



Citation : Motzafi-Haller, David (2026), « The Zionist Familial Developmental State », *Sociétés politiques comparées*, 66 : 27-52
doi : 10.36253/spc-20418

Copyright : © 2026 Motzafi-Haller. Il s'agit d'un article en accès ouvert, évalué par des pairs, publié par Firenze University Press (<https://www.fupress.com>) et distribué, sauf indication contraire, selon les termes de la licence Creative Commons Attribution, qui permet une utilisation, une distribution et une reproduction sans restriction sur tout support, à condition que l'auteur original et la source soient mentionnés.

Déclaration de disponibilité des données : toutes les données pertinentes sont disponibles dans l'article ainsi que dans ses fichiers d'informations complémentaires.

Déclaration d'intérêts : l'auteur (les auteurs) déclare(nt) n'avoir aucun lien d'intérêt en relation avec cet article.

Varia

The Zionist Familial Developmental State

L'État développementiste et lignager sioniste

DAVID MOTZAFI-HALLER

University of Neuchâtel

E-mail : david.motzafi-haller@graduateinstitute.ch

Abstract: Scholarship contrasts the “developmental state”—with autonomous bureaucracies fostering economic growth—and neopatrimonial regimes, where public resources are captured by kinship networks. Some scholars suggest examining the gap between the idealized state and social practices, while others highlight patriarchal lineage politics supporting state power. This article bridges these views, showing elite kinship networks crossing institutions to support, rather than hinder, development. This study uses “familial-developmental state” to analyze Israeli state formation in the 1950s, arguing that kin alliances formed a patrimonial network that underpinned Israeli development, protected from democratic accountability. By the late 1950s, this network shifted from neo-corporatist syndicalism to a centralized, state-driven industrialization. This change, marked by the decline of workers’ organizations and increased government policymaking, rendered much of the Zionist apparatus redundant domestically. This obsolescence led elites to export Zionist state-building efforts to Sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1960s, representing a transnational reconfiguration of the Zionist family-based developmental state rather than a simple shift from colonization to development.

Keywords: development; familial state; Israel/Palestine; kinship; neopatrimonialism; zionism.

Résumé : La recherche oppose traditionnellement « l'État développementiste » – caractérisé par des bureaucraties autonomes favorisant la croissance économique – aux régimes néopatrimoniaux, où les ressources publiques sont captées par des réseaux de parenté. Si certains chercheurs suggèrent d'examiner l'écart entre l'État idéalisé et les pratiques sociales, d'autres soulignent le rôle des politiques de lignage patriarcal dans le soutien au pouvoir étatique. Cet article fait le lien entre ces perspectives en démontrant que les réseaux de parenté au sein des élites traversent les institutions pour soutenir, plutôt que d'entraver, le développement. Cette étude mobilise le concept d'« État développementiste et lignager » pour analyser la formation de l'État israélien dans les

années 1950. Elle soutient que les alliances de parenté ont constitué un réseau patrimonial ayant sous-tendu le développement d'Israël, à l'abri de toute responsabilité démocratique. À la fin des années 1950, ce réseau est passé d'un syndicalisme néocorporatiste à une industrialisation centralisée et pilotée par l'État. Ce basculement, marqué par le déclin des organisations de travailleurs et l'accroissement des politiques gouvernementales, a rendu une grande partie de l'appareil sioniste redondante sur le plan intérieur. Cette obsolescence a conduit les élites à orienter les efforts de construction de l'État sioniste vers l'Afrique subsaharienne au début des années 1960. Ce mouvement ne représente pas seulement un simple passage de la colonisation au développement, mais une stratégie d'extraversion et une reconfiguration transnationale de l'État développementaliste et lignager sioniste.

Mots-clés : État développementaliste ; État lignager ; extraversion ; Israël/Palestine ; privatisation de l'État.

INTRODUCTION: A PATRIMONIAL-DEVELOPMENTAL NEXUS IN TRANSITION

Following the 1948 Nakba—a moment defined by the simultaneous emptying of Jewish camps in Europe and the filling of Palestinian camps in the region—Israel started an unlikely “Trente Glorieuses.” This period of rapid growth continued despite boycotts, wars, and internal social tensions. While conventional histories highlight the plunder of Palestinian wealth and land, external financial support, or Israel’s “pioneering” zeal, they often ignore the role of Israel’s contemporary political nexus. Riveted by political factionalism and clientelist networks, the political system is rarely seen as a development driver, yet it was precisely through these informal structures that the state managed its expansion.

In what follows, I briefly relate the history of an Israeli political nexus in transition during the 1950s and explain why Israel exhibited governmental and interventionist patterns that were both “familial” and “developmental.” Applying these two ideal types to the Israeli case opens new avenues for research, offering alternative international frameworks for understanding the Zionist project and, I hope, encouraging new comparisons across disciplines and regions.

Framed as a familial-developmental regime, the Zionist state in Israel/Palestine draws comparisons and contrasts with other such regimes – South Korea from 1961 to 1987, Malaysia from 1957 to 1997, Indonesia from 1967 to 1997, Botswana from 1966 to 1998, Kenya from 1965 to 1975, and Côte d’Ivoire from 1960 to 1975. Working within the “heterodox” tradition of economic analysis traceable back to Chalmers Johnson, Tim Kelsall and a group of economists highlighted how all these patrimonial regimes have achieved high year-on-year economic growth rates through a combination of four factors: a strong and visionary leader; a single or dominant party system; a top-down patron-client network; and a politically insulated economic technocracy.¹

¹ Kelsall, 2013, 26.

Economists critical of Western neo-liberal calls for “good governance” reforms in developing countries, Kelsall and his team argued that the key question was not how closely states were able to resemble the Weberian rational-legal ideal type, but rather what specific forms clientelism and rent-seeking—the use of office to extract regular bribes—took in each context. They contended that a government capable of centralizing rent-seeking and leveraging it to ensure that officeholders “buy-in” to long-term economic development projects is fully able to promote economic growth, even if it lacks many of the “good governance” qualities that liberal economists emphasize.²

Israel of the 1950s fits this model remarkably well. Its multiparty system was dominated by one party, Mapai, whose chairman, David Ben Gurion, enjoyed the kind of “founding father” prestige that firmly ensconced him in the Prime Minister’s office. Its governing coalition relied on a complex and multifaceted patron-client network that traded basic social services and minor positions in exchange for cooperation, votes, and labor from dependent populations such as Mizrahi Jews and Palestinian Arabs. Additionally, it maintained a “cradle to grave” labor union that secured a significant voter base among the Ashkenazi urban working class. Its government apparatus also kept a small reserve of well-trained and sophisticated economists capable of creating a small statistical operation to provide the essential information needed for economic policy development.³

There are, of course, serendipitous elements stemming from the specific circumstances of the case at hand. The Israeli developmental-familial nexus of the 1950s, to paraphrase E. P. Thompson, “arose, like every real historical situation, from a particular equilibrium of forces.” As I share my discipline’s customary suspicion of ahistorical conceptual abstractions, I do not reduce historical complexity to fit the economist’s model; instead, I choose to use the compound term on a strictly practical basis. “If there is no place for it in the model,” to quote Thompson again, “it is the model which must be scrapped or refined.”⁴

My historical presentation focuses on Israel’s political nexus in transition during the 1950s. This decade was marked by the rise of a syndicalist, neo-corporate faction—represented by the colossal Solel Boneh syndicate—which had started growing under the umbrella of British and Zionist “emergency economics” beginning in 1936 and continued to serve British imperial interests throughout the 1950s. This faction had dominated both economic and political spheres so completely that, by the mid-1950s, its concentration of power threatened to overshadow the state itself. My *moment charnière* is 1958, when a statist faction launched a targeted, highly effective counter-offensive. This response didn’t aim to dismantle the syndicalist nexus but instead took control of key parts of it and shifted its focus toward development projects in post-colonial nations, helping to accelerate the internationalization of Israeli development. I therefore see factional struggles within the family-based, developmental state as a complementary factor—rather than a replacement—to traditional geo-strategic explanations.⁵ While the ‘periphery doctrine’ provided the diplomatic motive, domestic fatigue with the family-based, developmental nexus served as the structural trigger; exporting the Zionist development

² *Ibid.*, 16-17.

³ Levi-Faur, 2001, 55-56.

⁴ Thompson, 1978, 255.

⁵ Kreinin, 1964; Ojo, 1988; Decalo, 1989-1990; Decalo, 1998.

system was thus a necessary step for reproducing the Israeli family-based, developmental regime, happening alongside broader international diplomatic strategies.

As the regime shifted from a neo-corporatist syndicalist system to a centralized developmental state, the political significance of kinship changed but did not diminish. Family ties, which interconnected the neo-corporatist organizations, parties, state, and Zionist parastatal institutions, were repurposed to serve as a connective tissue linking government officials to emerging industrialists, potential investors, and ‘private sector’ managers. More than simply replacing one group of actors with another, the transition from neocorporatist and syndicalist networks of power to a state-directed industrial policy through the mediation of a “private” sector-in-the-making represented two distinct versions of what Béatrice Hibou called “discharge”: the restructuring of governing practices by working through intermediaries that are not officially part of the state, redefining and recombining the public and private sectors, as well as the economic and political spheres, in new ways.⁶ It was also not merely about the Israeli state asserting itself over its previous auxiliary organizations. “Mediation,” as Hibou explains, “especially with private intermediaries, was and remains one method like any other of exercising power.”⁷ The events leading up to the switch from one system of discharge to another were neither linear nor inevitable, and what it involved was not a change of leadership but rather a complex reconfiguration of the “Israeli state-rhizome” driven by internal struggles for elite dominance.⁸

I narrate how the Israeli state-rhizome mutated during this decade of economic growth and political warfare in three interrelated parts.

