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Settling the Narrative

A Strategic Narrative and Social Identity Study of the Israeli Settlement
Expansion

Abstract

The Hamas terrorist attack on October 7th 2023 constituted an event with great impact on both Israel and the Middle East, and much focus has been given to its effects in terms of the war in Gaza. Simultaneously, settlements in the West Bank have risen to unprecedented levels, and have increasingly been given explicit governmental support. Furthermore, official Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank area has increasingly become an explicitly expressed goal in contemporary Israeli politics. The increase in settlements affects the prospects of peace in the area both short- and long-term, as increased settlements are linked to increases in violence and displacements directed towards the Palestinian population and serves to hinder the possibility of a peaceful solution to the conflict. These events have been given much less attention, both medially and scholarly.

This study examines the increased settlement activity in the West Bank with a theoretical framework derived from Strategic Narratives and Social Identity Theory. It is done by mapping the strategic narratives produced by Members of Knesset in the governmental parties regarding the West Bank before, directly after and approximately a year and a half after October 7th 2023. The study finds that the narratives increasingly link the settlement movement to Israeli identity, increased outgroup stereotyping of the Palestinian population, and increases the necessity of settlement expansion for achieving peace and security. The study suggests that the shift in narratives can have contributed to increased settlements, as they serve as a legitimising and justifying mechanism.

Keywords: Israeli Settlement Movement, West Bank, Israel, Social Identity Theory, Strategic Narratives.

Word count: 7445

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1. Introduction

Settlement activity in the West Bank has and continues to be a conflictual topic. In 2024, the International Court of Justice (2024: 2) ruled that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank have been established and maintained in violation of international law. Several countries have condemned the settlements and they are viewed as a serious obstacle for a two state solution between Israel and Palestine (European External Action Service [EEAS] 2025: 1; Stacey 2025). Simultaneously, Israel claims that the characterisation of settlements as illegal or colonial denies the complexity of the issue, the area's history and its unique legal circumstances (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2015). Since Hamas terrorist attack on October 7th 2023 (hereafter October 7th) Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank has accelerated, accompanied by explicit governmental support for the settlement movement. The expansion is followed by growing trends of settler violence directed towards the Palestinian population and increased displacement of Palestinian communities (Breteau 2025; EEAS 2025: 6-7).

The acceleration in settlement expansion and its explicit governmental support has led to us seeking to understand if or how the Israeli government has contributed to the increase by examining the narratives created by politicians in the governmental parties. Narratives before and after October 7th are examined in order to understand if and how internal narratives, that draw on identity processes and increases in threat perception, can serve as mechanisms for justifying the settlement enterprise.

1.1 Research Questions and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate contributing factors to the increase in settlements after October 7th. Mapping the narratives contribute to understanding a difference in strategic narratives and if these combined with social identity can be seen as contributing factors to the expansion. We aim to add to the field of research on intergroup conflicts and contribute to a deeper insight and understanding of how narratives and constructions of social identity can justify controversial or even illegal actions. Therefore, the following research questions will be studied:

- *How have strategic narratives regarding the West Bank been presented by Israeli governmental parties before and after October 7th 2023?*

- *How can changes in narratives regarding the West Bank have contributed to the increased expansion of settlements?*

1.2 Previous Research

Previous research on the settlement movement has attributed its increased political influence to the movement's organisational structure, as well as constraints and opportunities in the Israeli political system, uncovering that the movement's ideological and personal connections to the political far-right makes it hard to disentangle from the Israeli state (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde 2020). Other strands of research focus on the movement's influence and relationship to Israeli national identity, concluding that the settlement movement has reinforced already existing exclusive elements within the Israeli national identity, as the exclusion of the Palestinian population is amplified (Aron 2019).

Also examined by previous research is the cemented in- and outgroup categorisations and their effects in Israel and Palestine, connected to the psychosociological research on the role of social identities in intractable conflicts. It examines the conflict's contributions to deep rooted outgroup prejudices and antagonism, as well as the clashing narratives regarding national identity (Rouhana & Bar-Tal 1998). Less attention has been given to how Israeli political elites present the settlement movement and how such narratives interact with existing in- and outgroup categorisations. Our research thereby builds on previous research, but aims to deepen the understanding of the mechanisms that enable contemporary expansion.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Strategic Narratives Theory

The work on strategic narratives (SN) made by Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle (2013) is used as a theoretical foundation for this study as it explains how political actors, often political elites, attempt to use narratives to construct a shared meaning of the past, present and future to achieve political goals (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2013: 7). In short, narratives are understood as “a story with meaning, characters, and a plotline” (Subotic 2016: 610) and help create community by providing groups with a sense of self, origin and how they all fit together, which is crucial for any type of collective functioning (Patterson & Renwick Monroe 1998: 322).

In order to be strategic, narratives “requires an actor, action, a goal or intention, a scene and an instrument” (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2013: 7). Political actors will try to use narratives strategically, and communication and flow of narratives are fundamentally affected by the contemporary communication environment, impacting the effects of the attempted strategic narratives (Ibid: 1). Descriptions of a groups common past suggests a collective identity that should be recognized as legitimate. Furthermore, descriptions of a shared history and identity can be utilized by politicians to mobilize people and justify actions (Patterson & Renwick Monroe 1998: 317, 323). Strategic narratives thereby constitute a communicative political tool, with the aim of influencing the behaviour of others (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2013: 7, 3). It does not matter whether a narrative is actually true or not, but the narrative's effects (O'Loughlin 2017: 51).

Narratives become crucial during conflicts. They influence how the public interpret and understand the conflict and how actors engage in it, as they help construct the victims, enemies and who should be blamed (Yarchi 2025: 4). Politicians' use of narratives as a tool is thereby an important mechanism in influencing group-identity behaviour, how actions and policies are legitimised and how public support is gained during conflict (Patterson & Renwick Monroe 1998: 317; Yarchi 2025: 4). Actors will seek to shift debates and perceptions to only include what's beneficial for the constructed strategic narratives, the study of strategic narratives thus also include what is left out (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2015: 60).

