BOOK FORUM

• • • • • • • • • •

Ian S. Lustick, *Paradigm Lost: From Two-State Solution to One-State Reality* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

DEBATE

Social Transformation or a Two-State Solution to the One-State Problem?

Ian Lustick's *Paradigm Lost* has garnered considerable attention among scholars and educated laypersons and for good reason. The book presents two bold arguments. The first is that the two-state solution (TSS) has become no more plausible than any other solution in the twenty-first century. More specifically, a negotiated TSS is now impossible. Second, the main, albeit not the only, causes for the failure to negotiate a TSS stem from what Lustick refers to as (1) a flaw in Israel's Iron Wall strategy, (2) viewing the Israeli experience through the prism of the Holocaust, and (3) the impact of the pro-Israel lobby in the United States, which has prevented the necessary pressure on the Israeli government to advance the compromises required for a TSS. These two arguments are not intrinsically tied, and readers can comfortably accept one without accepting the other.

The argument likely to attract the most attention is about the demise of the negotiated TSS option because of its implications. *Paradigm Lost* argues that it is time to refocus attention on working within what currently exists, which is a one-state reality (OSR) whereby a single state, Israel, rules the entire territory from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River, with different regimes governing different populations in different parts of the territory. The logical conclusion of recognizing the durability of the OSR while accepting the impossibility of negotiating a TSS, in turn, should be to work toward improving the lives of all those living under the jurisdiction of the one-state through advancing democratization and equality for all inhabitants.

Israel Studies Review, Volume 36, Issue 1, Spring 2021: 144–164 © Association for Israel Studies
doi:10.3167/isr.2021.360110 • ISSN 2159-0370 (Print) • ISSN 2159-0389 (Online)

Institutional Design versus Social Realignment

The book's argument has been interpreted by some as an endorsement of the 'one-state solution'. It is not. Rather, it is a call to acknowledge the futility of chasing unachievable institutional solutions to the conflict. And herein lies one of the book's main innovations. Much of the debate about the political horizons of Israeli-Palestinian relations has focused on prescribing institutional designs as means of conflict resolution. Proposals for a TSS, a single democratic state solution, and various forms of federation and confederation, all fall into this category of solutions by means of institutional design.

The institutional design approach is very common in political science; it is how political scientists generally deal with conflict resolution anywhere. Institution-centric prescriptions normally consider two dimensions: (1) probability of success, and (2) normative standards (for example, self-governance or human rights). Upon examining available options, the most appropriate solution is the one that is deemed to meet accepted normative criteria and has the best prospect of success relative to other prescriptions that meet the normative standards.

Paradigm Lost follows this logic insofar as its claim against the TSS is driven by putative implausibility. At the same time, it deviates from the convention in that it eschews any institutional design as a solution to the conflict. The book presents an alternative long-term path forward under the two identified conditions—the persistence of the OSR and the implausibility of the TSS (or any prescribed solution)—by shifting the focus to society. More specifically, it calls for attention to how society might realign along shared interests that cross-cut the ethnonational divide and thus potentially lead to some sort of social transformation. To highlight the contrast with institution-centric prescriptions, I label this approach '*social realignment*'.

The social realignment approach offers a very different challenge to the TSS than institutional design approaches. To argue effectively against alternative institution-centric prescriptions, all one has to do is demonstrate that they are less likely or less normatively desirable than the TSS. By challenging the notion of solutions based on institutional designs, however, the social realignment approach requires readers to move away from these parameters. Instead, it invites them to conceive of different mechanisms of long-term political change, constituted of currently unanticipated alliances that cut across ethnonational identities and are based on shared interests; such as religious observance, health care, housing, and other welfare issues. These social realignments are said to carry the potential to transform the political arena and lead to greater equality.

The question that remains unclear is what conditions might facilitate movement in the direction of social transformation such that ethnonational loyalties would give way to different forms of engagement. The transformation envisioned in the book hinges on the potential for unintended consequences of the ethnonational order itself, which could conceivably erode it from within, as happened in South Africa or the US South. And yet, without extrapolating causal mechanisms that explain how such processes unfold, something missing from the book, a counter-position is that there are ample examples of durable ethnocentric and repressive outcomes resulting from ethnocentric endeavors, including Bengali suppression of the Pahari in Bangladesh, sustained Alawi rule in Syria, and Tutsi rule in Rwanda (not to mention unintended ethnonational consequences of political liberalization, such as the breakdown along ethnonational lines of the former Soviet Union). The challenge that remains, therefore, is not identifying whether unintended consequences of ethnonational policies can occur, but to identify conditions that allow for cross-communal alliances powerful enough to transform society in such a way that would lead to a fundamental realignment of politics.

Although conceivable, both global contours and the last century of Jewish-Palestinian relations should provide a note of caution about the probability of social transformation. Furthermore, in many respects, the commitment of Israelis to democratic principles and practices has long been on a decline. Generational replacement does not provide much room for optimism either, as younger generational cohorts consistently define themselves as more religious, rightist, and nationalist than their elders. Significantly for *Paradigm Lost*'s argument, civil society organizations that champion human rights have also been debased and tagged as traitors. Alliances between religious-conservative forces are likelier than between liberal democratic ones.