In the first part, “David and Goliath,” I tell the story of a falling-out within the elite that shows how family dynamics shape the early Israeli state. Through the lens of a brief public scandal in late 1954 and early 1955, known as “the Ramati Affair,” I illustrate how an internal dispute over the Solel Boneh syndicate’s dominance was not just a bureaucratic turf war, but a social drama involving the rebellious son of the Israeli party nomenklatura. By analyzing Yohanan Ramati’s failed effort to enforce rational-legal accountability on a neopatrimonial giant, I expose the underlying “patrimonial nexus” where kinship and party discipline override formal oversight. This section sets the foundation of the familial-developmental state: a system where horizontal kin ties and factional loyalties form the core of developmental power. It shows that during the mid-1950s, the state functioned through a network of male officeholders who leveraged personal connections to manage public resources, paving the way for the statist faction’s future reorganization of these networks.

In the second part, “The Reciprocal Assimilation of Elites,” I show how the Israeli governing apparatus initially formed in response to urgent political and developmental challenges posed by the aftermath of the Palestinian Nakba, the German Israeli Reparations agreement, and the influx of large numbers of Jewish migrants and refugees. I argue that this period was characterized by a strategy of extraversion, where the state solidified power by acquiring external resources—most notably through the 1952 German reparations—and channeling them through a fragmented network of Zionist parastatals and syndicates. By analyzing the career paths of “straddlers” like Yehoshua Ztolovsky and the overlapping roles of figures such as David

⁶ Hibou, 1999, 7-8.

⁷ Hibou, 2015, 40.

⁸ Bayart, 1993, 218-227.

Tuviyahu, I demonstrate that horizontal kinship ties and a “musical chairs” dynamic served as the crucial binding force for a social and political elite in formation. This section advances my main argument by showing how the “reciprocal assimilation” of these kin-linked elites enabled the regime to bypass formal bureaucratic sluggishness, creating a productive, albeit non-accountable, developmental system.

In the third part, “The Black Notebook,” I describe the decline of pre-statal institutions and the rise of a government-led industrial policy of state capitalism under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Using Béatrice Hibou’s concept of “discharge,” I argue that the dismantling of the Solel Boneh corporation and the rise of the “Sapir Method” signified a sophisticated reorganization of governing methods—not of governing elites. This shift marked a move from one development system based on indirect rule—mediated by neo-corporatist syndicates—to another system of indirect rule controlled by a supposedly “private” capitalist class that the Minister of Trade and Industry had purposefully created to be structurally dependent on state credit. By supporting a class of industrialists through state-backed loans and subsidies, the regime effectively “privatized” the implementation of state goals while keeping centralized control. This structural change ensured that the family-centered developmental nexus remained the “spine” of the Zionist project, reusing private intermediaries as protected reservoirs for elite cohesion and national growth.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

On 28 November 1954, the manager of an Israeli state-run company, “Negev Ceramic Materials Ltd.,” sent a memorandum to Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, copying the State Comptroller and the entire cabinet of ministers. In five densely typed pages and numerous appendices, Yohanan Ramati detailed how, despite his persistent efforts, the government mining company he managed had been reduced to a mere “conduit for flowing government capital” into the pockets of its minority partner, the Solel Boneh construction company.⁹ Reminding the Prime Minister that hanging in the balance were mining rights worth more than 20 million Israeli pounds (equivalent to some €150 million in 2026), Ramati demanded that the government intervene.¹⁰ If the interests of the state, and by extension the public at large, were to be protected, he wrote, the government must appoint an independent public inquiry commission. Such a commission would doubtlessly establish the veracity of his claims. But it should also seek out the deeper systemic causes for the current predicament, particularly “whether the Ministry of Development is capable of defending the government’s interests when those stand in opposition to the interests of Solel Boneh.”

Redolent of Victor Turner’s description of crisis as “social drama,” Ramati’s memorandum is a remarkable expression of the central tensions that riveted Israel’s political establishment during the 1950s.¹¹ The dry tone of its writing—aping the dull informative style of a legal demand letter—could hardly mask the exhilarating interpersonal intrigue and emotional investment

⁹ Ramati, 1954.

¹⁰ “Ramati demands public inquiry into activities of Negev Ceramic Materials Company”, *Haaretz*, 7 December 1954.

¹¹ Turner, 1974, 38-43, 1980, 141-168.

that animated its young author's narrative. The 33-year-old manager seemed to portray himself as a modern David, a small but undaunted protector of the public interest, waging righteous war against Goliath: Solel Boneh, Israel's largest construction, mining, and industrial concern. Though obviously self-glorifying, presenting the confrontation in such terms was not entirely without merit. For one thing, Solel Boneh of the mid 1950s was certainly a Goliath. With assets valued at over 17 million Israeli pounds (equivalent to approximately €120 million in 2026) and an annual business cycle equivalent to 10% of Israel's national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Solel Boneh—nominally a construction office operating under the General Federation of Labor in Eretz Israel, the "Histadrut"—was easily the largest business concern in the country.¹² Its construction arm was the principal instrument of the Ben Gurion government's nationwide development scheme, constructing roads, electric lines, power stations, military bases, and scores of new settlements in the newly conquered and ethnically cleansed territories of the Galilee, the Jerusalem corridor, and the Negev desert.¹³ Its industrial arm, the "Koor" corporate group, dominated the local industry, and was expanding rapidly.¹⁴ Its executives were major political players, wielding power comparable to, or indeed surpassing, that of any elected government minister.¹⁵ As the largest construction contractor in the Middle East, Solel Boneh was also a significant factor in Israeli foreign policy and regional geopolitics. It was constructing NATO airfields in Turkey; paving new transportation arteries in Istanbul; expanding British naval infrastructure in Cyprus; and was presently negotiating tenders for state-wide projects in Burma.¹⁶ Most importantly, Solel Boneh was projected to continue growing, given that one of its chief executives was placed in charge of managing over 3 billion Deutschmarks (equivalent to approximately €9.6 billion in 2026) in reparation money from West Germany and made no effort to deny he was using this money to privilege projects carried out by Solel Boneh, whose interests, he said, were "identical to those of the State."¹⁷ It didn't hurt that Ramati, too, cut a fine David. "Young, intelligent, and handsome," his ambition and vigor were unusual among the senior management of state companies. He graduated from Oxford University, had served as an officer in the British army during the war, and possessed the courage to speak up against his superiors when he believed they were in the wrong.¹⁸ Perhaps his confidence had something to do with the fact that Ramati—like David—was not just anyone. Ramati was the son-in-law of the late Eliezer Kaplan, Israel's first Finance Minister and chief architect of its economic system; his brother was a famed commander in the IDF General Staff. Sociologically, this placed him on the crest of Israel's political elite, "an octopus-like structure" of intricate and overlapping kin ties which formed the recruitment cadre for top jobs in the public service, the military, and the private sector.¹⁹

¹² Savorai, 2008, 195.

¹³ Sheva, 1974, 273-319

¹⁴ Giron, 1955, 4-5; Arnon, 1955, 10-14; "89 million pounds – Solel Boneh's projects in 1954", *Koor*, n° 2, April 1955 [Hebrew].

¹⁵ Hacothen, 1963, 1985.

¹⁶ "Solel Boneh in Turkey and in Cyprus", *Koor*, n° 1, March 1955; "Trade opportunities with the Far East", *Koor*, n° 2, April 1955; Shur, 1984, 18-19; Biletzsy, 1974, 403-406.

¹⁷ Dan, 1963, 342.

¹⁸ Gad, 1954, 2.

¹⁹ Nitzan and Bichler, 2002, 108-117.

Ramati's appendices meticulously documented a litany of logistical failures and contractual breaches culminating in an attempt he made to sue the offending company in court. His efforts to impose administrative accountability only revealed, however, that Solel Boneh would not submit to official oversight or contractual law; it was protected by political credit. Days after he sent the company his letter before legal action, the CEO of the Development Ministry summoned him to his office and bluntly told him that "if the Minister wishes to give a gift [...] to [Solel Boneh], that is none of your business." Ramati added that his superior "hinted that if I don't resign 'quietly' I would be fired and they will make it difficult for me to find another position." Defiant, Ramati retorted that "I will not be made responsible for wasting public money," and declared that "I do not seek, nor will I ever seek another position" in the government.

At this point, when an internal administrative dispute threatened to boil over into a damaging public legal battle, the attempt to discipline Ramati moved beyond professional channels. Dr. Dov (Bernard) Yosef, the Minister of Development and a close family friend, quietly reached out to Ramati's wife, Datya—Kaplan's daughter and herself an economist working for the government—and asked her to intercede. The minister explained that her husband was "in the right about virtually everything," but that, nevertheless, his job was at risk because he "isn't getting along with the [Solel Boneh] people." Yosef implored the young woman to prevail upon her husband to see reason and desist. He needn't do anything; the debts Solel Boneh owed to "Negev Ceramic Materials Ltd.," will be collected "in due time," he assured her. His aides would see to it. She had "his word in this matter."