Miskimmon et al. (2013) identifies three types of narratives; system narratives, identity narratives and issue narratives. System narratives seek to describe the international system, how it works, who the actors are and the challenges to the system. Identity narratives describe the story of a political actor containing its character, values and goals (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2017: 8), which are in a constant process of contestation and negotiation (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2013: 10). Lastly, issue narratives are used to explain a policy's necessity and desirability, within the broader system and identity context, and how it will be achieved and successful (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2017: 8; Yarchi 2025: 4). The three types are inextricably linked, and for a narrative to be able to persuade there needs to be a certain level of coherence between the different types of narratives (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2018: 5).

2.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is applied to explain the social mechanisms behind justifications of behaviour and policies. SIT assumes that humans are social beings and that social groups provide individuals with "identification of themselves in social terms" (Tajfel & Turner 1986: 16). Individuals seek to maintain or achieve a positive social identity, primarily derived from social categorisation where favourable comparisons between their own group and relevant other groups, referred to as ingroups and outgroups respectively, segments the world. Social categorisation is highly relational and comparative and often sufficient in triggering discriminatory behaviour on behalf of one's own group (Ibid: 13), and acts as the underlying mechanism for stereotyping (Hogg 2001: 187). Group identity consists of shared understandings of group members' identities, its characteristics, history and purpose. It is constructed, maintained and transmitted among and to members through historical realities as well as deliberate mobilization, and responses to contemporary circumstances. Importantly, group identity is dynamic and fluid and involvement and commitment varies between different members (Seul 1999: 556).

One of SIT's key insights is how social identity processes interact with "real" or instrumental motivations to conflict (Brown 2000: 637). In times of conflicts or crisis, group identity tends to be intensified, as individuals experience threats to the ingroup as threats to themselves, and conversely, threats to individuals of their own group are experienced as a threat to the whole group. This constitutes an escalatory conflict-dynamic, where new threats lead to

intensification and agitation of the identity of other groups, which in turn consolidates the produced individual and group identities (Seul 1999: 557-558). The perception of threats is one condition which constitutes a root to conflict and hate towards outgroups, as the effects of social categorisation and instrumental motivations interact (Brewer 1999: 435-436). Conflicts also contribute to moral justifications of extreme behaviour, such as exclusion, as the moral constraints for behaviour towards the outgroup shrinks at the same time as ingroup cohesion increases (Opatow 1990, p.6).

Crucial is the perception of intergroup conflicts. SIT emphasises that the perception of conflicts is largely controlled by the ingroup, in turn determining behaviour. In short, “the ingroup narrative determines what the conflict is about, what is at stake, who is a friend, who is an enemy, and what means are necessary to resolve the conflict satisfactorily” (Brannan & Strindberg 2023: 4). Conflicts are thereby subjective, and what is considered rational behaviour varies and is impacted by ideational factors such as culture, belief and ideology which shapes the ingroup perceptions (Ibid: 4). According to Seul (1999: 562, 563), religion is a particularly strong driving force in contributing to individual and group identity, and provides justifications for violent behaviour in intergroup conflicts. The theorization of social identity and leadership emphasises how leadership is a group process, where leaders, individuals or cliques with disproportionate power, influence identity, set agendas and have the ability to mobilize people (Hogg 2001: 188).

2.3 Applications of the Theories

This study combines SIT and SN to examine the mechanisms that could have enabled the expansion of the Israeli Settlement movement. SIT is used to examine how conflictual situations or perceived threats intensifies social categorisation (Tajfel & Turner 1986: 11), strengthens group identities and consolidates outgroup identities in ways that contribute to legitimising aggravations against outgroups (Seul 1999: 557-558). At the same time as conflict tends to intensify group identities, the ingroup narratives largely affect how its members perceive the conflict (Brennan & Strindberg 2023: 4). Strategic narratives complement this by explaining how narratives are used by political actors in order to achieve certain policy outcomes, and aims to influence group identity and the behaviour of others (Patterson & Renwick Monroe 1998: 317). The connection between SIT and SN is, therefore,

a highly natural one and emphasises the importance of examining ingroup narratives in contexts of intergroup conflict.

Our theoretical assumption, drawn from SN and SIT, is that social identity and strategic narratives coexist in the justification of actions and behaviours, and that these are enhanced during conflict. Narratives presenting threats to the ingroup and antagonising the outgroup creates conditions for justifying extreme actions and policies. Our theoretical assumption is tested in the case of Israeli expansion in the West Bank.

In this study the ingroup is conceptualised as the Israeli people and the outgroup as the Palestinian people, based on previous research on the dominant identity constructions in the Israel-Palestine context (e.g. see Rouhana & Bar-Tal 1998).

3. Method

3.1 Method and research design

Strategic narratives are used in the theoretical framework and as an analytical tool, as a narrative analysis will explain how the world is said to be (Oppermann & Spencer 2022: 117). Great caution on what to include and how to interpret collected data is taken into account. It is necessary when using narratives as a research method, as what the researcher includes and regards as important will be crucial for the outcome (Patterson & Renwick Monroe 1998: 326, 329). Nevertheless, narratives have potential to be a rich resource in exploring how identity and reality is created (Robertson 2018: 221).

The study is a qualitative analysis that seeks to systematically describe the meaning of qualitative data by using a coding frame as an analytic instrument, indicating what should be noted in the material (Boréus & Kohl 2018: 50, 58). The coding frame is based on analytical questions that focus on revealing the different narratives (Esaïsson et al. 2024: 315). The questions are not answered individually, but the same questions are used for each time period to ensure a structured analysis with an equivalent outcome.

The study has a structured comparative design; three time periods are analysed and thereafter compared with each other. SN and SIT are used to examine a certain outcome; the increase in settlements. The study aims to test the explanatory ability of the chosen theories, examined by comparing three different time periods. The time periods are chosen to examine why settlements have increased after October 7th. We analyze three time periods; January 2023 - October 6th 2023 (time period 1), October 7th 2023 - July 2024 (time period 2) and January 2025 - October 2025 (time period 3). Time period 3 is included to examine if the narratives created in time period two lasted.

3.2 Case Selection

The settlements are considered unlawful according to international law (UN Secretary-General 2025: 1-2). Despite the unlawfulness the settlements have accelerated since October 7th (Breteau 2025), and therefore it is suitable to examine if strategic narratives and social identity theory could have explanatory ability. The study is limited to settlements

in the West Bank. Other settlements in the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem are not included as they are formally annexed by Israel. The Gaza strip is excluded as its settlement activity was dismantled in 2005 (Handel, Allegra & Maggor 2022: 219, 227).