At the political level, 'centrist' political parties perform acrobatics to avoid building alliances with organized Arab political forces even though such alliance would serve as their only realistic path to government. The September 2019 election results serve as an excellent example. Benny Gantz could have enjoyed the support of 65 Members of Knesset (MKs) yet, despite the shared burning desire to remove Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu from office, the relevant political actors were unable to bring themselves to "rely on the Arabs," even as external supporters. This was by no means an isolated case. In 2008, Tzipi Livni could have built a coalition with Meretz and Labor with the external support of Arab parties, enjoying the stable support of 63 MKs. Instead, she chose to go to an election she lost to Netanyahu. And as recent election campaigns show, signs of civic political realignment are likely to encounter a powerful, reactionary, nationalist pushback. In twenty-first-century Israel, an alliance with

disciples of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane is more legitimate than one with Arab political factions. It is the power of ethnonationalism that obstructs such political alliances.

The Two-State Solution to the One-State Problem

Paradigm Lost asks readers to come to terms with the one-state reality, but there is also another powerful reality that needs to be acknowledged: the overriding power of ethnonationalism. For about a century, with the exception of a 19-year period (1948–1967), Jews and Palestinians have been living in a single polity stretching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean, either under the British Mandate or under Israeli rule. Although sporadic examples of Jewish-Palestinian collaborations can be identified, from the onset both communities were largely antagonistic and eschewed sharing a political community. The power of ethnonationalism has proven persistently stubborn. Jews and Palestinians continue to view themselves as two distinct national groups that are different in terms of language, dominant religious culture, collective memories, a sense of shared destiny, and of all other major ingredients of nationhood. They have been unable to share a single state without violent conflict and subjugation. On what grounds should we expect or hope the upcoming century will deviate fundamentally from the previous one? And more specifically, on what grounds should we expect deviation toward greater liberalism and equality at the expense of ethnonationalism?

The alternative is to recognize both the institutional reality, meaning the OSR, which *Paradigm Lost* describes well, and the social reality, which is that ethnonationalism is as strong now as it has always been, and there is little reason to imagine it dissipating or generating any outcome other than more ethnonationalism. Acknowledging both, we could conceive of the Israeli-Palestinian problem in different terms: the problem is the persistent OSR under conditions of two powerful antagonistic ethnonationalisms.

One of the main failures in past pursuits of the TSS was that it was conceived of as a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather than as a solution to the one-state problem. Imagined as a solution to the conflict, there was always a risk that the TSS, if it materialized, would disappoint. Indeed, most Israelis, who initially supported the Oslo Accords, became skeptical of the process when their personal security declined. Likewise, the optimism following the Gaza withdrawal and support for Olmert's Realignment Plan, which would have had Israel withdraw from some 90 percent of the West Bank, faded quickly following the Hamas takeover of Gaza and the 2006 Lebanon War. It was not that Israelis were unwilling to withdraw from the bulk of the occupied territories. Rather, it was that they

stopped believing such withdrawals would deliver the promised peace. The solution did not fit the diagnosed problem.

But if the problem is properly redefined, the TSS would no longer be presented as conflict-terminating. Instead, it should be envisioned as the most appropriate mechanism to resolve the problem of two antagonistic ethnonations that, for the good part of a century, have not been able to share political space with each other peacefully and with equality; *id est*, the *one-state problem*.

To be sure, the purpose is not to salvage the TSS for its own sake. Such an endeavor would be folly. Rather it is a logical conclusion of the prognosis. Envisioning the most appropriate future path first requires an appropriate diagnosis. If Israelis were persuaded that the OSR is a serious problem jeopardizing their own national aspirations, they might be willing to agree again to what they supported not so long ago under the Olmert government. There are no guarantees that they can or will. But recognizing both the OSR and the social reality of ethnonationalism offers a more promising path than recognizing just one of the two.

Oded Haklai
Queen's University, Ontario

From Pessimism to Optimism and Back: The Two-State Dream and the One-State Reality

In *Paradigm Lost*, Ian Lustick traces the political developments that led Israelis to become less incentivized to engage in accommodation and negotiations with the Arabs broadly, and the Palestinians specifically. The answer is found in the Iron Wall policy, which emboldened hawks in Israel; 'Holocaustia' syndrome, which, as Lustick defines it, resulted in Jewish-Israeli mistrust of others; and political 'Dutch disease' (i.e., the process by which states come to rely on a single or limited profitable resource/s to advance their economy, and it ends up hurting the economy), in this case the impact of the pro-Israeli lobby in US politics; all of which defeated moderates in Israel.

The unintended consequence of these three developments was the failure of the two-state solution (TSS) as a paradigm for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the emergence of the one-state reality (OSR). Lustick wants his readers to abandon the TSS paradigm and focus on the reality before us, that is, one state, albeit a non-democratic one, with different legal regimes for different populations.

The argument is as thought-provoking as it is inspiring. The case for the OSR is difficult to dispute. As Lustick notes, it is time to let go of the

"stubborn refusal to acknowledge that the warning of one state has already come true" (123). The book demonstrates quite effectively that the TSS did not fail because of incrementalism built into the process, or because it did not (or could not) solve the core issues of the conflict. *Paradigm Lost* outlines the unintended consequences of three political syndromes (Israel's Iron Wall, Holocaustia, and the US pro-Israel lobby) that doomed the TSS.

The book, therefore, asks the reader to shift the focus from finding structural solutions for the conflict to achieving equality for all inhabitants in the OSR. It reads as a call for action, but the intended audience is never made clear. It also remains unclear who, in the political reality of Israel, Palestine, and the United States, is left to drive the changes Lustick predicts as the OSR takes hold. The agency of the Arabs and Palestinians is stripped from the analysis and the shift between the pessimism in the first part of the book describing the TSS paradigm into the optimistic analysis of the possibilities within the OSR is difficult to follow. I analyze each of these critiques below.