Luckily for us, Ramati refused to take the proffered off-ramp and instead doubled down by disclosing the Minister's unofficial intervention in his memorandum. "The following conclusion seems unavoidable," he wrote in an astonishing public rebuke of a minister by one of his subordinates, "were I to 'get along' with the [Solel Boneh] people and not insist on repayment of the substantial debt they owed the government, were I to give them free reign to provide consumers with deficient material and turn a deaf ear to their justified complaints, and, more broadly, were I derelict in my duty to the state, society, and consumers, the Minister would have thought I was wrong about virtually everything but would have assured me that my position was safe."

This was a bridge too far. Were he to submit to Yosef, Ramati's familial pedigree might have been enough to overlook his grandstanding and disregard for administrative hierarchy and keep his government career on track. But Ramati chose to go public with scathing accusations of graft and corruption. He openly embarrassed a prominent member of the ruling Mapai party's nomenklatura—a family friend, no less—and, by extension, he embarrassed the entire party.²⁰ He audaciously drew a stark line between the preservation of the public interest and factional corruption and political graft and challenged Ben Gurion and the entire cabinet to join him on the right side of it.

On 7 December 1954, nine days after signing his memorandum, Yohanan Ramati was fired. In the days and weeks that followed, 'the Ramati Affair' played out in the highly factional arena of Israel's daily printed press. Opposition newspapers seized upon Ramati's biography to cast him as the archetype of the unflinchingly dedicated, rational-legal bureaucrat. Highlighting

²⁰ "D. Yosef: There is no connection between Ramati's dismissal and his quarrel with Even VeSid", *Zmanim*, 30 December 1954.

his Oxford pedigree and British military service, they presented the showdown as inevitable: the ‘Western’ civil servant could not possibly tolerate the ‘Eastern’ corruption of the Mapai machine.²¹ *Haaretz*, the leading newspaper of the liberal capitalist faction, presented the affair as proof of a broader pattern of corruption and self-dealing within the Mapai government. Speaking in the name of civil society as a whole, it called for “far more stringent oversight” on state companies: “the public is entitled to know how its money is invested, who benefits from it, and what it receives in return.”²² The centrist *Haboker* opined that Ramati’s dismissal sent a clear message to any “manager who dares defend the interest of the public that he will be sent to Canossa.”²³ The newspaper opined that, to officials so thoroughly mired in the culture of corruption and graft of Eastern Europe, the British-educated civil servant could only have appeared “like a Don Quixote fighting windmills.”²⁴

On display here was more than just an internalized orientalist anxiety, a fear that the Israeli state was failing to achieve the civic standards of Western modernity. The media’s outrage reflected a desperate desire to uphold the “image” of the state, in Joel Migdal’s terms, as a unified entity elevated and distinct from society, even as its “practices” revealed it to be deeply embedded within it.²⁵ But to view Ramati’s revelations solely through the lens of failure is to overlook the structural function of the relationships he had exposed. As Jean-François Médard rightly pointed out, the vocabulary of “corruption” is normative, not analytical: it criminalizes the receivers and givers of a bribe, but obscures the prospect that such transactions might reveal the rules of an alternative game.²⁶ By highlighting how a given state fails to measure up to an imaginary standard of governance, such frameworks gloss over the permeability of the state-society (as well as the state-economy) divide, and obscure the crucial insight that the act of producing and maintaining the distinction between state and society itself generates resources of power.²⁷

That competing political visions were at play is evident from the ripostes issued by Mapai and Solel Boneh to Ramati’s accusations. In a public statement to the party newspaper, *Davar*, Solel Boneh claimed that “Negev Ceramic Materials Ltd.,” had reached its current nadir because of the inflexible and inefficient way Ramati had managed it. Caricaturing him as an effeminate and self-important office-dweller with overbearing tendencies, the statement claims Ramati had repeatedly insisted on costly and unnecessary measures, exhibiting a willingness to waste public funds just for the sake of centralizing power in his own hands. Ramati was specifically accused of refusing to move the company’s offices to the Negev desert town of Be’er Sheva, a measure that, while surely comfortable for him, led to difficult, costly, and intermittent communications with his office in Jerusalem, which was conveniently situated a short walk away from his home.²⁸ This effectively flipped the script: it was Ramati—and not Solel Boneh—who prioritized ulterior motives that were hindering mining operations and hurting the public

²¹ Schussman, 1954, 2; Ben David, 1955, 3.

²² “Our economic life: economic diary,” *Haaretz*, 8 December 1954.

²³ “The ‘partnership’ that must be ended,” *Haboker*, n° 9 December 1954.

²⁴ Gad, 1954, 2.

²⁵ Migdal, 2001, 19.

²⁶ Médard, 2000, 83.

²⁷ Mitchell, 1999.

²⁸ “Even VeSid Company contradicts Ramati’s claims,” *Lamerhav*, 13 December 1954.

interest. Reminding readers of its “pioneering role” in founding the mining industry in the first place, Solel Boneh cited large sums the government allegedly owed it for essential and complex preparatory works, ostensibly performed on credit. In light of the government’s financial difficulties, and keeping with its “longstanding” and “ironclad devotion to the public,” however, Solel Boneh opted not to insist on receiving its dues and instead sought a negotiated settlement with “Negev Ceramic Materials Ltd.”²⁹ This defense effectively weaponized what Yoav Peled called the “republican” dimension of Israeli citizenship, namely, the idea that status and privileges are contingent upon contribution to the national “Common Good” rather than guaranteed by abstract legal rights.³⁰ By invoking its “pioneering role,” Solel Boneh argued that its accumulation of “civic virtue” credits—manifested in building the state’s infrastructure—should exempt it from the blind application of contract law that Ramati sought to enforce. In this worldview, the company was not a mere commercial entity subject to universal rules, but a long-standing virtuous partner in the Zionist project, entitled to accommodation rather than prosecution.

In this way and others, Ramati’s dismissal and the media storm that followed provide an exceptionally lucid window into the engine room of the Israeli state—where the formal blueprints of governance were inextricably entangled with factional partisanship, neopatrimonial politics, and the unwritten codes of “family.” Ramati did not merely fail to “get along”: he insisted on a superficial reading of the regime’s operating software and exhibited a willful ignorance when it came to asking how it might have applied in his own case. After all, there were clues to follow. Party affiliations were openly recognized as selection criteria in the recruitment of civil servants to the administrative organs of the state. His family connections were common knowledge. And, at 33, he was uncommonly young to be managing a state-run company.³¹ Still, Ramati chose to believe that his appointment was purely meritocratic, and that the government he worked for was a rational-legal state apparatus, where public interest was—or rather, was supposed to be—separated from private or corporate advantage. But as Minister Yosef’s backchannel demand made plain, the machinery of the Israeli regime did not run on the dry fuel of administrative hierarchy alone. It ran on party discipline. And, when all else failed, it ran on kinship.

Kinship was key to understanding the affair. But existing scholarship offers precious little guidance in explaining how. The extensive body of work examining state formation and nation-building in the Israeli case has exhibited a marked disinterest in the questions of whether or how kinship stitched Israel’s ruling class together—how it anchored belonging, conferred status, assigned rights and obligations, and provided access to resources and rents. The elitist school in Israeli sociology has rightly identified the centrality of organized party politics and trade unionism to the centralization of political power and the coalescence of an Israeli political elite. Kinship, however, remained beyond the purview of what the elitist school’s key figure, Yonathan Shapiro, had called “the shady side of politics”: the informal political networks, cliques, and pressure groups that operate upstream of formal politics.³²

²⁹ “Mining minerals in the Negev,” *Davar*, 15 December 1954.

³⁰ Peled, 1993.

³¹ Shapiro, 1985b, 128-149.

³² Shapiro, 1976, 1985a, 9; Lissak, 1981; Ram, 1995, 69-96.

Nor have historians fared any better. The Jewish-Zionist Community within Mandatory Palestine, the Yishuv, was a thoroughly “familial” society, Tamar Razi wrote, and yet, when they do attend to the family, histories of Zionism state-building tend to assign it a passive role, depicting families essentially as a blank cultural canvas upon which the extent of Zionism’s ideological reformist zeal can be appreciated more fully.³³

Whether by doing so, historians were replicating family’s marginality within Zionist’s modernizing ideology, as Razi maintained, or implicitly following a broader disciplinary shift away from kinship studies within the social sciences, the fact remains that extant scholarship—not only in the Israeli case—is largely oblivious to the workings of elite kin networks within the political centers of so called ‘developed’ or ‘advanced’ states.³⁴ Reading kinship practices within broader sociopolitical processes in history and the family’s relationship to other institutions—the party, the school, and the government—is therefore an urgent task at hand. Evidence was never the problem. Biographical data is sufficiently abundant to construct extensive prosopographical databases and to systematically map lineages, and anecdotes around famous cases have long hinted that kinship was in fact an important adhesive for the incorporation of a Zionist national elite.³⁵

To map this terrain, where the bureaucracy, the party, and the family formed a superimposed nexus of power and interests, we require a theoretical lens that views the state as a site of constant struggle—a perspective articulated well by Joel Migdal. In his *State in Society*, Migdal outlined a research agenda he defined as an “anthropology of the state,” which consisted of breaking down states, societies, and the junctures between them.³⁶ To Migdal, governance is not a matter of crafting policies through internal deliberation followed by enforcement through unilateral diktat, but a complex dialectical action that intervenes in contested fields of power. State action is part of a mutually transformative “recursive relationship” between state and society, in which assorted vested interests, social groups, and non-state power centers participate actively.³⁷ Statecraft must therefore be studied as a “grand arena of accommodation”, a collection of delicate power-sharing and resource-routing mechanisms born of struggles between various types and sizes of actors, both within and beyond the state.³⁸ Such an anthropological approach also disaggregates the state, analyzing it as a composite of vertically organized agencies and ministries, and horizontal strata of state officials (from ‘the trenches’ up to ‘the commanding heights’). This trains our eye towards the specificities of hierarchical checks and local pressures with which state officials had to contend based on their relative rank and the governmental sector in which they work.