3.3 Material

The analysis is done by examining debates in Knesset, the Israeli legislative authority (Knesset n.d.a). Included are statements and explanatory bills, which suggests new legislation. We focus on members of Knesset (MKs), part of government parties, which includes Likud, Otzma Yehudit, Religious Zionism and New Hope-The United Right (Knesset n.d.b). We have chosen to analyze their construction of narratives as they are democratically elected and possess power to influence and use narratives strategically.

The material consists of press releases on the Knesset's official website which summarizes debates and bills, where the search words *Judea and Samaria*, *West Bank*, *Settlement* and *Settler* are used. The website is used to ensure a systematic and structured analysis and the search words ensure a relevant scope of press releases. The statements and bills made by MKs belonging to government parties have been reviewed by gathering material during the time periods, constituting 14 press releases from time period one (see Appendix A), 14 for time period two (see Appendix B) and 18 for time period three (see Appendix C).

3.4 Operationalisation

The analytic framework is derived from Miskimmon et al.'s (2013) three types of narratives and provides a clear methodological template to examine the contents of narratives.

Coding frame: Operationalisation of the three types of strategic narratives

<i>Type of strategic narrative</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Operationalisation/ analytic questions</i>
System narrative	Describes the international system, how the system works and who the actors are and the challenges to the system.	How is the settlement movement positioned in a broader political context? Is it described as necessary for meeting external threats? How is the international community's position on the settlement movement described?
Identity narrative	Describes the story of a political actor containing its character, values and goals	What norms and values are associated with the settlement movement? How/is the settlement movement/ activity connected to Israeli national identity and history? Are threats towards the settlements character, values and goals presented?
Issue narrative	Explains why a policy is necessary and desirable, and how it will be achieved and successful.	How is settlement activity described? Is it political, non-political, self-defence or of cultural/ideological significance? Why is the policy/ bill necessary or desirable? What are the presumed effects of the policy?

4. Background

Settlements refer to Jewish civilian communities established in the areas militarily occupied by Israel after the 6-Day War in 1967. The nature of settlements vary distinctively, ranging from small communities with a few dozen residents to fully developed cities with over 60 000 residents. They also range in legality according to Israeli law, some constituting state-sponsored towns and some constituting illegal outposts, established outside of Israeli national law. In reality, the outposts are often fully supported by Israeli governmental agencies (Handel, Allegra & Maggor 2022: 218-219, 226).

Although the contemporary Israeli settlement movement is characterised by a diverse set of ideologies and sociodemographic profiles, it is largely based on religious Zionism (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde 2021: 63-65). Realizing Eretz Israel (Greater Israel) and the perception that security for the Jewish people is provided by settling in the occupied territories is central. Rooted in religious-fundamentalism, the perception of the Land of Israel as holy and that “the Land of Israel and the Jewish People constitute a single entity, promised by God” (Ibid: 2) is central. This ideology has persisted, as the contemporary movement is dominated by fulfilling the prophecy of consolidating Israeli control over the West Bank, for example by using biblical language referring to the West Bank as “Judea and Samaria” (International Crisis Group [ICG] 2025: 1). The movement has become increasingly robust and influential in shaping the Israeli state’s approach to the occupied areas (Hellinger, Hershkowitz & Susser 2016: 843; ICG 2025: 1).

In December 2022, Benjamin Netanyahu’s sixth government was announced, consisting of Netanyahu’s party Likud and the far-right parties Otzma Yehudit, Religious Zionism and New Hope-The United Right (Knesset n.d.b). Although Likud historically has been supportive of the Settlement movement (Hellinger, Hershkowitz & Susser 2016: 851) the current government constitutes a paradigm shift in settlement support. One of the biggest shifts is the transfer of powers from military to civilian agencies, thereby replacing a system of occupation that by definition was of temporary nature to one that cements Israeli state control over the area, where Israeli sovereignty increasingly is applied to the West Bank (ICG 2025: 4-10). Hamas terrorist attack on October 7th and the following war have also largely impacted Israeli activities in the West Bank (Ibid: 1). In combination with legislative

measures, the establishment of illegal outposts have significantly increased since October 7th, from a yearly average of 5.7 since the 1990s, to new outposts to 47 (Breteau 2025). The acceleration in settlement activities in the West Bank has caused criticism from the international community, and is illegal according to international law (UN Secretary-General 2025: 1-2).

5. Narrative Analysis

As outlined in the theoretical framework the types of narratives are interlinked. Thereby certain themes can be attributed to more than one narrative, however, due to the study's scope, overlapping elements will be addressed with minimal repetition.

5.1 Time Period One (January 2023 - October 6 2023)

5.1.1 System Narratives

The settlement activity was positioned as an important part of a broader political agenda. The government distinguished themselves from previous governments and emphasized Israel's right to the West Bank. Justice Minister Yariv Levin (2023) stated: "We have returned to the belief in our right to all the Land of Israel, and we have gone back to strengthening the settlement [enterprise]". This view reoccurs, exemplified by MK Limor Sonn Har Melech's (2023) statement on increased Israeli construction in the West Bank: "My point of departure with regard to this entire discussion is that Jews have a right to settle in our ancestral homeland". This implies a description of the international system as one where Israeli activity in the West Bank is justified by emphasising Israel's historic right to the land.

Distinctions were made between the nature of different actors' activities in the West Bank. Israeli activity in the West Bank was seen as natural and legitimate, in contrast to Palestinian. When debating constructions by the Palestinian Authority (PA), the activity was presented as a tool of "political construction", described by MK Avichay Buaron (2023) as "constructing buildings and roads, and laying infrastructure not for any use or need, but to strategically influence the balance of power, from a political or security perspective". Palestinian activity in the West Bank was thereby presented as political and a potential threat to Israel.

Simultaneously, discussions regarding international critique of extended Israeli powers over the West Bank were present, showing evidence of a need to take the politicised dimensions of the subject into consideration. In a discussion on extended emergency regulations, MK Yuli Yoel Edelstein (2023) brought up the need for acknowledging international critique, but put the risk in relation to the lives of the Israeli citizens in the West Bank. Edelstein said:

“decisions on this issue have ramifications in the international arena on one hand, and for the lives of the Judea and Samaria residents on the other.”.