Audience, Actors, and Agency

As noted above, the book reads like an urgent call for action, but I am unsure who is required to act. Scholars and students alike will be pushed to reassess their understanding of why, perhaps from the start, the TSS was doomed to fail. However, surely today, policy makers, scholars, and activists are well aware of the reality on the ground that makes the TSS no longer possible. Perhaps the book is intended to convince those still lingering behind in hope of reviving the TSS—Israel's all but eliminated political left. Perhaps it is a call to embolden those who have always supported, or increasingly come to terms with the OSR, to move toward it with more confidence.

Another question that emerges is one of actors. Who even remains in the Israeli political landscape to work cooperatively toward the political change Lustick predicts for the OSR? The Left has all but disappeared in the Knesset, Arab parties are once again fracturing from within, and activists are demoralized. Some activists that Lustick mentions, such as Zochrot founder Eitan Bronstein, along with other leading anti-occupation scholars and activists, have recently given up and left Israel (Littman 2020). Thus, it is unclear who remains to fight for the reality Lustick paints.

Is it not more likely that a reckless Israeli policy, emboldened by a supportive or perhaps distracted US administration and with the tacit acceptance of Arab states, moves forward with creeping annexation that maintains Jewish superiority without granting full rights to all residents? Such a reality could not be sustained for too long, as Lustick implies,

thanks in part to BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) against the state. If international pressure is mounted, would Israeli intransigence, described so well in this book, not prevail, rather than the reality of equality across ethnonational lines?

What struck me the most about this book is the lack of agency of the Arabs. Although they appear in the first and last chapters of the book, the story of the failure of the TSS paradigm reads entirely Western—a story of Israeli Jews (predominantly Ashkenazi) and their US supporters. The role of Arabs does not feature prominently. Did the Palestinians play no role in the failure of the TSS? And if not, what is their agency in the story?

The argument seems to predict that new alliances, not currently present because of the divides between Jews and Palestinians in the two-state paradigm, will emerge in the OSR. However, it is unclear why Israelis would abandon the Iron Wall, Holocaustia syndrome, and weaken the pro-Israel lobby in the United States for the sake of a one-state solution? Such prescriptions read as optimistic as the ones advanced by two-staters. In other words, how do the social changes discussed in the first part of the book dissipate for the sake of the optimistic OSR narrated at its end?

From Pessimism to Optimism and Back

There is a duality that is hard to bridge between the sobering realism of the book's first four chapters and the hopeful optimism of its last chapter. On the one hand, the political realities on the ground lean toward Lustick's strong case for why the TSS cannot work. On the other hand, those same realities seem to diminish when discussing the prospects for equality between Palestinians and Jews in the OSR. Lustick provides a more optimistic narrative that outlines how Jews and Arabs can work together by focusing on process, rather than on fixed solutions. The book heavily criticizes the wishful thinking of the proponents of the TSS, but one cannot escape the sense that the same optimism is reflected in the introduction of the OSR.

For example, BDS is characterized as a purely rights-based movement that does not deny Jewish self-determination rights; legislation that entrenches Israel's Jewish character is portrayed as providing opportunities to advocate and fight for equal rights for Jews and Arabs in all the territory Israel controls; the move of the US embassy to Jerusalem is not one that undermines existing international norms but, rather, an opportunity to change the norm so that the city is the capital of all who live there—not just Jews.

Lustick notes, for example, that in the run-up to the Jerusalem municipal elections in 2018, 22 percent of its Palestinian residents indicated that

they intended to vote. And, he continues, had even a fraction of them showed up, the outcome might have been very different. But the reality is that very few showed up to vote. Even the three thousand votes for Ramadan Dabash, the Palestinian municipal candidate, were less than half of what was required to win one seat on the city council. It is unclear how we get beyond this sobering reality. In other words, while the OSR is presented as 'reality', its desired outcome—further equality of Jews and Arabs under Israeli control—still reads like a pipe dream, at least to this skeptical reader.

It is difficult to envision, for example, why the Palestinians of East Jerusalem, who do not come out to vote in the two-state paradigm, would be willing to do so in the OSR. It is not entirely clear how Jewish superiority is eliminated from the OSR; how out of the reality on the ground emerges a coalition for the promotion of equal rights rather than more institutionalized and intentional apartheid. Lustick further argues that intergroup hostility and fear will need to be abandoned, but then recognizes a paragraph later that even intragroup hostility and division remain among Jews and, I would argue, also deeply among Palestinians. Why should we believe that under the OSR, intergroup hostility and fear will be abandoned?

Finally, the book does not explain how Israel's 'Dutch disease' can be cured. Some hypotheses could be advanced here. Perhaps changing attitudes, especially among younger Americans, and political shifts within the Democratic party might curtail the ability of the pro-Israel lobby to wield its power? Perhaps now that Israel is becoming a partisan issue in US politics, it will no longer be able to shield itself from the repercussions of its policies under a Democratic US administration? One can also suggest that an effective alliance between BLM (Black Lives Matter) and BDS might force a change in public attitudes in the United States that would also impact its policies vis-à-vis Israel.

Interestingly, Israel's recent normalization agreements with the UAE and Bahrain and diplomatic relations with Morocco may create a perverse incentive structure whereby Israel's support from liberal and progressive Americans decreases, but its acceptance in the region grows. These normalization agreements may delay the end of the two-state paradigm even more, as they seem to be predicated on the basis of that paradigm, at least in word, if not in fact.