Applying this ‘anthropology of the state’ to the specific social and political environment inhabited by Ramati allows us to see this crisis not as a standard bureaucratic turf war, but as a falling-out within the elite kinship networks that formed the bedrock of the regime. Here we come to appreciate the delicacy of Ramati’s sociological position, namely, that he was not just

³³ Razi, 2010, 396-398.

³⁴ Thelen and Alber, 2018, 1-38.

³⁵ Rosenberg-Friedman, 2012; Dayan, 1961; Hacothen, 1985, 1-16; Nitzan and Bichler, 2002, 108-117.

³⁶ Migdal, 2001.

³⁷ Migdal, 2001, 128.

³⁸ Migdal, 2001, 92.

an anonymous whistleblower, but a rebellious son of the party nomenklatura. His nomination to the managerial job might well have been based exclusively on his education in economics, politics, and philosophy from Oxford University; we cannot assess with any certainty how much it had to do with the rights to state sinecures of his family-in-law, the Kaplans.³⁹ We do know that, since their marriage, both Yohanan and Datya Ramati had worked in high-ranking positions in adjacent ministries in the same small government building in central Jerusalem. The relevance of the familial connection can perhaps be glimpsed from the fallout following Ramati's memorandum. Eric Wolf noted that, while families anchor "the social credit" of their members, the benefits of filiation come with public responsibilities.⁴⁰ Ramati's memorandum was a violation of a core tenet of the social world he inhabited: generalized reciprocity. He had accepted the gift of office from the familial state, only to use the access he was given to publicly attack it from within. His punishment, therefore, was correspondingly harsh: banishment. His betrayed minister, Yosef, took to publicly referring to him as "*that gentleman*," and went so far as to order the security staff to physically bar his entry to the governmental office building where his wife continued to work.⁴¹ While virtually all the other members of his family continued to work for the Israeli government, Ramati was out of the game.

THE RECIPROCAL ASSIMILATION OF ELITES

"What am I going to do with you, Hillel Dan?" asked Israel's Minister of Finance, Levi Eshkol, grinning exasperatedly despite himself. "Would you like me to just hand the whole country over to you?"

Flanked by his trusty Chief of Staff, Pinchas Sapir, Eshkol was attempting to convince Dan, the powerful manager of Solel Boneh, to take charge of disbursing the annual budget of 250 million deutschmarks that would soon begin to flow into Israel's coffers under the 1952 German-Israeli reparations agreement. Dan wanted the job, of course. But he told Eshkol and Sapir he had two conditions: first, that he remain employed in Solel Boneh, and not depend on the government for his paycheck. Second, that the government create an independent "reparations authority," free from Ministry of Finance oversight, and name him its head.⁴²

After several weeks of negotiation, a compromise was reached that perfectly encapsulated the Israel-during-the-early-1950s iteration of what Bayart termed "extraversion": the ability of elites to consolidate power by turning the state agencies under their control into bottlenecks through which to capture and dispense resources flowing from the external environment.⁴³ Dan was to be placed in charge of a Tel-Aviv-based "Reparations Company" (*Hevrat HaShilumim*), which would operate a permanent purchasing delegation in Cologne. By deciding on what equipment and raw materials were to be purchased, Dan had the power to decide how to spend the annual budget on a list of pre-approved German industrial goods and raw materials and

³⁹ Bayart, 1993, 75-78.

⁴⁰ Wolf, 2001, 173.

⁴¹ "Ramati steps down from position in 'Harsit Ve Khol Zakh'," *Haaretz*, 10 December 1954; Israel Knesset, 1954.

⁴² Dan, 1963, 323-328.

⁴³ Bayart, 1993, 75-78.

coordinated their shipment to Israel. Once arrived, distribution to clients was to be managed by a “Development Administration”, delicately defined as “adjacent to the Ministry of Finance.” Two men were tapped to lead this new Development Administration: Pinchas Sapir oversaw the agricultural sector, water management, and petroleum prospecting, while Hillel Dan managed the industrial, mining, and electricity sectors.⁴⁴ The fact neither of the two men steering Israel’s development policy were government employees – Dan drawing his salary from Solel Boneh and Sapir from *Mekorot*, a waterworks company co-owned by the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut⁴⁵ – not to mention that each man was given discretionary powers to spend the reparations funds in the sector in which he was employed, was revealing of the instrumentalization of the official Israeli State within the contemporary architecture of extraversion. The government apparatus – the Reparations Company and the Development Administration – was indeed the crucial bottleneck, but control over it was handed to the directors of companies outside of the official remit of the government.

During the crucial first years of its existence, the State of Israel secured a monopoly over violence, raised a budget, recruited a bureaucracy (often by ‘poaching’ from the Jewish Agency, the Histadrut, and the World Zionist Organization), and accumulated a portfolio of political and economic assets. Still, these were only the initial steps in what was to be a long rise to preeminence within the broader Zionist institutional and political landscape. During the first decade of its existence, the Israeli state found it particularly hard to assert control over the Labor movement—an umbrella term that refers to several political parties, most notably the ruling party, Mapai; nationwide federations of collective settlements called Kibbutzim and Moshavim; and, most importantly, the General Federation of Labor in Eretz Israel, known as “the Histadrut”, a “cradle to grave” workers’ labor union which operated nationwide health, educational, and employment services, an internal justice system, and owned numerous enterprises and economic arms, such as banks, pension funds, factories, workshops, construction companies, and more.⁴⁶ As the Ramati Affair has shown us, the reverse was more commonly the case: through Mapai, the ‘movement’ often ventriloquized state organizations and preserves, using government prerogatives to entrench its grip over the country’s capital and market relations.

Government ministries’ jurisdictions covered complex economic and institutional landscapes, where Zionist organizations—better funded and staffed, with larger administrative capacities—were operating, often autonomously. Jewish Agency operatives managed immigrant transition camps (*ma’abarot*), while the government provided basic services and work.⁴⁷ Histadrut-affiliated organizations controlled much of the agricultural, mining, and industrial sectors.⁴⁸ The Jewish National Fund, as the designated Zionist landowning monopoly, allocated land to the national government and municipalities.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Dan, 1963, 328.

⁴⁵ Greenberg, 2011, 24-25.

⁴⁶ Shalev, 1992.

⁴⁷ Bernstein, 1981.

⁴⁸ Levi-Faur, 2001, 38-55.

⁴⁹ Kleiman, 1997, 150.

Governing in this context required fluency in what Michael Cowen called “straddling” on an institutional scale.⁵⁰ Holding public office meant crafting policy that was both effective in stimulating growth and ensuring that its rewards flowed to the right places. As in other developmental states—both communist and capitalist—in the Israeli case, this meant channeling resources not to office-holders’ ‘private’ bank accounts and properties, but rather to restricted collective reservoirs to which access was unequally dispensed on a hierarchical and factional basis.⁵¹ Distinctions between “private” and “collective” ownership here are harder to make, and are less analytically valuable than they initially appear. What matters is access, not ownership. As patrimonial states in sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate, wealth legally encoded as private is often *de facto* used to “feed” large groups of dependents and clients.⁵² Similarly, Solel Boneh’s assets were not public in a universal sense. Rather, they were collective in a factional sense, reserved for the members of the *nomenklatura* and their networks.

In the 1950s, the German Reparations Agreement constituted the ultimate act of extraversion, providing a massive infusion of capital flowing through the state, which politicians could use to administer patronage and charge rents. The sheer scale of the resources funneled through this mechanism is evident in the breakdown of its spending. The Israeli purchasing delegation in Cologne received funds in annual installments, buying goods that the Reparations Company deemed necessary. About 30 percent of the money went to fuel. Most of the remainder purchased equipment and raw materials for companies owned by the government, the Jewish Agency, and the Histadrut. Sharply critical of the reparations agreement, Tom Segev nonetheless conceded how, after the reparations money started flowing into the Israeli economy, “construction began in every city; there were modern cranes and cement mixers; suddenly there was momentum.”⁵³ Approximately \$66 million (about 8 percent of the total) went to purchase equipment for more than 1,300 industrial plants, ranging from printing presses to sausage-making machines. Crucially, however, two-thirds of this sum was allocated to just thirty-six factories, mostly owned by Solel Boneh. Only \$22 million was spared for the remaining 1,264 privately owned factories.

The impact was transformative. Reparations money funded about a third of the total investment in Israel’s electrical system (tripling its capacity) and nearly half of the investment in its railway system. It bought new cranes for Haifa port, brought new mining equipment, and paid for the ships that would constitute two-thirds of the Israeli merchant fleet by 1961. During the twelve years the agreement was in effect, Israel’s GNP tripled, and about 15% of its overall growth and 45,000 jobs were attributed to the reparations agreement.⁵⁴

Of course, the way this growth was cultivated was deeply political. By channeling the lion’s share of the incoming capital into the Histadrut’s heavy industry, the German-Israeli Reparations agreement was harnessed to fortify the labor movement’s economic hegemony, starving potential rivals of the liquidity needed to compete. This influx of capital and equipment resulted in Solel Boneh taking an even more significant part in the ensuing development

⁵⁰ Cowen and Kinyanjui, 1977.