5.1.2 Identity Narratives

Identity narratives tie settlements to Israel as a nation, thereby including them in the national identity. This was done when referring to the West Bank as an area which Israel has a historic right to (Har-Melech 2023; Levin 2023) and when equalising the West Bank to other areas of Israel (Solomon 2023). Settlement activities were also linked to Jewish norms and culture and presented as generally non-violent. When discussing incidents of settler violence, violent actors were presented as separate from the settlement enterprise (Gallant 2023), and focus on violence was presented as a way to tarnish the movement (Sukkot 2023). MK Yoav Gallant (2023) stated that settlers to “99.9%” are law-abiding and that violent actors are denounced by the movement. He further stated: “As a Jewish ethos, we do not harm and we do not burn innocents or people who are not involved. I will not allow a situation in which we will act like our enemies.”. Such statements can be analysed both as a defence of the settlement activities by denouncing violent actors but also that the Jewish culture of non-violence should guide the settlers. References to a difference between the own actions and the actions of enemies also implies that settlement activities are connected to Israel by having common guiding norms and enemies. Furthermore, Israeli settlement activity was connected to creating good living standards for all citizens of the area. MK Gallant (2023) stated: “Fortunately, our goals are different than our enemies’ goals. They want to expel us, while we want a flourishing country for all those who live in it.”, positioning the settlements as being able to contribute positively to the area, in comparison to the Palestinian residents.

5.1.3 Issue Narratives

As previously examined, narratives on Israel’s historical right to the West Bank were present, also implying that Israeli activity is of cultural and ideological significance. This was used as a legitimising background to policies, the government parties were mainly projecting an issue narrative of settlements as solutions to practical problems, presenting the issue mainly as non-political. MK Solomon (2023) stated in a debate on increased housing construction in the West Bank that “We’re in the midst of a housing crisis. The solution is probably right under our nose. [...] As a national Government, we want to advance construction in Judea and Samaria.”. Narratives presenting the issue more drastically were also present. In a debate

regarding increased construction by the PA, the activities were presented as causing harm to the settlement enterprise and “the fabric of life within”, as harming Israeli security assets and making routine security activity in the area difficult (Buaron 2023), presenting it mainly as a practical issue, but with security aspects.

5.2 Time Period Two (October 7 2023 - July 2024)

5.2.1 System Narratives

The system narratives largely presented the settlements as crucial for the safety of Israel. In a bill sponsored by MK Amit Halevi, aimed to prohibit persons from obtaining entering permits to certain areas of the West Bank if they have been convicted of terrorism, the explanatory bill stated that the “obligation to the security of its [Israel’s] citizens requires it to reexamine the standards on this issue and other issues pertaining to terrorist infrastructures.” (Knesset 2024). The events on October 7th were used as a warning example of Palestinians as an external threat that needs protecting from, especially in the West Bank.

Additionally, the system narratives were dominated by views on opponents and activists as external actors that contributed to security issues in the West Bank. The debate “Inflammatory activity by activists in Judea and Samaria whose center of life is not in Judea and Samaria”, described activists as a problem wanting to worsen the situation and as non-Israeli citizens. Exemplified by MK Limor Sonn Har Melech (2024a): “These people come here under the guise of tourists. [...] which has very dangerous ramifications and aspects for the security of the State of Israel’s citizens.”. This suggests a narrative presenting resistance as primarily derived from outside actors further emphasized by MK Ariel Kallner (2024) when claiming that these activists “are antisemites, for all intents and purposes, and supporters of terrorism.”.

5.2.2 Identity Narratives

The identity narratives were imbued on the idea that the West Bank is part of Israel’s and the Jewish people’s ancestral homeland, therefore they have a right to settle there. In a debate about antique findings in the West Bank, MK Halevi (2024a) claimed a historical right to the land and discredited Palestinian claims, stating: “There is no question that these areas are steeped in Jewish history, and these finds have no historical or other link to the Palestinian

Authority.”. Furthermore, settlers were praised and defended from criticism. MK Tzvi Suktot (2024a) defended the settlers by saying: “It’s not clear why there are people who think that the blood of the Judea and Samaria [Jewish] residents is less red”. Settlers were emphasized to be part of the rest of the population, and were presented as heroic and needed for the security of Israel (Suktot 2024b; Edelstein 2024).

The identity narratives were also largely based on antagonising the Palestinians, portrayed as security threats, terrorists or supporters of terrorists (Suktot 2024a; Kallner 2024; Elkin 2024; Halevi 2024b). The Palestinian presence was framed as having “civilian, national or military goals” and that “It’s clear that we’re facing a strategic event” (Halevi 2024c). Their presence was viewed as political in contrast to Israeli presence which was viewed as natural. Coexistence was not viewed as an option, exemplified by MK Har Melech (2024b): “Our demand is to sober up and view the Palestinian Authority as a terrorist element, and certainly not an element that can be relied upon or one from which cooperation can be expected”. Palestinians were presented as dangerous and untrustworthy, thereby constituting a threat to the whole of Israel, further emphasised by MK Hanoch Milwidsky (2024) meaning they are “an enemy population, and that’s how they should be treated.”. MK Halevi (2024b) sponsored a bill where he argued that the “‘forgiving’ and ‘accepting’ attitude” towards illegal Palestinians must change in the aftermath of October 7th to ensure the security of the region and to combat “terrorist infrastructure”, framing the settlements more of a necessity for security than before.

5.2.3 Issue Narratives

The issue of the settlements were presented as important in various ways, described as having cultural and religious significance as well as a function of defence needed for Israeli security. In a debate about a bill proposing to prohibit stay permits in the West Bank for persons convicted or operating terrorists, MK Halevi (2024b) said that the bill is supposed to “impair the social and economic infrastructure and deter the [would-be] terrorist, who will know that his family will be denied all of the social and economic rights”. Halevi framed this as necessary because of “The potential tsunami that threatens us”, referencing a possibility of an attack similar to October 7th, that the settlements need to be protected from.

