willing to consider territorial concessions for a peace agreement with Syria, settlement planning began in October 1967 (Kipnis 2013: 82) and the state-led promotion of permanent settlement proceeded apace in the 1970s with a focus on agricultural enterprises. The settler colonial regime of primitive accumulation in the occupied Golan Heights overturned a system of property relations nominally governed by state socialism (under variants of Ba'athist ideology), although the rural economy was mostly subsistence-based agriculture. Over time both communal and often private land was seized as Syrian property law was extinguished. The 1981 Golan Heights Law marked a further step-change in natural resource exploitation, as the move to Israeli civil law and administration created conditions more open to private economic investment. Visible landscape-level changes – oil drilling, viticulture, cattle ranching, and the development of Mount Hermon ski

resort (on land taken from Majdal Shams village) – attest to the growing capitalization of the settler rural economy since annexation.

My claim that *lifeworld colonization is intensified under settler colonialism* refers to the cumulative social-cultural impact, in the Golan Heights, of these three phases of colonizing power. Firstly, there was the abrupt, external shock on the Syrian population of an Israeli military invasion that destroyed civilian infrastructure, displaced people and seized land. Secondly, there was the systemic harm to the remaining Druze communities caused by the first round of primitive accumulation under military occupation (1967 to 1981). For Israel, economic 'modernization' in the Golan meant investment and employment opportunities in early settlement enterprises, but this was experienced as brutal dispossession by the Syrian Druze in the north, as the bulk of their lands were seized and zoned for exclusive Jewish use. Lastly, the annexation in 1981, the shift from military rule to Israeli civil administration, created social conditions open to the type of lifeworld colonization attributed by Habermas to advanced capitalism, as growing commodification and bureaucratization penetrated everyday lives. However, only to associate lifeworld pathologies with the normalization logic of annexation would be to miss the deep, enduring legacy of lifeworld damage in Jawlani communities – the cultural, social and personal harm produced by the sharp economic and political asymmetries of settler colonial rule.

Arguably the principal *symbolic damage* unleashed by settler colonialism in the occupied Golan is the wholesale devaluation by Israel of the cultural and social standing of a non-Jewish population no longer regarded as 'native' (Mamdani 2020: 254). The efforts of the displaced Syrian population to maintain family and other cultural ties with those still living in the Golan Heights have long been frustrated by restrictions placed by Israel on cross-border movements, while there are also unresolved restitution and compensation claims for lost and destroyed property (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2007; Russell

2018). At the same time, the remaining Druze communities clustered in the north have faced a *systemic misrecognition* of their place-based Jawlani identities, which are erased by a state-led Zionist ideology celebrating the 'return' of the Golan Heights to the land of Israel. This injustice of misrecognition is distinct from, but inextricably fused to, the distributive losses of resource dispossession and political disenfranchisement (Mason and Dajani 2019).

The material legacy of material destruction from the occupation also underwrites the social and cultural devaluation by Israel of the Jawlani people. Within months of the start of the Israeli occupation in June 1967, the military had systematically demolished hundreds of Syrian villages and farms, ostensibly for security reasons. In the village of Kushniyah, the mosque remained as the only standing structure (Plate 2.1), used by the Israeli military for training. In 1974, as the Israeli military withdrew from further gains made in the Golan Heights during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Jewish National Fund tractors bulldozed the Syrian city of Quneitra, a regional centre for Circassians since the late nineteenth century (Kipnis 2013: 160-61). These actions violated international humanitarian law prohibitions against extensive damage to, and material destruction, of civilian objects, including cultural heritage (Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1954: ratified by Israel in October 1957). In dissolving a Syrian territorial space, the selection of place-names for Israeli settlements, parks and forests in the Golan Heights also serves as an important instrument for Zionist landscape transformation, with the new names reflecting various Jewish ideologies and settlement types. Jawlani geographic markers face both cultural appropriation, as when the Arabic names of destroyed Syrian villages are subsumed into Hebrew versions, and cultural erasure, when ancient names invoke biblical and Talmudic authority to signal historic Jewish presence on the land (Cohen and Kilot 1992).