In summary, the book is a fascinating autopsy into the death of an idea that has dominated the region for almost a hundred years. However, if followed to its logical conclusion, Israeli dominance over the entire territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea will continue and become more institutionalized as we move further and further into the OSR. Such a reality of apartheid cannot sustain itself for too long. Perhaps

the expectation of those still left to fight in Israel for Lustick's vision is that this regime falls as a result of international pressure to bring about a more just and equal reality, albeit in a non-Jewish state. These are the exact predictions made by the two-staters to argue against creeping annexation and in favor of the two-state dream. Such realization may in fact return the dreamers back into the TSS, or they will end up in a one-state nightmare.

Ronnie Olesker
St. Lawrence University

REFERENCE

Littman, Shany. 2020. "After Losing Hope for Change, Top Left-Wing Activists and Scholars Leave Israel Behind." *Ha'aretz*, 23 May. https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-losing-hope-for-change-top-left-wing-activists-and-scholars-leave-israel-behind-1.8864499.

It's Time

Every once in a while, a book in the field pops up that is utterly citable, not only in scholarly forums but in popular ones too. Ian Lustick's *Paradigm Lost* has now become my go-to title when I need to make a point in political conversations about the future of Israel-Palestine. This is because the book does something that helps us crawl out of the hole that the structures of typical arguments over the future of Israel-Palestine often force interlocutors into. Rather than ask which potential outcome—the one-state solution or the two-state solution—is better, more just, more optimal, or more pragmatic, Lustick starts from an empirical observation: the two-state solution, he argues, is no longer possible. Instead, he observes, there is a one-state reality. In light of this reality, how should we move forward?

The Messenger

On this alone, his book is worthwhile. But there is another reason I cite Lustick's book more than others, depending on who my interlocutors are: specifically, Lustick's personal background. In a proper scholarly world, of course, arguments should be judged on their merits—by the standards of logical consistency, available empirical and theoretical support, and even their ethical implications. But when it comes to the current debate over the future of the political arrangements in Israel-Palestine; for better or worse, subjectivity often matters in terms of who gets listened to.

It certainly has mattered all too often, tactically—as when Daniel Gordis pressed Peter Beinart to admit that he was sufficiently 'tribal' (and Beinart, to my own chagrin anyway, acceded) (Beinart 2012).

Lustick is no stranger to Zionism, and he possesses a deep connection to Israel. He is one of the handful of founders of the Association for Israel Studies and was one of its early presidents. He established its pre-eminent book award and edited its first publication and the Books on Israel series. He lived in Israel for eighteen months and has visited dozens of times, sometimes for months at a time. As he has told me, his "Zionism is very, very old fashioned." Accordingly, he "favors a large, secure, and prosperous Jewish community in the land of Israel." Lustick, in other words, is no Israel spurner.

The Politics of Paradigms

While Lustick is persuasive in situating the debate within a Kuhnian analysis of heuristics, namely the contention that some paradigms come to be discredited over time and replaced by new ones, we know that in the context of the Israel debate, agreeing that the dominant paradigm is dead has become a largely political act. Right-wing Zionists and the settler community that embodies their ideology have, of course, long resisted the idea of any Palestinian state in the Land of Israel. But liberal Zionists, including the Israeli left and much of North American Jewry, have long promoted such a territorial division on the grounds of maintaining Zionism's core logic of Jewish sovereignty while extending similar (though, when it comes to the refugee issue—more on this below—not identical) rights to Palestinians.

This is where the power and the tension of Lustick's book lies. He acknowledges that through their advocacy campaign, much of the two-state community in Israel has managed to garner support through unsavory methods—namely by appealing to Jewish-Israeli prejudices about Palestinians—while at the same time using that support to delay the day where any semblance of justice reigns. For as long as people cling to the two-state model as some future possibility, he shows, the work needed right now to extend democratic and human rights to Palestinians living under Israeli rule is ultimately avoided.

Lustick rightly, I think, points to the kind of narrative mentality that has dominated Israeli political culture when it comes to conceiving of threats and possibilities. He calls this consciousness 'Holocaustia', whereby Israelis transpose Nazi identities onto their enemies, and perceive all real and potential conflicts as existential threats rather than as a coordination game that can be addressed and untangled through dialogue and negotiation. He cites, for example, the excellent film *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) (51–52),

which he discusses as an example of attempts by some Israelis (artists, intellectuals, some scholars, and politicians) to get their fellow citizens to think about threat and complicity in a new way.

Yet those who are most vocal about upholding the possibility of a two-state solution—including scholars like Gershon Shafir, whose book Lustick discusses at length, and grassroots groups in Israel, such as Shalom Achshav, and in the United States, Americans for Peace Now and Ameinu—are the actors least likely to (consciously, at least) be under the sway of Holocaustia, and in fact probably actively resist those impulses. The same people who promote the two-state solution, in other words, are the same people who embrace films like *Waltz with Bashir*. Perhaps Holocaustia is a deeper and more insidious overlay, as intergenerational trauma often is, than we realize.

As for Lustick's smart take on how the two-state solution paradigm is now being (or is in need of being) ruptured—like any Kuhnian paradigm that eventually gets replaced by a new one as the scientific consensus is moved by new evidence and discovery—I wonder whether, in the area where science meets politics, which comes first: do new political commitments allow or even force (political) scientists and policy analysts to reject old paradigms in favor of new ones? Or does new evidence force such a shift? None of us, of course, are immune to emotions, attachments, and ideologies. While it would be ideal, as scholars, for evidence to lead us to the political arguments we embrace, it is not always that way in practice, something I have begun to investigate in my own case as a scholar (Sucharov 2020).