Another example is a debate on Israel's strategy regarding defense of the settlement enterprise. MK Sukkot (2024c) argued that distribution of additional firearms to the residents of Judea and Samaria is of great significance, since it will enhance the sense of security in the region. Sukkot emphasized its necessity: "Terror is rearing its head, and we will do everything so that we may continue to live in Judea and Samaria, and everywhere else in our homeland, in peace and security.". It suggests the need for more extreme defensive methods in protecting continued settler presence from the threat that Palestinians could pose.

5.3 Time Period Three (January 2025 - October 2025)

5.3.1 System Narratives

The system narratives portrayed official Israeli sovereignty as a political objective, linked to the war and explained as a crucial step for enabling peace and security, and to winning the war. MK Halevi (2025) stated: "A central component of absolute victory is our sovereignty over the land. It is in the name of that [cause] that the enemy went to war, and for this reason that is the way to overcome it.". Similar connections were drawn by MK Sukkot (2025) explaining that sovereignty is crucial for achieving a "decisive outcome for the conflict" and MK Dan Illouz (2025) stated that "Sovereignty is the victory image". Thereby, activities in the West Bank were presented as necessary for meeting external threats and were linked to the broader political context of war.

The system narratives also included descriptions of how application of sovereignty and resistance against a Palestinian state is supported by other international actors. Support was linked to a perception of Israel's historic right to the West Bank and the dangers of the establishment of a Palestinian state, and support was mainly linked to the United States. In a debate regarding an amendment to Israeli Basic Law, which would aggravate regulations on Israeli legislative powers over the West Bank, MK Simcha Rothman (2025a) stated: "At this time, when new tunes are heard, including from the US administration, and around the world, understanding that the so-called two-state solution endangers the existence of the State of Israel, [...] which understands the danger of a Palestinian state". International support was thereby used as an argument for the wanted policy-change. US support was further emphasized by Defence Minister Bezael Smotrich (2025) encouraging the proceeding in the

application of sovereignty in the West Bank and Minister of Education Yoav Kisch (2025) when explaining that the future prospects for official sovereignty is to be made with US support. When international sanctions against Israeli officials were brought up, actors that condemned the sanctions were described as having “conscience and morality”, at the same time portraying international opposition as immoral and as an attack (Rothman 2025b).

5.3.2 Identity Narratives

The identity narratives were dominated by creating a strong link between the West Bank and Jewish and Israeli identity. MK Rothman sponsored a bill stating that the term “West Bank” should be replaced with the Jewish historic names of the region, “Judea and Samaria” because it will “express the legislator’s recognition of the historical right of the Jewish people to its land, and will rectify a historical injustice that was created by foreigners” and will continue to “strengthening the Israeli linkage to the region” (Knesset 2025a). Former residents were presented as “foreigners” and illegitimate in decision making about the area. The historical link was further emphasized in a statement made by the government parties presenting the West Bank as an “inseparable” part of Israel because “Hundreds and thousands of years before the state’s establishment, the forefathers and the prophets of the nation lived and acted in these regions, and the foundations of Jewish culture and faith were laid in them” (Knesset 2025b). This was further strengthened when referencing that “Eretz Israel belongs to the people of Israel. In 1967 the occupation did not start, it ended. That is the historical truth” (Ohana 2025). Meaning that the occupation ended as the Israeli settlements began, as it constituted a return to the historical homeland.

Furthermore the identity narratives portrayed Palestinians as a danger to Israeli and Jewish rights and security, and framed as terrorists and enemies to the Israeli people. MKs Avichay Buaron and Moshe Passal sponsored a bill promoting demolition of terrorists homes in the West Bank, stating that “the State of Israel has been dealing with murderous terrorism that exacts heavy physical and emotional prices. [...] on one hand severely harm its security and resilience, and on the other hand violate the right of its citizens and residents to security, bodily integrity, and dignity.” (Knesset 2025c). Security threats were further emphasized by the government parties, concluding that “October 7, 2023, proved that the establishment of a

Palestinian state poses an existential danger to Israel, its citizens and the entire region” (Knesset 2025b).

MKs presented coexistence and any type of cooperation as impossible, and Israelis and Palestinians as incompatible. In a debate about sovereignty over the West Bank MK Rothman (2025c) said “The time has come to pursue and seek peace from power, not from weakness.”, implying that the belonging of the West Bank should no longer be a question. Sovereignty was further determined by MK Illouz (2025): “The time has come to say clearly: Judea and Samaria are not a bargaining chip, they are the heart of our land.”. Opposition was viewed as a threat and the narrative presented emphasizes that there will only be one state in the region regardless of opposition, stated by MK Sukkot (2025): “we will show our enemies that the story is finished and there is only one state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea - a Jewish state.”.

5.3.3 Issue Narratives

As previously examined, control over the West Bank was depicted as a crucial factor for ensuring security for Israel and its citizens. Sovereignty over the region was framed as a necessity for winning the war. During a debate about applying Israeli sovereignty in the region, Smotrich (2025) stated: “Application of sovereignty is of diplomatic, security, economic, settlement and democratic significance, and also of moral and Zionist significance.”. Smotrich described different aspects of the necessity of sovereignty, but with the largest emphasis on the need for security. MK Sukkot (2025) stated: “In order to eradicate terrorism and achieve a decisive outcome for the conflict here, we need to apply sovereignty in Judea and Samaria.”. Sovereignty was also viewed as a right and the hindering of Israelis to purchase land was presented as discriminatory, exemplified by MK Edelstein (2025): “For decades, Jews have been forbidden from purchasing lands in Judea and Samaria. This is a crime and a terrible fiasco”. MK Sonn Har Melech (2025) further explained: “the insanity that causes a country to apply to itself racist and antisemitic laws that pertain to it”. The West Bank was thereby portrayed as a natural part of Israeli territory and obstacles were described as discriminatory to the Jewish people.

The issue narratives were dominated by the need for policies further strengthening Israel’s position in the West Bank by obstructing palestinian activity, homes and work in the region.

MKs Avichay Buaron and Moshe Passal sponsored a bill that proposed that orders of terrorists home demolition should be executed in cases of security, national-security, deterrent, or punitive needs. The explanatory bill stated that prison sentences have not achieved sufficient results and “Therefore, the demolition of terrorists’ homes is a significant and important step that will strengthen the security of the state and the security of its citizens.” (Knesset 2025c).