⁵¹ Djilas, 1983, 45-45; Johnson, 1982, 314.

⁵² Bayart, 1993, 87-90.

⁵³ Segev, 1993, 240-242.

⁵⁴ Bank of Israel, 1965; Schnitzer, 1966, 3.

activity. Solel Boneh rebuilt Palestinian towns destroyed during the Nakba such as Lydda and Ramle, as well as built entire towns from scratch – Ashdod, a few kilometers north-east of the destroyed Palestinian town of Majdal, in the southern coastal plains; Eilat, on the shores of the Red Sea, ensconced between Jordan's Aqaba and Egypt's Taba; Kiryat Shmona, on the ruins of the Palestinian village of Halasa, on the Lebanese border; and Kiryat Gat, the urban center of the centrally planned Lakhish agricultural region.⁵⁵

The southern Negev frontier served as the ultimate laboratory for this pattern of development via proxy, a space where the state was not a monolith but a fractured constellation of competing agencies, "Histadrut"-run companies, and organizations.⁵⁶ Nowhere was this blurring of boundaries more visible than in the figure of David Tuviyahu, who, for the first six years of his thirteen-year tenure as mayor of Be'er Sheva, did not relinquish his post as the head of the local Solel Boneh office, effectively fusing the municipal regulator with its primary contractor.⁵⁷ Thanks to Tuviyahu's straddling, Solel Boneh was the only construction contractor operating in the Negev until 1958, when the company decided to hire a former overseer as a private sub-contractor. The result was the Be'er Sheva branch quickly rising to become the third most active Solel Boneh branch in the country (after Tel-Aviv and Haifa), earning the company 30 million pounds a year.⁵⁸

Beyond the Negev's single urban center, developing the desert became a contest between three bodies, each with a distinct operational pattern. The IDF Engineering Corps, operating on a pragmatism inherited from the British Mandate, built and managed vast roadworks by employing Bedouin laborers in exchange for food stamps, prioritizing military mobility over nationalist ideology.⁵⁹ This drew the ire of the Jewish Agency, which viewed large-scale infrastructure works as opportunities to expedite the territory's demographic engineering, lobbying alongside the governmental Ministry of Labor, for the replacement of Bedouin laborers with Romanian immigrants, who could be used to anchor permanent Jewish colonies. Amidst this tug-of-war between the military and the Agency, Solel Boneh carved out a third extractive niche: it resisted the logic of permanent settlement in favor of maintaining temporary work camps for its men, a tactical transience that allowed the company to bill the government premium rates for "frontier expenses" while its director sat in the mayor's chair.⁶⁰ Its muddled institutional configuration notwithstanding, the Israeli regime proved effective in its pursuit of rapid development. Horizontal kinship ties between families—alongside other integration mechanisms, such as elite schools, and heavily mythologized military cliques—became an important binding agent for a social and political elite in formation. In their survey of "Israel's dynasties," Jonathan Nitzan and Shimshon Bichler have shown how elite extended families simultaneously inhabited the command centers of Solel Boneh, the Jewish Agency, and the military high command.⁶¹ As they bridged over institutional boundaries, family links

⁵⁵ Biletzky, 1974, 273-285. On Lakhish, see Sharon, 2017.

⁵⁶ Porath, 1995.

⁵⁷ Sheva, 1974, 250-254.

⁵⁸ Dan, 1963, 382-384.

⁵⁹ Israel State Archives, 1950.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Nitzan and Bichler, 2002.

helped foster a “musical chairs” dynamic, with individual career trajectories commonly including numerous short-term appointments in the military, several government ministries, the private sector, and the Histadrut.

One case in point is the career of Yehoshua Ztolovsky, a high-ranking engineer and labor overseer for the Solel Boneh corporation. Ztolovsky, whose sister, Dvora, was Moshe Dayan’s mother, worked in the company for several decades until a series of rapid promotions during the late 1940s and 1950s elevated his position into a string of high-profile but seemingly unrelated jobs. In 1949, as his nephew Moshe was made the head of the IDF Southern Command, and his brother-in-law Shmuel quit his job at the Jewish Agency and took up a seat as member of the first Knesset for Mapai, and shortly before his close associate and fellow kibbutz member, David Tuviyahu, became Be’er Sheva’s first mayor, Yehoshua Ztolovsky was named head of the Israel Military Industries, serving several months before being requisitioned by Solel Boneh and sent out to Kenya, Tanzania, the United States, and Germany to pursue opportunities to purchase hardware from various disbanding military units, foreclosing factories, and failed agricultural corporations.⁶² In 1951, the 60-year-old ex-engineer was tapped to lead an oil prospecting company, Israel Oil Prospectors Ltd., jointly owned by Solel Boneh and a group of wealthy investors from Miami, headed by Yekutiel Federmann, a German-Jewish businessman, hotel magnate, and arms smuggler, who had worked with both Pinchas Sapir and Hillel Dan.⁶³ Another example is that of Haggai Avriel, whose older brother, Ehud, served as Chief of Staff to both David Ben Gurion and Eliezer Kaplan before taking up ambassadorships in several states in Sub-Saharan Africa. Alongside a small group of his friends from the army, the newly discharged Avriel founded Kibbutz Sde Boker in 1951, without having received permission to do so from anyone in the government, military, or Jewish Agency. Five years later, Avriel decided to establish another settlement in the Negev, Mitzpe Ramon, for which he personally picked—“quite randomly”—15 families of newly arrived immigrants from Lydda, based on a few minutes’ interview.⁶⁴ In both cases, Avriel first established the settlements and only later relied on his personal acquaintances and his brother’s influence to acquire authorizations, resources, and governmental support, post-factum.⁶⁵

Such fluidity of elite personnel encouraged collaboration and mitigated potential inter-agency friction. The settlement agent, the contractor, and the general thus emerged not as separate poles or lords of competing fiefdoms, but as malleable components in a more-or-less synchronized formation.⁶⁶

Kinship was therefore an important component in the production of a dominant class that managed the early Israeli state. Julia Adams stressed the vital point: coalitions of male officeholders implanted in the wider apparatus of rule—spanning both the state and commercial apparatuses which formed an essential part of its political economy—formed a “grid” that underwrote the modern state’s capacities.⁶⁷ In other words, it mattered little where one happened to work, the Jewish Agency, Solel Boneh, the Israeli Defense Forces, or the Ministry

⁶² Motzafi-Haller, 2024, 27-99.

⁶³ Frenkel, 1984, 20.

⁶⁴ Avriel, 1973.

⁶⁵ Zivan, 2012

⁶⁶ Nitzan and Bichler, 2002, 108-117.

⁶⁷ Adams, 2005, 32-34.

of Development. What mattered was that the men of the family were out “doing Zionism,” which meant procuring armaments, managing immigrant workers, coordinating construction projects, and mining natural resources. In developmental states, Chalmers Johnson argued, the authority of elites is “like that of field commanders in a major military engagement. It comes from people working together, and it probably cannot long survive either defeat or victory.”⁶⁸ All these activities required funding—mostly procured from abroad—and they fueled what Bayart called the “reciprocal assimilation of elites” and Adams called the “tying together of nodes into a single cartel.”⁶⁹ It was a generative developmental system that incubated the formation of the state and extended the regime’s governing capacity. And the reciprocal assimilation and homogenization of a small elite, interlaced by kinship bonds, was a crucial element that allowed the regime to mount a “quasi-revolutionary” agenda, bypass the sluggishness of formal bureaucracy, the endemic party politicking, and the time-consuming conventions of public oversight that hampered liberal states’ effectiveness.⁷⁰

Before long, however, the elements who benefitted the least from the familial-developmental nexus in the form it attained fought back: “by the second half of 1954, an agitation against me has begun to brew,” Hillel Dan recalled, “reparations have become a significant factor [...] [and] ambitious men started viewing the Reparations Company as a valuable position through which to accumulate influence and status.”⁷¹ A few months later, those “ambitious men” managed to remove Dan from his position in the Reparations Company on the grounds that his continued employment in Solel Boneh represented a conflict of interest. The irony of the allegation itself was less surprising than the man who publicly insisted it constituted grounds for dismissal: Pinchas Sapir.

THE BLACK NOTEBOOK

“We have been witnessing an unprecedented phenomenon these past few weeks,” wrote the recently appointed secretary of the Histadrut and former Defense Minister, Pinchas Lavon, in a September 1958 issue of Labor Zionism’s leading daily, *Davar*:

A few comrades – some of whom are presently, or were in the past, members of the Solel Boneh Executive – have banded together and raised the banner of rebellion against the Histadrut, with the objective [...] to impose their positions on how best to organize and administer the economy. [...] such disagreements have always existed. But until recently they were seen as family affairs, and we all strove to keep them from the prying ears of outsiders. [...] this is the first time that the rebellion is out in the open.

‘Rebellion,’ *Davar*’s readers would have known by now, was the term Lavon liked to use to refer to an acerbic struggle between Solel Boneh and the Histadrut. It began on 14 April 1958, when the Histadrut Executive Committee (with Lavon acting as its chief) voted to “reorganize”

⁶⁸ Johnson, 1999, 52-53.