[INSERT Plate 2 here: **FULL PAGE SIZE**]

Plate 2: Ruined Al-Kushniyah Mosque, 2019. Photo: Michael Mason

The intangible properties of cultural reproduction (e.g. community solidarity and shared histories) structuring lifeworlds are particularly vulnerable to debilitation by an occupying power. Empirical evidence that settler colonial practices intensify lifeworld colonization in the Golan Heights would encompass the full range of crises encountered when there are disturbances in cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization (Habermas 1987: 143). Some pathologies in Jawlani life experiences may simply reflect stresses from wider impacts of 'cultural globalization', though these are often inflected by settler colonial policies and practices. Under occupation/annexation, there can simultaneously be processes of cultural homogenization (e.g. the use of Hebrew by younger Jawlanis in social media) and politically motivated cultural division (e.g. the co-opting by Israeli-appointed municipal councils of local artists). There are also internal social tensions between

religious leaders and the wider community over, for example, loyalty to the Syrian government or conservative positions on gender equality. Moreover, the idea of Jawlani indigeneity, as a vehicle for social integration, is both defined against and made unstable by settler colonization. Systemic misrecognition of the Syrian and Arab faces of Jawlani culture is consistent with Israel's essentialist 'othering' of them as Druze; for example, the Israeli-imposed 'Druze curriculum' in local schools, which represents the Jawlani population as a Druze minority separate from regional Arab communities and identities (Chapter 6 in this volume: see also Abbas 2020; Aun 2018).

Finally, lifeworld colonization in the Golan Heights is intensified by the particular *ecologies of violence* generated by settler colonialism. A major lacuna in the notion of lifeworld formulated by Habermas is its anthropocentric disregard of underlying ecological conditions – the fact that culture, society and personality are entangled with, and sustained by, metabolic interactions with more-than-human entities and processes. Military conflict and occupation produce transformative ecologies, in which the production of harm is often a complex bio-psycho-social wounding (Abu Sitta et al. 2016; Mason 2011). Through its occupation and effacement of Syrian territory, Israel opened up Mediterranean grassland landscapes to capitalization and commodification. Not only did this feature the dispossession of Jawlani land and water resources, but also the production of settler ecologies; for example, the planting of non-native forests by Keren Kayemet LeYisrael/Jewish National Fund (e.g. Mevo Hama Forest), the extensive creation of nature reserves (a zoning applied also to the Banias River and Lake Ram), and attempts to reintroduce to the Golan Heights such 'biblical animals' as the Nubian ibex and the Jacob sheep (Kastrinou et al. 2020: 11–13). The recreational commodification by Israel of the Golan Heights – as a popular holiday destination – makes great play of the green open spaces which are an ecological palimpsest over an erased agrarian landscape. Israeli settler colonialism in the Golan Heights thus adopts

'environmental protection' as a technology of occupation, with conservation and other investments in ecological assets naturalizing domination. These transformative settler ecologies are an inherent part of lifeworld colonization in the occupied Golan Heights.

3. *A major political role for identity-based resistance*

In its original formulation, the thesis of lifeworld colonization addresses 'new' potentials for political protest emerging in late capitalist societies since the 1960s, such as feminism, environmentalism, the peace movement, religious fundamentalism, anti-regulatory campaigns and movements for autonomy. Habermas claims that these protest tendencies, which encompass both reactionary and progressive forms, are driven less by distributional conflicts than the defence of conditions of life threatened by the growth and reach of economic-administrative systems. Resistance to experiences of lifeworld colonization can therefore be expected to feature a major role for political mobilizations by those fighting social-cultural marginalization (Habermas 1987: 391–96). More generally, this type of reaction can motivate the formation of a *resistance identity* that challenges a hegemonic logic of cultural devaluation and stigmatization (Castells 1997: 6–12). To what extent is the identity-based resistance in the Golan Heights motivated by lifeworld colonization? In the occupied Syrian Golan, the round of primitive accumulation unleashed by Israel in 1967 had major distributional consequences – notably resource dispossession and population displacement – which have yet to be peacefully resolved. However, the continuation of older distributional grievances is not necessarily inconsistent with, and may feed into, an identity-based politics of Jawlani resistance. The question is what types of protest mobilization would likely be motivated by the oppressive economic and political control over Jawlani lives exercised by Israel in the Golan Heights?