6. Discussion

6.1 Comparison and Summary

Present during all three time periods and types of narratives was the notion of the right for the Israeli to settle in their historical homeland. The settlements were justified by a combination of historical, religious, security and nationalist narratives, and the emphasis differs between the different time periods. During time period one, the settlements were largely viewed as a solution to practical problems like the housing crisis, this narrative is not present in the later time periods where the biggest emphasis was put on the security aspects.

In period one settlement activity was presented with more caution than in the following periods. Present in period one was the discussions on possible international critique of legislation. In time period two opposition from outside actors were portrayed as a threat and antisemitic. This was further consolidated in time period three, where sanctions imposed were seen as an attack, and the US was repeatedly described as a protector, implying that activity can be continued without fear of repercussions from international actors.

Through all periods, the identity narratives consistently presented Palestinians as an enemy-population. A narrative-change is however observable. In period one coexistence was viewed as possible, whereas Palestinians were portrayed as potential terrorists and existential threats in period two and three, thereby presenting coexistence as unimaginable. Furthermore, reflected in the issue narratives in period two and especially three, was the necessity of self defence. It was emphasized more than in period one, and the norm of non-violence expressed in period one has been replaced by the need for the settler population to arm themselves for protection.

This narrative analysis shows a difference in the narratives before and after October 7th. The narratives after have gained ground and developed further, as seen when comparing period two and three. The security aspects that were largely emphasised in period two becomes increasingly emphasized in period three, where sovereignty was seen as a requirement for the existence and safety of the Israeli people.

6.2 The Effects of Strategic Narratives

Our theoretical assumption; that social identity processes and strategic narratives coexist in the justification of actions and behaviours, and that these are enhanced during conflict, can be attributed to the mediated narratives in the Knesset that contribute to the justification of increased settlements, as examined below.

Theorised by SIT and SN, leaders have the ability to influence how identities are defined, can mobilize support and set an agenda (Hogg 2001: 188; Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2013: 7, 3). In this context, MKs from the governmental parties function as actors that shape the narratives concerning the settlement movement, which contributes to defining the movement's position within the Israeli ingroup. Further theorized is the sufficiency of the social categorisations of segmenting the world into in- and outgroups to trigger discriminatory behaviour on behalf of the own ingroup (Tajfel & Turner: 16, 13). In all periods the description of settlers linked to Jewish and national identity and history are present, implying narratives that seek to include the settlement movement in the ingroup. Hence, the settlement movement's inclusion in Israeli identity can be analysed as a contributing mechanism to acceptance within Israel, even though largely internationally condemned.

Settlers were increasingly portrayed as heroic and crucial for security in period two and three. This implies an escalation in the ingroup categorisation of the settlement movement, where they increasingly were portrayed as crucial for the survival of the rest of the group. This narrative can also affect the legitimacy of the settlement movement, both to the public but also to settlers themselves. In line with Somers (1994: 624), people do not act on the basis of rationality but on a basis of identity which decides appropriate behaviour in accordance with their self at that given time. The narrative shift allows for a sense of self for settlers associated with historic and religious righteousness, with heroism and national security necessity, suggesting that the behaviour has become increasingly legitimised.

Combining the safety narrative with theological and justice based narratives; the portrayal of a historical right to settle in the region, produces a more comprehensive narrative (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2013: 187). The recurring linkage to religious history in all periods can be analysed as a legitimising mechanism. According to Seul (1999: 567),

religion serves a more comprehensive and powerful impulse of social identity construction than other factors, such as culture. Although religious linkage was consistent throughout all periods, the religious norms of non-violence emphasised in period one was left out after October 7th. This could suggest a religious justification of violent behaviour by omitting the Jewish norms of non-violence. Religious justifications to violence have a greater tendency to gain broad support than norms which oppose it (Seul 1999: 566), which could explain the justification of settlement activity after October 7th.

Furthermore, strategic narratives work to convince the public of a certain actions necessity, by locating who to blame for an event, as well to break the legitimacy of the opponents actions (Akdoğan 2025: 169; Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2013: 178). According to Hogg (2001: 191) one strategy of leaders is to accentuate intergroup conflicts and to polarize the ingroup relative to the outgroup. The process of in- and outgroup categorisation is thereby an important parameter in strategic narratives, especially the functioning of outgroup stereotyping. In accordance with SIT, stereotypes are of importance in justifying behaviour towards outgroups and taking into account how stereotypes are portrayed is a valuable tool for understanding ingroup judgements and actions (Tajfel 1981 in Brown 2000: 750). Palestinians were portrayed as a bigger security threat in period two and three, where they were seen as potential terrorists, capable of executing similar actions as October 7th, exemplifying an increased and more extreme stereotyping. Furthermore is justifications of collective punishments toward the Palestinian population present, exemplifying moral justification of a behaviour that will negatively affect the Palestinians.

The change in narratives regarding the prospects of coexistence can also be attributed to outgroup characterisations and stereotyping. It changes from portraying settlement activity and Israeli presence as enabling a flourishing West Bank for all in period one, implying some sort of coexistence. In period two and three increased expansion was motivated by portraying the Palestinian population as dangerous and untrustworthy, and emphasizing the existential threats a Palestinian state constitutes. An escalation in narratives which describes the Palestinian population negatively can be attributed to enhancing the possibilities of expansion in the West Bank.

The perception of conflict and its behavioural effects can be attributed to the crisis and national trauma that October 7th meant for Israel, as the narratives help explain the nature of the crisis and a preferred solution (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2013: 28). SIT explains how perceptions of external threats towards the ingroup creates circumstances where ingroup cohesion and group identities are enhanced and is directly associated with fear and hostility towards the outgroup (Brewer 1999: 435-436). This holds explanatory power in explaining the correlation between the change in narratives after October 7th and increased settlement expansion. The event of October 7th has enabled the conception of threat towards the own identity and an increased fear of what a Palestinian state would implicate, leading to a moral justification to increased expansion based on experiences of insecurity. Narratives after October 7th implied that West Bank settlements would increase the safety of Israel, thereby largely drawing on the perception of threat and suggesting settlements as a solution to the conflict.