⁶⁹ Bayart, 1993, 159-179; Adams, 2005, 34.

⁷⁰ Johnson, 1982, 21-22.

⁷¹ Dan, 1963, 345.

Solel Boneh. However technical the term, this ‘reorganization’ was nothing less than a political earthquake, with far-reaching economic consequences. It carved Solel Boneh into three distinct organs—a Building and Public Works division, an industrial holding company (Koor Industries), and an Overseas and Harbor Works division—and surgically beheaded it by reassigning individual members from the existing, all-powerful company executive board into one the three new company’s boards, where their power was nullified by new loyalists.⁷² Faced with the imminent prospect of losing their base of power, it was hardly surprising that the old guard of the company—many of whom now held key positions in the Government and headed other agencies—fought back, or, in Lavon’s terms, “rebelled” against the Histadrut, their creator:

For weeks the press has been feeding off whispers, their reporting filled with curious ‘intuitions’ and all manner of falsehoods [...] *Haaretz*, known for its love for organized labor, willingly opened its gates to the generous profusion [...] There goes one rumor, that, due to the reorganization, the company finds itself unable to pay its workers’ wages; here goes another report, that due to the “ill-fated reorganization,” major contracts are being lost; commentators inform the public that “Lavon’s reorganization” risks plunging Solel Boneh into a total collapse. Here we have a report that, due to the chaos and demoralization he has sown, Lavon must now choose between suspending his ill-fated coup-d’état or step down. At present, briefings to journalists are debating the finer points of the obvious analogies between myself, Stalin, and Khrushchev [...].

The comrades busying themselves with agitation should know [...] that the hour draws near where the Histadrut will make them decide: resignation or responsibility [...] no one will be allowed to impede the wheels of history or thwart the inexorable rise of Solel Boneh.⁷³

Over the summer of 1958, the long-expected reckoning had come at last. The institutional admixture that had served well for much of the preceding decade had, by 1958, grown rancid. The scandals around Solel Boneh have grown increasingly more unhinged—Hillel Dan deciding to purchase a bank with private American investors, and keeping it secret even within the company itself; Hillel Dan investing 750,000 Swiss Francs in a Geneva financial company owned by Edmund Safra and, when caught, claiming he “mentioned” it to the Minister of Finance but never got around to legally declaring it—leading to anger at the company from within the Histadrut.⁷⁴ An increasingly critical chorus of journalists and economists took to analyzing Solel Boneh as suffering from ‘elephantiasis,’ popularizing the idea that it had become dangerously bloated, and that, due to its size and maladies, it represented a direct threat to the economic stability of the state.⁷⁵ One influential economist compared Hillel Dan to Hugo Stinnes, the powerful German industrialist who played a key role in stabilizing the post-World War I chaos in Germany, but whose ill-conceived business empire collapsed and triggered an economic crisis that shook the foundations of the Weimar Republic.⁷⁶ The beleaguered Dan, who was recovering from a series of heart attacks in rapid succession, had maintained all this was purely political. Lavon “wanted to rule. Ergo, he had to break Solel

⁷² Biletzky, 1974, 372-378.

⁷³ Lavon, 1958, 2, 4.

⁷⁴ Biletzky, 1974, 352-355.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 351.

⁷⁶ Schloss, 1958.

Boneh and control its pieces. Lavon did more damage to the movement than anyone else, including its enemies on the right.”⁷⁷

Breaking Solel Boneh up was not merely a corporate reorganization. It was a palace coup in the highest echelons of economic power in the Israeli regime. Dan, the company’s “strongman”, was offered what he called a “humiliating” offer, resigned, and was replaced by a new group of executives—including Aharon Remez, son of David Remez, one of the company’s founders—loyal to the new doyens of the Israeli economy, the Minister of Finance, Levi Eshkol, and the Minister of Trade and Industry, Pinchas Sapir.⁷⁸ This marked the victory of the statist faction and heralded a sea-change in the role of the Israeli State in directing and managing development policy and industrialization. The industrial and construction sectors were now domesticated, dependent on the Ministry of Commerce for credit, while Sapir and Eshkol were in a position to elevate friendly elements from the familial elite into private industrialists.

There is little evidence that the new statist faction governed the economy in ways that were any more orderly, transparent, or bureaucratic than the neo-corporatist system that it supplanted. To the contrary. The new dynamic amounted to rule by fiat by a new “strongman,” Sapir, and has, in consequence, become known as the “Sapir Method.” Sapir’s approach consisted of close personal micromanagement of the business community, easy access to the minister, and generous government-backed credit to those industrialists willing to trade autonomy for access to state credit.⁷⁹ It did not undermine the neopatrimonial structures of the Histadrut; rather, it reconfigured them into a centralized hub-and-spoke network with the minister at its center.

Inevitably, the minister’s approach came under fire. Sapir “was criticized because he would pull strings and move things without bureaucracy, and within hours he’d be able to get done what otherwise might have taken years,” recalled one of his aides. “It created an opening for embezzlements, fraud, to people getting wealthy overnight, to scandalous bankruptcies [...] he acknowledged his mistakes but explained that there was no other way to accomplish so much so quickly.”

The administrative heart of this new system was not a government office, but Sapir’s legendary notebook in which he recorded debts, favors, and production figures to track the economy in real-time. Sapir used his own family residence as a primary site of statecraft, hosting industrialists, investors, and politicians for Shabbat meals where his wife, Shoshana, “toiled in the kitchen” to ensure the guests felt personally indebted to the regime. In this domestic setting, the new minister and private capitalists mingled, and the new industrialists traded autonomy for generous state credit, effectively becoming trustees of national development.⁸⁰ “He would listen for a few moments, make up his mind immediately, and scribble a note,” recalled another aide. “Sapir’s notes were as good as any official state document, [...] He belonged to a generation that saw itself as directly responsible for everything that was happening in the country. It wasn’t like today, when we have a clear separation between the public sector and the private sector.”⁸¹

⁷⁷ Dan, 1963, 418.

⁷⁸ Greenberg, 2011, 92.

⁷⁹ Keissari, 1985, 18.

⁸⁰ Greenberg, 2011, 89-90.

⁸¹ Keissari, 1985, 18.

The archetype of the Sapir method's translation into day-to-day political life was the domestication of the ATA textile concern. In 1957, during a bitter strike at the factory, Sapir had sided with the owner, Hans Möller, against the powerful Haifa Labor Council, declaring that he "rebelled against the atmosphere" of intimidation they created.⁸² Having disciplined the unions to secure industrial quiet for private capital, the state eventually moved to absorb the asset entirely. Following Möller's death in 1962, the ownership of the ATA empire was transferred—orchestrated by Sapir—to Tibor Rosenbaum, a Swiss-based financier and founder of the *Banque De Crédit International Genève* (BCI). Rosenbaum was the ultimate "straddler." His bank in Geneva served as the covert financial lung for the Israeli State, financing the expansions of Solel Boneh into Sub-Saharan Africa and managing off-book accounts for the Mossad.⁸³ By transferring ATA from Möller to Rosenbaum, Sapir was effectively moving a strategic national asset from one trustee to another, keeping it within the operational sphere of the state-security complex. The familial logic of this transaction was consummated by Rosenbaum's first major executive appointment. He named Amos Ben-Gurion—the son of the Prime Minister—as the new head of ATA. At the time, the younger Ben-Gurion was a man in need of rescue; he had recently been forced out of his position as deputy Police Commissioner following a series of corruption scandals.⁸⁴

The appointment was the definitive expression of the Sapir system's logic. By installing the Prime Minister's scandal-ridden son at the helm of a "private" industrial giant, the regime demonstrated that its reach extended far beyond the formal civil service. The transaction revealed the pertinence of Hibou's contention that the discharge of state prerogatives into "private" sector—here under the stewardship of state-dependent financiers like Rosenbaum—does not signify the erosion or narrowing of state power but rather the multiplication of the points at which state power can be exercised. Sapir used Rosenberg's businesses as a protected reservoir for the ruling elite, capable of absorbing political liabilities that the public sector could no longer tolerate.⁸⁵ This was the 'Sapir Method' in its purest form: a political economy where market institutions were effectively repurposed as extensions of the party, ensuring that the network could sustain its members and preserve elite cohesion regardless of their formal standing.

However, the dismantling of Solel Boneh and the rise of the "Sapir method" coincided with a looming material crisis. By the late 1950s, the heroic phase of Israeli infrastructure was approaching a point of domestic saturation. The great national waterworks—such as the draining of the Hula and the initial stages of the National Water Carrier—were nearing completion. As the trunk roads of the Negev were paved and the frantic construction of transit camps gave way to permanent housing, the state's massive construction apparatus began to run out of internal frontiers to conquer. The Israeli developmental state had effectively completed its initial mission, leaving its vast machinery with nowhere left to build.

The developmental machine that Solel Boneh had built faced a daunting challenge: stagnation. A developmental state that stops developing is a state in crisis, and the patrimonial network

⁸² Greenberg, 2011, 103-105.

⁸³ Nitzan and Bichler, 2002, 113, 116, 278-279; CIA, 1949; "Egozi and Ben-Gurion – Managers of ATA", *Haaretz*, 10 January 1965.

⁸⁴ Kabalo, 2008.