If settler colonial practices are indeed intensifying lifeworld colonization, we would expect to see forms of protest consistent with the claim that political resistance would feature

prominently the defence of the Jawlanis as a distinct ethno-geographic community. This seems particularly to be the case since the de facto annexation at the end of 1981, which triggered six months of strikes and mass demonstrations by Jawlanis, then saw the longer-term emergence of a collective strategy of non-violent resistance informed by the idea of *sumud* (steadfastness). Rootedness to the land is at the heart of Jawlani strategies of political mobilization in the Golan, which have also forged solidarity with those Palestinians invoking sumud as strategy of resistance. It motivates those cooperative organizations supporting agriculture – notably the reclamation of common land and cultivation of fruit trees – and the development of alternative water infrastructure (Dajani and Mason 2019; Kastrinou et al. 2020), alongside initiatives favouring socio-cultural autonomy, such as community health care delivery and alternative educational and youth events. In the wake of annexation, various civil society groupings emerged to provide social alternatives to the Israeli colonization of Jawlani social and cultural space – the Golan Academic Association (now the Arab Association for Development), the Women's Committee in the Golan and, more recently, the human rights organization Al-Marsad (since 2003).

This collective strategy of non-violent resistance, which draws on religious beliefs as well as secular political ideas, informed the overwhelming rejection by the Jawlanis of the October 2018 municipal elections administered by Israel. The public announcement of the elections by the Israeli government actually forged new political unity amongst a population divided over the conflict in Syria. This created a broad-based coalition which issued a statement reaffirming the Syrian identity of the Jawlan and rejected the proposed election as the illegitimate act of an occupying power (Alaawar 2018). What followed was a series of political statements, demonstrations and a one-day strike (Delforno 2019: 31). On election day (30 October), after gathering early in Sultan Al Atrash Square in the centre of Majdal Shams, about 500 demonstrators marched to the polling station to protest peacefully outside,

attracting another 500-1000 supporters. Shortly after midday, Israeli police forcefully dispersed them with tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets, injuring thirty-six protestors. This use of violence provoked further protests and a further collective statement condemning the elections (Delforno 2019: 34). Fakher Eldin observes an identity-based politics motivating what may seem a paradoxical rejection of an opportunity to vote: 'the Jawlanis decided not to play the occupying power's game; they chose to fight for whatever autonomy they had managed to carve out and to continue having a say in determining their political outlook as well as the symbols and sentiments that govern their private and public lives' (2019: 88).

The Jawlani Youth Movement, which had been instrumental in the campaign against the municipal elections, also organized protests against the development of wind energy in the northern Golan Heights, including a major demonstration in January 2020 of thousands of Jawlanis in Sultan Al Atrash Square. In 2018, Al-Marsad had undertaken a comprehensive investigation of the wind farm plan, then convened a committee of community activists to organise public meetings to discuss the project: the overwhelming response was to oppose the placing of wind turbines on Jawlani land (Southlea and Brik 2019: 4–5). Dajani (2020) draws attention, amongst those opposing the wind energy project, to the young educated Jawlanis who mostly live outside the Golan Heights in Israeli and Palestinian cities. In their representation of the wind farm proposals as 'green energy colonialism', they sustain – from their scattered locations – a resistance narrative that the protection of Jawlani land is a defence, and affirmation, of collective identity against an occupying power. The landscape-shaping power of the wind turbines, promoted by their developers as a benign, low-carbon technology, is seen as a threat to Jawlani ways of life.

Jawlani political mobilization is not free of internal divisions, for resistance to annexation coexists with the everyday pressures of normalization, which provide practical

conveniences and tangible benefits to those accepting, or resigning to, their fate as residents of Israel. Normalization has seen several Druze religious leaders (*'uqqal*) co-opted by Israeli state actors. In this context, it is remarkable that, in the face of Israel's considerable material and symbolic power over their land and resources, the Jawlanis continue to be able to contest and sometimes override Israel's local domination. Fakher Eldin (2019) attributes this in large part to the continuing influence of the khalwas in the boycotts of the Israeli municipal elections and opposition to Israeli wind turbine development adjacent to Druze villages. The khalwas represent a focus of moral-political authority, outside Israeli state structures, validating Jawlani life experiences and collective identity. As such, they are not raising policy-oriented demands of a state but articulating *anti-colonial* claims against a state in defence of communal norms of autonomy (Fakher Eldin 2019: 82). The long history of anti-colonial resistance in the Golan Heights reaches back over a century to liberation struggles against the French Mandate and the Ottoman Empire (Neep 2012). It is no surprise, therefore, that the recent demonstrations against the Israeli municipal elections and wind energy development both converged in Sultan Al Atrash Square, around a monument to the Druze military leader who had fought both the Ottomans and the French. This monument and its setting serve as a lifeworld resource for the Jawlanis – a public space facilitating collective anger as a legitimate form of political expression against oppression (Srinivasan 2018).