Simultaneously, perceptions of threats could be exploited for political purposes, narratives construct social identities and guide social action, and are constructed and mediated by institutional processes and interactions, (Brewer 1999: 437-438; Somers 1994: 621). Thereby, narratives that correlate the October 7th attack to an increased need for expansion in the West Bank can also be analysed to draw upon the social processes of threat perception for a political purpose. The government has had an explicit political agenda of expanding settlement activity from the beginning of their mandate, and the increased fear and threat perceptions that October 7th entailed could be utilised strategically for that. The narratives present in period two and especially in period three include the settlements as crucial solutions for achieving peace and security, and are thereby increasingly rooted in the importance of meeting an external threat towards the ingroup. The narrative shift before and after October 7th can thereby exemplify how actors use threat perceptions to legitimize actions.

Notably, the MKs examined are not the only actors in Israel with political power and the ability to create and spread strategic narratives. Reality is shaped by competition between several different narratives and the contemporary media landscape has made it more difficult for leaders to control narratives (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin & Roselle 2013: 4-5, 2). As elsewhere, competing narratives are present in the Israeli context and the inclusion of

competing narratives would further contribute to research on this case, but is outside the scope of this analysis.

Additionally, it should be noted that conflict escalation is not generated by psychological factors only (Rouhana & Bar-Tal 1998: 761). The West Bank could also be seen as a material conflict over tangible resources. Such instrumental aspects should not be disregarded, and future research where instrumental causes to increased conflictual relationships is further examined could contribute to a broader understanding of the contemporary increase in settlements. Still, the social processes behind security and identity perceptions are central factors in conflict (Ibid: 761), however a more realistic research approach could contribute further.

7. Conclusion

This study shows a difference in strategic narratives regarding the West Bank before and after October 7th. Time period one emphasized the historical linkage to the West Bank and the practical problems settlements can solve. Time period two was dominated by narratives focusing on security and antagonising the Palestinians. This was further presented in time period three where sovereignty was viewed as the only solution for peace and security. The shift in narratives constitutes a larger emphasis on the need for security and the exclusion of Palestinians in the West Bank, thereby answering our first research question.

SN and SIT have contributed to explaining how the governmental parties' has constructed narratives and their effects, thereby answering our second research question. Our theoretical framework highlights how settlers have increasingly been included in the ingroup, how outgroup stereotyping has escalated and how religious and threat narratives have been present. It further highlights how such narratives can serve to legitimize and justify the settlement movement internally in Israel, therefore possibly contributing to settlement expansion, even though they are largely condemned internationally.

This study has highlighted how social identity theory and strategic narratives work together, and emphasizes how ingroup narratives can contribute to morally justifying and legitimizing extreme actions.

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<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press15323w.aspx>

Sukkot, T. (2024a). *Judea and Samaria Subcommittee discusses policy on entry of Palestinian workers into communities and industrial zones; Subcommittee Chair MK Sukkot: Severe failing and real security danger* [press release]. Knesset, January 2.

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Sukkot, T. (2024b). *Judea and Samaria Subcommittee Chair MK Sukkot: Those who create violence are radical left-wing anarchists who harass IDF soldiers and heroic settlers; MK Michaeli: Outrageous attempt to present an opposite and completely false reality* [press release]. Knesset, March 12.

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press12324x.aspx>

Sukkot, T. (2024c). *Subcommittee for Judea and Samaria discusses strategy for defending settlement enterprise; residents warn of repeat of Oct. 7 attack* [press release]. Knesset, June 2.

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press2624q.aspx>

Sukkot, T. (2025). *Minister Smotrich to Judea and Samaria Subcommittee: I want to call upon the Prime Minister—make the decision to apply sovereignty. There is no time more suitable than these days to convene the Government and make the decision* [press release]. Knesset, July 29.

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press29725t.aspx>

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9. Appendix

9.1 Appendix A: Material Time Period 1 (January 2023 - 6 October)

The Knesset (2023). *Bill for extending the validity of emergency regulations in Judea and Samaria passes first reading* [press release], 10 January

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/News/PressReleases/Pages/press10123w.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Approved for second and third readings: Legal powers of state authorities in Judea and Samaria and in PA territories will be extended by five years* [press release], 17 January

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press17123f.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Knesset extends Judea and Samaria emergency regulations by five years* [press release], 25 January

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press25123r.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Special Committee on Young Israelis Chair MK Lazimi: Riots in Huwara were unprecedented, this is a test case that obligates us to think about the flaws in our treatment of 'fringe populations'* [press release], 15 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press15323w.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Reported to Subcommittee for Judea and Samaria: In terms of traffic enforcement, Judea and Samaria is treated like a district of half a million people, but three million people drive on the region's roads* [press release], 3 May

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press3523w.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Chair of Subcommittee for Judea and Samaria MK Solomon: We need to advance construction in Judea and Samaria and remove barriers; solution to the housing crisis in Israel is right under our noses* [press release], 7 June

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press7623e.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Committee on Public Projects begins to discuss bill allowing expansion and application of admission criteria to community localities in the Negev and Galilee, in Judea and Samaria and in seam zone localities* [press release], 19 June

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press19623q.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee hears classified briefing following escalation in Judea and Samaria, with a focus on northern Samaria* [press release], 21 June

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press21623w.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *IDF official to Subcommittee for Judea and Samaria: Significant increase in terrorist incidents on the roads in the first quarter of 2023* [press release], 28 June

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press28623w.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Defense Minister MK Gallant addresses parliamentary question on settler violence: "Jewish public in Judea and Samaria is essentially law-abiding"* [press release], 28 June

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press25623r.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Heads of municipalities from communities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza perimeter tell Health Committee budget for resilience centers is insufficient* [press release], 3 July

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press3722r.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Internal Affairs Committee approves for first reading: Local authorities in Judea and Samaria located near industrial zone within the Green Line will be able to benefit from property tax revenues of industrial zone* [press release], 17 July

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press17723p.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Minister Smotrich to Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee: "Our work will hopefully lead to a cabinet decision to define PA's activity in Judea and Samaria as*

hostile political activity" [press release], 20 July

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press20723r.aspx>

The Knesset (2023). *Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee hears classified intelligence-operational briefing focusing on Judea and Samaria sector* [press release], 7 September

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press7923w.aspx>

9.2 Appendix B: Material Time Period 2 (7 October 2023 - July 2024)

The Knesset (2023). *Finance Committee approves NIS 110 million transfer, including NIS 90 million in cash, to Ministry of Settlement and National Missions* [press release], 31 December