Dilemmas

There are three dilemmas I see arising from Lustick's account. One is his call for joint partnerships in order to move justice forward within the one-state reality. I wonder how these might emerge given the robust (and in some ways, in my view, quite valid) opposition to normalization among the Palestinian grassroots. The obvious solution is a model of 'co-resistance' (versus co-existence), as some activists have begun to point to (Uri and Evron 2019). But there is a chicken-and-egg dilemma here regarding getting sufficient numbers of Israelis, especially, to commit to co-resistance before stepping forth into the dialogic space. Second, none of this, of course, says anything about the issue of Palestinian refugee return, which is perhaps the elephant in the room of Lustick's book.

A third dilemma is this: Lustick is right that Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza constitute a single proto-state in practice. But it is not a proper sovereign state until the borders are finalized. Is Lustick implicitly suggesting

that Israel should formally annex all of the territories in order to entrench sovereignty, so the work of democratizing the entire area across both halves of the Green Line can begin? There is a certain logic to this, though it might be weighed down by the obvious challenge of flouting international law even more acutely than Israel already does. Acquiring territory by force, which is what annexation would be, even half a century after the 1967 war, is illegal. Yet maybe, in this case, the law is standing in the way of rights.

Conclusion

In reading *Paradigm Lost*, there are some who will feel frustrated by Lustick's empirical starting point—namely, his observation that the two-state solution is dead. While he lays decent groundwork for this claim—pointing out the stark challenges in achieving the conditions that even those who claim it is still possible to achieve a two-state solution have laid out—there are many who will say that creating a single, democratic state will be even more difficult, and that Lustick is therefore misguided to declare the more promising patient, of the two, dead. But I think Lustick still gets the last word here: a single state already exists, he says. And in a certain sense, this observation is unassailable: one regime, not two, rules the area from the river to the sea, in spite of the existence of the rump polity of the PA, a quasi-governmental body that even its previous supporters are now demanding be shuttered (Buttu 2017). That regime is Israel. How many more years of occupation, and how much more deeply entrenched a settlement movement do we need to see in order to begin to demand serious democratization and rights-extension by the ruling state to all people living within this area? Lustick needs no more, and neither do I.

Mira Sucharov
Carleton University

REFERENCES

Beinart, Peter. 2012. "A Response to Daniel Gordis." *The Jerusalem Post*. 19 April. https://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Opinion/A-response-to-Daniel-Gordis.

Buttu, Diana. 2017. "Why the Palestinian Authority Should Be Shuttered." *The New York Times*. May 26. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/26/opinion/palestinian-authority-mahmoud-abbas.html.

Sucharov, Mira. 2020. *Borders and Belonging: A Memoir*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Uri, Renaud, and Omri Evron. 2019. "Forget about Dialogue Groups, It's Time to Switch to Co-resistance." *+972 Magazine*. 12 February. https://www.972mag.com/coresistance-activism-israel-palestine/.

Three Comments on *Paradigm Lost*

In *Paradigm Lost,* Ian Lustick argues that the two-state solution (TSS) for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is no longer feasible. Policy and scholarly agendas should use the one-state reality (OSR) as their baseline. This is the result of the unintended consequences of the success of Israel's Iron Wall strategy, the effect of the Holocaust on the Israeli psyche (Holocaustia), and US support for Israeli control in the West Bank, which is largely driven by the Israel lobby. In the last chapter, Lustick predicts that the OSR will become, in the long term, democratic.

This is an important book, by an important scholar, analyzing the most important question regarding Israel's future. The book expands on Lustick's earlier work and opinion pieces, such as his 2013 article in the *New York Times*, "The Two State Illusion." It is the latest and most updated articulation of the OSR and can be read alongside the works of the mostly Israeli sources Lustick mentions (e.g., 125–126) as well as Tony Judt's 2003 *New York Review of Books* piece, "Israel: The Alternative," and Virginia Tilley's 2005 book *The One State Solution.* Judt made a largely normative claim, while Lustick explains that we are already in an OSR. Here, he overlaps somewhat with Tilley's argument. A TSS is no longer possible, she wrote, due to the expansion of the settlement grid in the West Bank. Lustick agrees, but he mostly unearths the mechanisms that led Israel there.

Should We Accept the OSR?

This book can be read as a polemic crafted by a seasoned scholar, one that is intended to affect the discourse and help shape things to come. As such, the reader is left with several questions. First, are these really the only explanations for the decline of the TSS? What about other reasons, such as the rise of national religious politics in Israel (which Lustick helped analyze back in the 1980s)? The failure of Palestinian state-building efforts? The split in the Palestinian national movement? Even within the existing explanations, one is left with some questions. For example, is the role of the Israeli lobby inflated? After all, there are structural explanations for US support for allies that misbehave, including the cases of Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara and Indonesia's past occupation of East Timor. Moreover, the lobby works primarily on Capitol Hill, while the most fervent senior US official to support Israeli expansion since 1967 was elected to occupy the White House in 2016. Although there is, perhaps, a feedback loop effect, generally the lobby has followed Israeli preferences rather than shaping them. In the 1990s, AIPAC supported legislation that provided aid to the Palestinian Authority because that was deemed to reflect Israel's goals.

Second, Lustick ends the book with the prediction that the OSR inevitably would lead to a democratic state. Global, regional, and internal conditions suggest otherwise. Liberal democracy is on the decline worldwide, seriously qualifying Lustick's optimism that "the democratization of the state will occur" (148) with "the enthusiastic support of the international community" (149). The region is already opening to Israel as realist calculations overshadow normative and identity-based considerations. In Israel, there are no serious voices that call for a change in the status quo, while the Palestinian Authority is locked into an institutional arrangement (125–126) and legitimacy crisis that seems to inhibit its possible shift to supporting a rights-based OSR.