⁸⁵ Hibou, 2015, 24.

depended on a steady flow of projects to sustain its patronage systems. Without new frontiers to expand into, the flow of goods would stop, and securing the loyalty of the elite would require alternative strategies. It was during this period of internal exhaustion that the Foreign Works division—the third segment of the fractured Solel Boneh—found a new opportunity. If the Zionist frontier in the Negev was closing, a new frontier was emerging in the decolonizing nations of Sub-Saharan Africa. In March 1958, Solel Boneh established its first joint-venture partnership in West Africa, the Ghana National Construction Company (GNCC).⁸⁶ Israel's first embassy in Africa, in Accra, soon predicted that the company's expansion across the region would elevate Israel into a significant and influential regional player.⁸⁷ Over the following five years, Solel Boneh replicated this joint-venture model in the Federation of Nigeria (1959), Eastern Nigeria (1960), Sierra Leone (1960), and the Ivory Coast (1962). Since they were 60% government-owned, Solel Boneh's subsidiaries benefited from Africanization policies, securing large contracts via negotiations with government officials, marginalizing local contractors, and sharing profits with local intermediaries and ruling party figures.⁸⁸

The pivot to Africa was not just diplomatic altruism, Cold War positioning, or geopolitical maneuvering. It also acted as a release valve that helped sustain the Israeli familial state. This exodus had a dual purpose. Economically, it brought in a new stream of hard currency and contracts to support the ruling party. Structurally, it enabled the familial state to reproduce itself internationally. The African operations were often financed by the same gray banking networks, especially organizations like Rosenbaum's bank in Geneva, that funded the domestic patronage system. Therefore, the Israeli familial-developmental state expanded internationally. The developmental nexus was no longer simply a domestically grown system of governance; it had become an export product, using the skills developed in the friction between Ramati and Dan to navigate the post-colonial environment.

CONCLUSION

Scholars of the developmental state typically identify it as a regime where an ambitious bureaucratic elite centralizes power to direct economic growth, prioritizing state guidance over market forces.⁸⁹ Although initially theorized based on the post-World War II history of East Asian states like Japan and South Korea, the concept has since been applied to European, Latin American, and Sub-Saharan African contexts.⁹⁰ In these varied settings, case-specific external pressures and internal structural dynamics led state elites to adapt their governmental architecture to effectively wield state power to transform the society, economy, and environment under their control.

It is here that the seemingly distinct theoretical lineages of the “familial state” and the “developmental state” begin to blur. Traditionally, scholarship on state-building and development has invited us to view these as opposing archetypes: on one hand, we have the neopatrimonial

⁸⁶ Stanek, 2015, 420.

⁸⁷ Levey, 2003.

⁸⁸ Chinatu Ugbogu, 2015.

⁸⁹ Johnson, 1982.

⁹⁰ Bagchi, 2003; Haggard, 2018.

or familial state, where power is personalized, dynastic, and ostensibly antithetical to modern efficiency.⁹¹ On the other hand, we have the developmental state, predicated on a meritocratic, insulated bureaucracy that rationally devises plans for the national economy, formulates industrial policies meant to realize them, and allocates resources accordingly.⁹² I propose that the Israeli “familial-developmental” system is a mutually reinforcing regime of elite incorporation and resource allocation that was premised on continual expansion and which had adapted itself to the conjunction of political, economic, geographic, and demographic conditions that the Zionist project faced in Palestine during the 1950s. In other words, Israel’s neopatrimonial “belly” was not an obstacle to its developmental “head.” It was its spine.

This system operated through what Béatrice Hibou describes as ‘discharge’—a mode of indirect rule that persists regardless of the specific faction in power. Whether power was exercised through the neo-corporatist syndicalism of the early 1950s or the state-capitalist Sapir Method thereafter, the underlying principle remained the same: a reliance on intermediaries who, while not nominally part of the state, constituted the primary vehicles for national development.

The Israeli case is particularly interesting because it shows how horizontal alliances between kin groups—often transnational and transregional in their spread—provided the marrow for the Israeli developmental state’s bones. This was most evident in the ‘Sapir Method,’ where the state did not merely collaborate with an existing private sector, but actively created a dependent class of ‘private’ industrialists—like the Möller family and Tibor Rosenbaum—who functioned as trustees of the state’s development goals. Kinship networks linked elites into durable tapestries of mutual trust and co-dependence that no formal organization could match. These networks were the structural mechanism that enabled the state to bridge the gap between public office and private interest, and to project its authority seamlessly across territorial borders.

Crucially, this ‘patrimonial nexus’ was not merely a domestic arrangement but anchored a transnational—and diasporic—network. By leveraging pre-existing transnational infrastructures of money, personnel, and influence, the Zionist familial-developmental state managed to operate in a space that was functionally shielded from domestic pressure and democratic oversight. Rosenbaum’s *Banque De Crédit International Genève* (BCI), used to finance Solel Boneh, the Mossad, and the ruling party Mapai in various countries and for various purposes, and the inexplicable reappearances of Yehoshua Ztolovsky in Tanzania, Kenya, Germany, and the United States hint that what we today call the ‘transnational state’ has a historical precedent in the Zionist project, where the movement of the family across borders served as a crucial mechanism for building networks of power while bypassing the volatilities of the local electoral will.

This mechanism thrived on the permeability of spheres—blurring the lines between the public and the private, the national and the international, the family, the party, and the nation. In the syndicalist setup, parastatal assets were treated as factional collective reservoirs; under the Sapir Method, the minister’s own family residence became a site of statecraft where personal relationships were forged, and investitures took place, transforming ‘private’ industrialists into state trustees. In both cases, the ‘private’ was never truly autonomous, nor the ‘public’

⁹¹ Bagchi, 2003, 3-8.

⁹² Johnson, 1982, 18-34.

bureaucratic; instead, they were different arrangements of a single, hybrid political economy. Because kinship among the Israeli elite has rarely been the subject of serious study, its political and economic significance—both historically and today—is often misunderstood and underappreciated. The trans-institutional and cross-national spread of family ties—such as Israeli elite families’ ability to coordinate individual members across numerous continents in Palestine/Israel, Europe, and the United States—has also provided insulation from the volatility of democratic accountability. This insulation enables developmental states to pursue long-term industrial and developmental goals more effectively. Elite networks have contributed to the “authoritarian” aspect identified by scholars of successful developmental states. In Israel’s Jewish society, in other words, democratic interference in top-down policymaking was not so much suppressed by the gun as it was smothered by the “family.” By marginalizing external oversight in favor of insular elite consensus, the Israeli state was designed to coexist with non-accountable networks and institutions, thus protecting its vital long-term economic structure from willy-nilly electoral politics. This created a regime that was both intensely developmental and deeply patrimonial—a state-building project rooted in transnational networks. Framing Israel as a variant of the developmental state emphasizes the importance of government cooperation with domestic economic players. By highlighting industrial policymaking and its influence on the relationship between the state bureaucracy and private businesses, it reminds us that the country’s industrial policies were active — not just reflective — of its main political goal: colonizing Palestine and securing Jewish national independence. Readings in comparative historical sociology, political anthropology of the state, and scholarship on state formation, nation-building, and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia provide a broad comparative canvas on which I consider the applicability and usefulness of the compounded concept—the familial developmental state. My goal in bringing such a broad array of scholarship into conversation is to help create analytical tools and comparative frameworks through which to meet the challenge of conceptualizing how kinship structures the struggle over resources not only within the bounds of a single state, but rather transnationally. Ultimately, this analysis reveals the inherent mobility of the familial state: as the domestic frontiers of the Negev closed in the late 1950s, the familial-developmental nexus ensured its own reproduction by exporting its surplus capacity to the post-colonial world.

The projection of Israeli technical aid to Sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1960s should be understood as a convergence of factors. While standard geopolitical explanations emphasize Israel’s need to reposition itself among non-aligned forces during the Cold War or the “peripheries strategy” to encircle Nasser’s Egypt, this shift was complemented and catalyzed by the endogenous needs of the familial-developmental state. As domestic frontiers in the Negev approached saturation, the internal logic of the regime—which required a constant flow of projects to sustain its patronage systems—found a structural ‘vent’ in the decolonizing world. Exporting this state-building apparatus was thus a structural necessity for the preservation of the regime’s logic, occurring in tandem with broader international diplomatic strategies.

Ultimately, the Israeli case suggests that the ‘developmental state’ is most resilient when it is most familial and transnational. The ability of elite networks to coordinate across numerous continents—moving seamlessly between Palestine, Europe, America, and the post-colonial world—provided a level of insulation from democratic accountability that no purely domestic bureaucracy could achieve. By viewing the export of the Zionist apparatus to Africa as a

transnational reconfiguration of this nexus, we see a regime that was not just reacting to external geopolitics, but actively reproducing its own structural marrow on a global stage.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Motzafi-Haller holds a Ph.D. from the Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID) and is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Neuchâtel. His research examines how transnational and transimperial kinship structures animated the formation of the Israeli state and the deployment of its aid programs across the developing world.

L'AUTEUR

David Motzafi-Haller est chercheur postdoctoral à l'université de Neuchâtel et docteur de l'Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement à Genève (IHEID). Ses travaux interrogent la manière dont les structures de parenté transnationales et transimpériales ont animé la formation de l'État israélien et le déploiement de ses programmes d'aide dans les pays du Sud.