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press311223e.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Judea and Samaria Subcommittee discusses policy on entry of Palestinian workers into communities and industrial zones; Subcommittee Chair MK Sukkot: Severe failing and real security danger* [press release], 2 January

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press2124i.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chair MK Edelstein: Scenario of 'reversal of gun barrels' is not imaginary, and the State of Israel must be prepared for it* [press release], 3 January

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press3124q.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee holds debate on the topic of "Forming rapid response security teams in the region surrounding Judea and Samaria"; MK Edelstein, Chair: "We mustn't underestimate the operational value of a man defending his home"* [press release], 31 January

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press31124r.aspx>

The Knesset (2024) *Prime Minister MK Netanyahu after approval of statement on international diktats by Knesset Plenum: Diktat for establishing Palestinian state will endanger the State of Israel; Opposition Leader MK Lapid: You invented a threat that doesn't*

exist [press release], 21 February

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press21224w.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee holds classified debate following request for IDF briefing on settler violence report; MK Edelstein, chair: Committee condemns any violence, but also collective blaming of a group for producing violence* [press release], 28 February

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press28224r.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Judea and Samaria Subcommittee Chair MK Sukkot: Those who create violence are radical left-wing anarchists who harass IDF soldiers and heroic settlers; MK Michaeli: Outrageous attempt to present an opposite and completely false reality* [press release], 12 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press12324x.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Chair of Judea and Samaria Subcommittee MK Sukkot: We all saw on October 7 the meaning of unchecked construction adjacent to the fence, the goal is to prevent Kfar Saba from becoming Kfar Azza* [press release], 21 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press210324d.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Internal Affairs Committee approves for final readings bill enabling municipalities in Judea and Samaria to receive part of the revenues from industrial or commercial zones in nearby municipality outside Judea and Samaria* [press release], 26 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press26324u.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Approved in final readings: Interior Minister's power to distribute revenues between nearby or bordering municipalities will be expanded to cases in which nearby or bordering municipalities are in Judea and Samaria* [press release], 2 April

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press2424q.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Subcommittee for Judea and Samaria discusses strategy for defending settlement enterprise; residents warn of repeat of Oct. 7 attack* [press release], 2 June
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press2624q.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Subcommittee for Judea and Samaria holds follow-up debate on entry of Palestinian workers into residential communities and industrial zones in the region; plant owner: "Burden is entirely on us"* [press release], 16 June
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press16624q.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Approved in preliminary reading: Powers of Israel Antiquities Authority to also apply to Judea and Samaria territories* [press release], 11 July
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press11724o.aspx>

The Knesset (2024). *Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee discusses bill to prohibit issuing of stay permit to resident of Judea and Samaria and Gaza, or to such a resident's family member—if the person has been convicted of an act of terror* [press realese], 21 July
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press21724q.aspx>

9.3 Appendix C: Material Time Period 3 (January 2025 - October 2025)

The Knesset (2025). *Approved in preliminary reading: Annulment of Jordanian law applied in Judea and Samaria regarding lease and sale of real estate to foreigners* [press release], 30 January
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press30125q.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Constitution Committee discusses referendum bill; National Security Council and Defense Ministry: No obstacle to prevent bill's advancement, Justice Ministry: Challenges expected, but not insurmountable ones* [press release], 10 February
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press10225t.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Antiquities Authority opposed to bill giving it powers in sites in Judea and Samaria, says will harm academic ties with international bodies; Education Committee Chair MK Taieb: We want government agency to take responsibility for the antiquities* [press release], 11 February

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press11225s.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Approved in preliminary reading: The term "West Bank" will be replaced by "Judea and Samaria" in all legislation pertaining to the Judea and Samaria territories* [press release], 12 February

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press12225q.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee holds first debate on bill that would enable any citizen to purchase land in Judea and Samaria; MK Edelstein, chair: Bill rectifies "historic distortion"* [press release], 13 February

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press13225w.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Approved in preliminary reading: Power to enforce prohibition on opening and operating missions of the Palestinian Authority, Fatah or PLO in Israeli territory—will be handed over to Minister of National Security* [press release], 20 February

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press20225r.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Subcommittee for Judea and Samaria discusses response for disconnected youth in Judea and Samaria* [press release], 18 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press18325t.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Approved in preliminary reading: Bill empowering Minister of National Security and military commander in Judea and Samaria to order demolition of terrorist's home* [press release], 19 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press19325d.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Constitution Committee approves for first reading bill to replace term "West Bank" with "Judea and Samaria" in all legislation* [press release], 24 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press24325e.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Approved in first reading: The term “West Bank” to be replaced with the term “Judea and Samaria” in all legislation* [press release], 31 March

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press31325h.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Reported to Committee on Young Israelis: 84% of young adults from northern localities have not yet returned to their homes* [press release], 21 May

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press21525t.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Economic Affairs Committee discusses bill to include communities in Judea and Samaria within Negev Development Authority Law; MK Bitan, chair: Residents of the Negev will not be harmed, full stop* [press release], 4 June

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press4625t.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Constitution Committee approves for final readings bill to eliminate use of “West Bank” as official term* [press release], 11 June

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press11625t.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *By majority of 71 MKs, Knesset Plenum votes in favor of declaration calling to apply sovereignty to Judea and Samaria and the Jordan Valley* [press release], 23 July

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press23725r.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Minister Smotrich to Judea and Samaria Subcommittee: I want to call upon the Prime Minister—make the decision to apply sovereignty. There is no time more suitable than these days to convene the Government and make the decision* [press release], 29 July

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press29725t.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Energy Minister Cohen to Israeli Citizens' Fund Oversight Committee: Energy sector functioned impeccably during Operation Rising Lion; Committee Chair MK Vaturi: Scenarios for the war were ominous but the public didn't experience these things* [press release], 4 August

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press4825e.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *National Security Committee discusses "police's preparedness to prevent harm to settlers during the olive harvest season"* [press release], 29 September

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press29925q.aspx>

The Knesset (2025). *Two bills approved in preliminary reading—one for application of sovereignty to Judea and Samaria settlement regions, and the other for application of sovereignty to Ma'ale Adumim* [press release], 22 October

<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press221025t.aspx>