Even if there is a democratic horizon, Lustick admits that "expanding citizenship and suffrage for all will take decades of struggle" (148). Under these circumstances, would a TSS offer a more immediate path to a just reality? Even more so as the Palestinians still enjoy wide support in the international system, based on the global norm of national self-determination.

The Possibility of Change?

If a TSS is normatively preferable, can it still be achieved? The material realities of a large number of settlers in the West Bank are usually presented as the main driver toward, and manifestation of, the OSR. Lustick mentions this, for example in his detailed discussion around Meron Benvenisti's analysis from the 1980s about the point of no return (97–101). But Lustick's own explanation for the OSR is more ideational; it is a result of a flaw in Jabotinsky's Iron Wall strategy and a security-oriented interpretation of the Holocaust in Israel.

His third explanation is the cover provided by the United States to Israel in the West Bank, largely driven by the Israel lobby's "sophistication, clout, and single mindedness" (69). If ideas, policies, and public mindsets are the reason for an OSR, can this change? After all, Jewish and Palestinian elites have altered their ideology, policy preferences, and material realities several times during their 100-year war. Fatah transformed, within a decade or so, an issue seen in the 1960s (for example in UNSCR 242) as mostly a humanitarian "refugee problem" into an armed political action plan that changed the Palestinians' consciousness, status, and future. Armed Palestinian action further changed Israeli consciousness and led to limited withdrawals from the West Bank and Gaza in the 1990s and 2000s.

Even earlier, it was the Zionist movement's ideology and effective use of international and regional conditions that reshaped the land and its human composition, in one generation. Why should we assume that this is the end of history? In fact, we are in the midst of rather dramatic regional

and global power changes, which can have—as they had in the past—a significant effect on the Israeli-Palestinian dynamic. Not least, if we accept Lustick's observation that his book (and the conflict it discusses) tells a history of "political programs and projects transformed by the law of unintended consequences" (140).

In the last chapter, Lustick offers the possibility of re-interpretation of Holocaustia in a more humanistic way, as a potential key to democratizing the OSR. The same argument could be easily made regarding the Iron Wall, in a way that leads to the revival of the TSS. After all, a wall signifies a boundary between 'us' and 'them'; and the Iron Wall was intended to defend a Jewish space. Both interpretations should lead to a territorial contraction, not territorial expansion into an OSR.

Alongside the data Lustick uses to prove an OSR, there are data points that can lead us to holding on to the possibility of a TSS: both Gaza and the parts of the West Bank are governed (to various degrees) by national Palestinian institutions. They are weak and suffer from many shortcomings but can be viewed as a nucleus of a future Palestinian state. Moreover, modern sovereignty is also about international recognition. The Palestinian Authority has enjoyed non-member observer state status in the UN since 2012. It is recognized by some 115 states, has diplomatic missions in most of them as well as to numerous international organizations. Palestine is further a signatory to many international treaties and has been sending athletes to the Olympics since 1996.

Is Paradigm *the Right Paradigm?*

Lustick frames his argument as the demise of a scientific paradigm (at least functionally), implying a notion of progress. Yet, looking at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one is struck by how circular it is. Both sides lived in a OSR for most of the first seven decades of Zionist settlement in the land, and then again since 1967. In fact, the first two decades of the occupation saw a greater integration (compared to today) between Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, for example, in the labor markets. In terms of ideas, numerous voices in the Yishuv called for an OSR, even as the Zionist leadership accepted a British (1937) and then a UN (1947) TSS, only to abandon the latter when faced with the postwar territorial realities. In the 1970s, the TSS was revived and became somewhat hegemonic among Israeli and Palestinian ruling elites for a brief time in the 1990s and early 2000s. Fatah was committed to the one state solution until 1988, though change began occurring as early as 1974. Even as Fatah/PLO/PA moved to accept a TSS in the 1990s, Hamas began challenging the mainstream with an old-new idea: one state.

The neatness of the Kuhnian and Laktosian models, and their implied notion of scientific progress, are challenged in this case by a reality in which these two ideas/realities/models have appeared, disappeared, and reappeared for about a century. This has been shaped by the interaction between local, regional, and global power dynamics, political agents, and changing ideologies.

This constant flux should give us then, some pause, before we accept the OSR. Since this symposium met in APSA (via Zoom) in the fall of 2020, four Arab countries and one Asian country have recognized Israel. More states may follow before this exchange is published. In 1967 only 45 states recognized Israel. Today the number is 167. A far cry from the expected Israeli "growing isolation in the world" (12), or Ehud Barak's 2011 warning of "diplomatic tsunami," should the occupation/OSR proceed (Ravid 2011). This does not mean that the TSS is back (in fact, maybe the opposite), but it should humble us as we declare the permanence of existing realities. History, as Lustick writes wisely, is indeed "cunning" (140).

Ehud Eiran
University of Haifa

REFERENCES

Judt, Tony. 2003." Israel: The Alternative." *The New York Review of Books*. 23 October. https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2003/10/23/israel-the-alternative/.

Lustick, Ian. 2013. "The Two State Illusion." *New York Times*. 14 September. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/15/opinion/sunday/two-state-illusion.html.

Ravid, Barak. 2011. "Barak: Israel Must Advance Peace or Face a 'Diplomatic Tsunami.'" 13 March. https://www.haaretz.com/1.5135859.

Tilley, Virginia. 2005. *The One State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.