REFERENCES

- Adams, Julia, (2005), *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
- Arnon, Yehoshua, (1955), "A tour from the writing desk", *Koor*, n° 1, march, pp. 10-14 [Hebrew].
- Avriel, Haggai, (1973), *Haggai: Life Chapters* (Mashabbei Sade: Kibbutz Mashabbei Sade Press).
- Bagchi, Amiya Kumar, (2003), *The Developmental State in History and in the Twentieth Century* (New Delhi: Regency Publications).
- Bank of Israel, (1965), *The Reparations and Their Impact on Israel's Economy* (Jerusalem: Government Printing Office).
- Bayart, Jean-François, (1993), *The State in Africa: Politics of the Belly*, translated by Mary Harper, Christopher and Elizabeth Harrison (London/New York: Longman).
- Ben David, Asher, (1955), "The Ramati affair in the headlines again", *Herut*, 7 march.
- Bernstein, Deborah, (1981), "Immigrant transit camps: the formation of dependent relations in Israeli society", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 4, n° 1, pp. 26-43.
- Biletzky, Eliyahu, (1974), *Solel Boneh 1924-1974* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved) [Hebrew].
- Chinatu Ugbogu, Marklene, (2015), "Ethical issues in the Western Nigeria Development Corporation and its Israeli partners, 1958-1966", *Global Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 14, n° 1, pp. 49-59.
- Cowen, Michael, and Kinyanjui, Kabiru, (1977), "Some problems of capital and class in Kenya", *Occasional Paper*, n° 26 (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, Institute for Development Studies).
- Dan, Hillel, (1963), *On an Unpaved Road: The Hagadah of Solel Boneh* (Jerusalem: Schocken Publishing).
- Dayan, Shmuel, (1961), *Pioneers in Israel: Recollection of the Development of a New Society in the Ancient Land of Israel* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company).

- Decalo, Samuel, (1989-1990), "The rise, decline and rebirth of Afro-Israeli entente", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol 8-9, n° 1-2, pp. 3-25.
- Decalo, Samuel, (1998), *Israel and Africa: Forty Years 1956-1996* (Gainesville: Florida Academic Press).
- Djilas, Milovan, (1983), *The New Class: An Analysis of The Communist System*, second edition (New York: Harvest/HBJ).
- Frenkel, Shlomo, (1984), "Federman: textile, hotels, petrol, arms", *Hadashot*, 26 July.
- Gad, Menachem, (1954), "The 'Negev Ceramic Materials Ltd.' affair did not end with the dismissal of Ramati", *Haboker*, 21 December.
- Giron, Meir, (1955), "1955 Plan", *Koor: Israel Monthly for Solel Boneh Industries*, n° 1, march, pp. 4-5.
- Greenberg, Yizhak, (2011), *Pinchas Sapir: An Economic and Political Biography* (Tel-Aviv: Resling).
- Hacohen, David, (1963), *Burma Diary* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved) [Hebrew].
- Hacohen, David, (1985), *Time to Tell: An Israeli Life, 1898-1984* (New York: Cornwall Books).
- Haggard, Stephan, (2018), *Developmental States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Hibou, Béatrice, (1999), "La 'décharge', nouvel interventionnisme", *Politique africaine*, n° 73, pp. 6-15.
- Hibou, Béatrice, (2015), *The Bureaucratization of the World in the Neoliberal Era: An International and Comparative Perspective*, translated by Andrew Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Israel Knesset, (1954), "Negev Ceramics Company Ltd. and the government", Parliamentary question 1651 by MK Avniel, Session 515 of the second Knesset, Chairperson Y. Klivnov, 20:07 14 December, Jerusalem.
- Israel State Archives (ISA), (1950), "Employment – Development of the Negev – Employment", G-6153/14.
- Johnson, Chalmers, (1982), *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
- Johnson, Chalmers, (1999), "The developmental state: odyssey of a concept", in Woo-Cumings, Meredith (ed.), *The Developmental State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 32-60.
- Kabalo, Paula, (2008), "Mediating between citizens and a new state: the history of Shurat Ha-mitnadvim", *Israel Studies*, vol. 13, n° 2, pp. 97-121.
- Keissari, Gil, (1985), "The Sapir Boys on the man with the Black Notebook", *Maariv*, 6 September.
- Kelsall, Tim, (2013), *Business, Politics, and the State in Africa: Challenging the Orthodoxies on Growth and Transformation* (New York/London: Zed Books).
- Kleiman, Ephraim, (1997), "The waning of Israeli Etatism", *Israel Studies*, vol. 2, n° 2, pp. 146-171.
- Kreinin, Mordechai Eliahu, (1964), *Israel and Africa: A Study in Technical Cooperation* (New York: Praeger).
- Lavon, Pinchas, (1958), "The creation has turned against its creator", *Davar*, n° 2, 5 September.

- Levey, Zach, (2003), "The rise and decline of a special relationship: Israel and Ghana, 1957-1966", *African Studies Review*, vol. 46, n° 1, pp. 155-177.
- Levi-Faur, David, (2001), *The Visible Hand: State-Directed Industrialization in Israel* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press) [Hebrew].
- Lissak, Moshe, (1981), *Elites of the Jewish Community in Palestine* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved) [Hebrew].
- Médard, Jean-François, (2000), "Clientélisme politique et corruption", *Revue Tiers Monde*, n° 161, pp. 75-87.
- Migdal, Joel S., (2001), *State in Society: Studying how States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Mitchell, Timothy, (1999), "State, economy, and the state effect", in Steinmetz, George (ed.), *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 76-97.
- Motzafi-Haller, David, (2024), *Zionism in Development: A Family Micro-History*, PhD Dissertation (Geneva: Geneva Graduate Institute).
- Nitzan, Jonathan, and Bichler, Shimshon, (2002), *The Global Political Economy of Israel* (London: Pluto Press).
- Ojo, Olusola, (1988), *Africa and Israel: Relations in Perspective* (Boulder: Westview Press).
- Porath, Hanina, (1995), "The Negev Enterprise: from a rehabilitation office to the settling and developing organization in the Negev", *Iyunim BeTkumat Israel*, vol. 5, pp. 212-239.
- Sharon, Smadar, (2017), "The dialectic between modernization and orientalizing: ethnicity and workrelations in the 1950s Lakhish region project", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 40, n° 4, pp. 732-750.
- Stanek, Łukasz, (2015), *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- Peled, Yoav, (1993), "Strangers in utopia: the civic status of Palestinians in Israel", *Theory and Criticism*, n° 3, pp. 21-35.
- Ram, Uri, (1995), *The Changing Agenda of Israeli Sociology: Theory, Ideology, and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press).
- Ramati, Yohanan. General Director, to the Government of Israel, (1954), "Subject: Negev Ceramic Materials Ltd. - request for the conduction of a public inquiry", letter no. 132/2772, Jerusalem, 28 November. Israel State Archives [hereinafter: ISA], "Israel Minerals" 5438/3-א, 000rnud.
- Razi, Tamar, (2010), "The family is worthy of being rebuilt: perceptions of the Jewish family in mandate Palestine, 1918-1948", *Journal of Family History*, vol. 35, n° 4, pp. 395-415.
- Rosenberg-Friedman, Lilach, (2012), "Wedding ceremony, religion, and tradition: the Shertok family debate, 1922", *Israel Studies Review*, vol. 27, n° 1, pp. 98-124.
- Savorai, Dan, (2008), "*Sollel-Bone*: An Economical [sic] Civil Organization in the Service of and Recruited by the Authorities, at a Transition From Mandate to a Status of sovereign State", Doctoral Dissertation (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University) [Hebrew].
- Schloss, Justus, (1958), "Der Sturz des H. Dan", *Yedioth Hayom*, 19 November.
- Schnitzer, Shmuel, (1966), "Days of Gold", *Maariv*, 22 April.

- Schussman, Yosef, (1954), "Where do the investments disappear to?", *Herut*, 10 December [Hebrew].
- Segev, Tom, (1993), *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, translated by Haim Watzman (New York: Hill and Wang).
- Shalev, Michael, (1992), *Labor and the Political Economy in Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Shapiro, Yonathan, (1976), *The Formative Years of the Israeli Labour Party: The Organization of Power, 1919-1939* (London: Sage Publications).
- Shapiro, Yonathan, (1985a), "Political sociology in Israel: a critical view", in Krausz, Ernest (ed.), *Politics and Society in Israel: Studies of Israeli Society. Vol. 3* (Oxford: Transaction Books), pp. 6-16.
- Shapiro, Yonathan, (1985b), *An Elite Without Successors: Generations of Leaders in Israeli Society* (Tel-Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim).
- Sheva, Shlomo, (1974), *A Road in the Desert: The Story of Solel Boneh* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved).
- Shur, Yacov, (1984), "Chapters in the Company's history", *Company News: Solel Boneh International Ltd.*, n° 76, pp. 18-19.
- Thelen, Tatjana, and Alber, Erdmute, (2018), "Reconnecting state and kinship: temporalities, scales, classifications", in Thelen, Tatjana, and Alber, Erdmute (eds.), *Reconnecting State and Kinship* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 1-38.
- Thompson, Edward Palmer, (1978), *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press).
- Turner, Victor, (1974), *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
- Turner, Victor, (1980), "Social dramas and stories about them", *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 7, n° 1, pp. 141-168.
- Wolf, Eric R., (2001), *Pathways of Power: Building an Anthropology of the Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- United States, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), (1949), "Arms traffic between Israel and Switzerland", Information Report, March 11, CIA-RDP82-00457R002500050007-6.
- Zivan, Zeev, (2012), *From Nitzana to Eilat: The History of the Southern Negev, 1949-1957* (Midreshet Ben Gurion: Ben Gurion Institute).