Conclusion

The thesis of lifeworld colonization was developed to account for systemic tendencies in advanced capitalism which, it is claimed, fracture the semantic coherence and continuity of everyday life. Colonization describes the damage to cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization caused by the growing intrusion into the lifeworld of processes of commodification and bureaucratization. In this chapter I consider the relevance of the social

scientific theory of lifeworld colonization to the settler colonial context of the occupied Golan Heights. Israel's occupation of the Syrian territory displaced most of the native population and marginalized those that remained, whilst facilitating Jewish settlements and enterprises. However, while there was both material and symbolic colonization, the market and state logics employed – primitive accumulation and military rule – enacted less an encroachment than a shock treatment skewed towards settler-colonial domination. The transition to Israeli civil administration in 1981 did not temper this coercive assault on Jawlani lifeworlds. As shown by the chapters in this volume, lifeworld colonization was intensified by annexation: we can observe a wholesale, ongoing devaluation by Israel of a diverse range of Jawlani social-cultural and ecological practices.

There is a conceptual reckoning here for a critical theory of the lifeworld that is silent on settler colonial violence, although it is instructive to explore whether its critique of advanced capitalism helps us to understand at least some of the power dynamics of a settler colonial state accorded a privileged position within the global economy. Israel was accepted into the OECD in 2010 without any interrogation of its economic exploitation of occupied territories or other forms of institutionalized discrimination against Palestinians and Jawlanis. The lifeworld of these peoples, their 'common-sense reality', is articulated amidst the political, economic and cultural colonization of the occupying power. Wrenched politically from their Syrian citizenship, the remnant Jawlanis have largely defined themselves in opposition to the Israeli occupation of their land: the 'Jawlani' identity is a dynamic hybrid of place-making, Syrian nationality, the Druze faith and secular political ideas. The major role for identity-based protests expected by the lifeworld colonization thesis seems borne out by Jawlani political mobilization in the Golan Heights. As noted above, there are a wide variety of efforts to defend and promote Jawlani ways of life. At the same time, Jawlani 'statelessness' means that their grievances are not equivalent to those raised by Israeli

citizens *as citizens* about harmful policies of a state otherwise treated as legitimate; instead, they are the more basic articulation of anti-colonial resistance against an occupying power. This antagonistic political subjectivity has been energized by the Israeli state using the US recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights to justify further settlement-building and economic development in the territory. Jawlani resistance is also energized by right-wing Israeli governments doubling down on domestic policies that marginalize non-Jewish groups, such as the 2018 Nation-State Law (which provoked opposition from the Israeli Druze community, including serving and retired members of the Israeli military). In these circumstances, the Jawlanis have identified an existential threat to their lifeworlds.

Finally, we can recall that, as a theoretical claim, lifeworld colonization invites the collection and assessment of relevant evidence, above all from the first-person perspective of those Jawlanis living under conditions of political-economic and cultural domination. Critical social scientific research must be open to inclusive methodological strategies for capturing the textures and traumas of everyday life within the Golan Heights – the impaired, but also robust, processes of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization which shape Jawlani lifeworlds. This is a reflexive task for the researcher and one that informs the contributions to this book, notably those Jawlani voices under-represented in Anglophone literature on the region. The extent to which the idea of lifeworld colonization helps to explain the power dynamics of settler colonialism requires an empirical interrogation that is receptive to the social and cultural forms of expression of those marginalized. To be valid in the setting of the occupied Syrian Golan, it should explain how processes of commodification and bureaucratization under Israeli state capitalism manifest as settler colonial policies and practices experienced as harmful by Jawlanis. And to understand how, in the face of such an over-determined colonization, Jawlani communities somehow remain able to realize alternative ways of living and undertake collective resistance.

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