RESPONSE

Ian Lustick Responds

Every author knows how difficult it is to expect that readers will take from one's work what was intended. In that light I am delighted that for each of these distinguished readers my fundamental points are clear. Israeli-Palestinian relations, and discussion of them, are no longer dominated by questions about whether or how to divide the land between two states, but by questions about rule over all inhabitants, from the sea to the river,

by a single apparatus of power. Within this one-state reality, power is implemented in different zones with different sets of norms, over different castes, and with different rules of engagement, but nowhere are the life chances or property rights of individuals any more secure than they can be as a function of the laws, directives, and coercive power of the state known as Israel.

This one-state reality is not a solution. It is not a pretty picture that accords with my, or anyone's, publicly avowed values; and it is not a path to such a state of affairs. It is simply a fact. No one can trace a politically plausible route from the here and now, through negotiations, to the establishment of a viable Palestinian state in territories Israel captured in 1967. The debate over whether it is possible for one state to rule all of Palestine/the Land of Israel is over. One state in the whole land can exist. It does, even if we still do not know whether one democratic state in the whole territory will be achieved. Based on what we know about how democratic rights are extended to large, historically repressed, and stigmatized populations, I argue that democratization of Israel is possible, even plausible; but it is certainly not inevitable. Indeed, I offer no plan for how to make it happen within the lifetime of most of my readers.

This state of affairs, whether it is seen as the best attainable situation, a problem that must be solved, a tragedy that justifies abandonment of hope, or a setting within which better outcomes can evolve, is nonetheless the condition of life for Israelis and Palestinians. It is the result of the unintended consequences of a flaw in the Iron Wall strategy of Zionism and Israel that produced extremization of Israeli demands rather than accommodative responses to the long-sought softening of Arab positions; of the victory of Holocaustia over rival constructions of the meaning of the destruction of European Jewry and its cultural and psychological consequences; and of the unanticipated effect of the Israel lobby's domination of US foreign policy toward Israel and the Palestinians that ended up crippling moderate political forces in Israel and incentivizing territorial and ideological maximalism.

Underlying these arguments, however, and recognized by the commentators, is the claim that both analysts and actors within the arenas joined by the *qadiyya* can no longer think clearly or act effectively without accepting a radically different frame of reference than most have been accustomed to use. A paradigm (Kuhn) or a 'research program' (Lakatos) is such a frame of reference. It establishes conventions treated as assumed truths about how the world is constructed. Those unquestioned and virtually unquestionable assumptions focus conversations and enable sophisticated debates, struggles, strategies, and mobilizations of resources for pursuing agendas and goals deemed to be sensible and attainable. As is

true of all institutions, well-established paradigms and research programs can never provide the rules for adherents to recognize when their assumptions are no longer valid. Such structures of thought therefore last considerably longer than is appropriate, given either changes in the world or new knowledge of it.

The two-state solution (TSS) paradigm never guaranteed the establishment of two states. Indeed, it was a crucial element of that research and political program that its main objective would not always be possible. As early as the late 1970s and early 1980s Israeli and Arab experts, politicians, and TSS advocates identified a point of no return for creeping annexation, beyond which establishment of a Palestinian state would no longer be possible. Sometimes that point was measured in time: months, a year, two years. Sometimes it was measured in numbers of settlers, most commonly "100,000." That was half a century and nearly half a million settlers ago.

Paradigm Lost uses what we know of how sluggishly and messily paradigmatic assumptions change to encourage readers to do that which Hannah Arendt stressed makes us human and yet is so very difficult to do—to actually *think* about the world and ourselves within it, rather than accept the legacies and boundaries of what our predecessors and our own long-cherished and unquestioned assumptions encourage us to believe.

Indeed, that is why I wrote the book. Beginning in the late 1960s, I thrived professionally by using the TSS paradigm to think, analyze, and forecast the dynamics of relations within Israel, among Palestinians, and between the different segments of those communities. I do not renounce that work or question its validity. But circumstances change. Working to accomplish or understand something that was not certain, but was reasonably seen as attainable, was justified. But once success became so implausible that the struggle for it started to serve other purposes, whether intended or not, then the only analytically and ethically acceptable path is to cast aside assumptions and think more broadly.

Since the Second Intifada, I have felt uneasy about the effectiveness of the categories associated with the two-state solution paradigm and was increasingly bored by the 'one-state, two-state tango', by ever more complicated plans for making progress, and by the repetitive and disappointing outcome of negotiating initiatives. As I tell my students, if, despite your best efforts to give them a chance, the evidence keeps running against your ideas, change your ideas so you can think about what you see before you. You will be surprised by how exciting and interesting the world can appear once you do that. That is the primary message of *Paradigm Lost*. It is not a "call to action," per se, as Ronnie Olesker puts it, but a call to think, and to rethink so that interesting questions can be posed and useful work

undertaken. Then, and only then, can our values guide us to the actions that make sense.

As Ehud Eiran and Mira Sucharov note, I am not the first to advance the idea of a 'one-state reality' as a new framework for thinking. In addition to works and authors they mention, I also benefited greatly from *The One State Condition* by Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir (2012). In any case, the test of a framework for thinking is not what Imre Lakatos calls its "negative heuristic" (its rules for what is not worth considering) but its "positive heuristic"—its power to encourage interesting new research projects and new opportunities for the exercise of political imagination. Happily, in that respect each of the comments published here suggests how robust and promising the opportunities opened up by one-state reality thinking are.

Naturally, debate about partitionist solutions focus on the geography of space and how imperatives of national identity, communal compactness, and transportational continuity can be fulfilled or contradicted by settlement location, infrastructural design, withdrawals, land swaps, tunnels, bridges, and boundaries. But politics takes place in time as well as in space. In the context of the two-state solution paradigm, most temporal thinking focuses on the months or years over which a particular diplomatic process, plan for negotiations, or transitional arrangement, is to be implemented. Each commentator rightly points to the solidity and oppressiveness of the one-state reality and the paucity of signs today, among either Israeli Jews or Palestinian Arabs, pointing toward growing acceptance of the principle of equal rights for all or the emergence of cross-communal solidarities and political partnerships.

Netanyahu's vigorous political outreach to Palestinian voters in Israel, and their responsiveness to it, may well be harbingers of future political integration, but part of what the one-state reality means is that it is wrong to evaluate prospects for democracy in Israel by over-reliance on current events, election outcomes, or polling data. An entirely different time frame is in order—not months or years, but decades and generations. There was little to learn in the 1890s or even in the 1930s and 1940s from white attitudes toward blacks in the United States or the Democratic Party's commitment to Jim Crow to suggest that in the 1980s George Wallace would win re-election as Alabama's governor by kissing black babies, that a decade later the Democratic Party would become utterly reliant on black turnout to win national elections, that Barack Obama could be president, or that Kamala Harris could be vice president.

Learning to think within the framework of the one-state reality will mean research comparing the evolution of relations between Jews and Palestinians to the changing political relationship between blacks and whites in America, Irish Catholics and British Protestants within the

United Kingdom, and between men and women in almost every industrialized country. What are involved in these transformations are not negotiations between groups that lead to new and fairer arrangements, but much longer processes of what Oded Haklai aptly describes as "social realignment," fueled by incremental struggles for political advantage producing strange bedfellows and, eventually, new worlds of political contestation and possibility.

Once the shift in appropriate time frame is accepted, trends in international political culture, toward or away from liberal democracy, can be understood as oscillations bound to occur over the time frames of importance for the question being asked. This shift in time frame also allows the resilience of non-democratic regimes to be recognized, as Ronnie Olesker and Oded Haklai emphasize that they must, while also understanding that they can eventually become fragile. How that sort of democratization occurs, rather than the kind of quick, top-down change associated with successful transitions from authoritarianism, is another important research question provoked by the switch of paradigmatic assumptions required by the one-state reality. Taking this longer view also allows us to imagine a two-state outcome eventually emerging, not by virtue of a new Washington diplomatic initiative or a clever Shaul Arieli scheme for disentangling Palestinians from Israelis, but by the processes of annexation, political emancipation, mobilization, political competition, civil disobedience, violence, and secession that led Irish Catholics from annexation to Great Britain in 1801, to holding the balance of power in British politics late in the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century, to achieving statehood in most of Ireland in 1921.

This latter comparison helps explain my answer to Mira Sucharov's question. Yes, I do favor Israeli annexation of the West Bank and of the Gaza Strip—full annexation. (De facto annexation has already occurred.) Even if implemented disingenuously, with rules making enfranchisement of Arabs difficult or impossible, formal annexation will set the stage for real struggles for equal rights under the laws of the same state. The problems such struggles pose have the advantage of being genuine and aligned with progressive values, as opposed to phony problems (How can another round of US diplomacy be encouraged? How can BDS be delegitimized by cosmetic changes in Israeli policies?) that distract attention, displace effort, and are, in fact, often associated with deceptive efforts to pretend a struggle for peace continues when it is really a struggle to postpone confronting the problem of democracy.

The one-state reality paradigm encourages research to assess the extent to which those advocating such positions do so knowingly, because the mirage of two-states-on-the-way is an effective way to preserve the regime

of silent ('grey') apartheid they prefer to democracy, or whether they do so because they lack the conceptual equipment to recognize how pursuit of liberal Zionist agendas under the one-state reality makes them complicit in the perpetual oppression of half the country's population.

The commentators raise more questions to which my book gives answers that are incomplete or, at least to them, unsatisfying. I cannot extend this response by attending to them all, including Ronnie Olesker's doubts (that I share) about whether fear and hostility can disappear from relations between Jews and Arabs, and Mira Sucharov's point highlighting how changing circumstances might change international law from a resource for progressives to a bastion for oppressors. But I do want to respond to Olesker's wish that I had attended more to Arab perspectives, roles, and responsibilities. What, for example, as Sucharov asks, are the implications of the one-state reality for Palestinian postures of 'anti-normalization'? That is yet another excellent question for research and analysis. My own view is that Palestinians need to re-evaluate that position. Ending occupation remains the imperative, but the path to that goal has shifted from removing Israel's rule of the West Bank and Gaza to extending the rights of equal citizenship and equal access to all parts of the country and to all who live within it. So, one might say, Palestinians should consider, and are considering, how the real problem is to 'normalize' the presence of seven million or so Arabs within the same state occupied by seven million or so Jews. The success of Adalah, whose suit at the Israeli Supreme Court vindicated West Bank Arab landowners' rights by invoking Israeli "constitutional" law, is a great example of such agency.

To encourage conversations about the one-state reality, I have created a website, www.ParadigmLostbook.com. It features news about the book, its forthcoming Hebrew translation, new source material, errata, interviews, reviews, discount ordering information, articles that extend and elaborate the book's arguments, and my more complete responses to comments and criticisms of the book's findings, including by the scholars participating in this symposium.

Ian S. Lustick
University of Pennsylvania

REFERENCE

Azoulay, Ariella, and Adi Ophir. 2012. *The One-State Condition: Occupation and Democracy in Israel/Palestine*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press