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"Common Ground" A Roadmap for Long-Term National Paradigms

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National policy research and surveys are executed at the Samuel Neaman Institute and their conclusions and recommendations serve the decision makers at various levels. The policy research is conducted by the faculty and staff of the Technion and scientists from other institutions in Israel and abroad and specialist from the industry.

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Abstract

The **organizing principle** that gave birth to the State of Israel and that continues to accompany it is **Zionism.** In the past decade or two, as Israel has been undergoing a number of deep societal processes of change, the validity of the original Zionist idea as a central organizing principle for today's modern country has increasingly been questioned. A manifestation of this process is the simple fact that fully one-third of the citizens of Israel—mainly Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews—do not identify with Zionist values during this current period.

This report is the outcome of a focused effort to conduct, analyze, and integrate the contents of more than thirty in-depth interviews with influential opinion-makers in Israel in order to create an **agreed-upon roadmap** that includes an alternative organizing principle and several leading paradigms that, together, may serve as a "common ground" for the diverse voices and "tribes" that make up Israeli society today. The justification, as well as the rationale, for viewing this as a common roadmap arise from the discovery of a rather broad common denominator; even among these holders of diverse and divergent views, there is nearly virtual unanimity that the tenets of the **Declaration of Independence** should serve as the organizing principles for the future of the country. Almost everyone interviewed agreed that the existing situation is undermining the foundations of the Zionist idea as the founders defined it; thus, the need to formulate and articulate clear organizing principles has become urgent and imperative. With rare exceptions, the interviewees, whether deliberately or inadvertently, pointed to the Declaration of Independence as the document that constitutes a broad basis for valid organizing principles.

Our working method was based on personal in-depth interviews with a series of well-known Israeli personalities—women and men, Jews, Druze, and Arabs, secular, religious, and ultra-Orthodox, young and less-young—holding a wide variety of social, ethical, and political views. Among them were senior academics, writers and scientists, former politicians, media personalities and publicists, rabbis, economists, social entrepreneurs, strategists, and retired senior army officers. (For a list of the participants, see Appendix 2.)

The interviews with these thirty-two people were conducted largely in January–February 2021. Most interviews lasted sixty to ninety minutes; all took place on Zoom and were recorded (with the interviewees' consent). Those interviewed, each in their own words and style, expressed their viewpoints, their attitude toward the question of an "organizing principle" (as they perceived it), and the important values (in their eyes) on which Israeli society should be predicated in the decades to come. The researchers-interviewers (**E.A.** and **R.G.**) collected, organized, and summarized the contents of the interviews without changing their essential meaning. The interviewees' remarks as they appear throughout this document are set in quotation marks and italics.

The surprising parallel that we found between the interviewers' comments and the text of the Declaration of Independence (Table 1) prompted us to proffer a central recommendation in this document:

The State of Israel should adopt the Declaration of Independence as the document that best expresses its vision, essence, and values.

The contents of the interviews may be summarized at two additional levels. The first comprises several essential preconditions without which the aforementioned central principle cannot be promoted. One may classify these conditions into two main areas—national security, strength, and resilience; and mechanisms and "rules of the game." . The second (and principal) level is composed of six paradigmatic topics that require creative thinking and adjustment to the new reality; their application will imbue the renewed vision with practical content.

The six paradigmatic topics are:
- Education;
- Jewish and Democratic State;
- Moral Market Economy;
- *Mamlakhtiyut* - Striving for the Primacy of the Non-Partisan Common Good;
- Israel in the Middle East;
- Israel among the Nations.

In the Report proper, we analyze and expand on each of these topics, and include representative quotations by the interviewees.

Thus, the main purpose of this Report is to produce an initial draft of a roadmap that will help Israel navigate its journey in the next few decades. The various entities that are striving to establish a new government of Israel as we write may, to our best understanding, use this map—which, as stated, has received broad public consensus—to guide their efforts.[1]

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[1] A new government has been formed on June 13th, 2021, after completing this report.

Introduction

The crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, a global event that has not bypassed Israel, has engulfed numerous areas, including economics, healthcare, society, government, and, some would add, national identity. In Israel, the intensity of the crisis and the difficulties in coping with it were evidently exacerbated by lengthy political instability, radicalized sociocultural tension, and the undermining of trust in the institutions of government, particularly following four successive election campaigns in two years.

The argument is often made that something about the current paradigm, based for years on a standard agenda, "has gone awry." Instead of leading the nation forward to a future of growth based on social foundations of mutual respect and responsibility, schism and polarization in Israeli society are escalating. This is true not only of Israel: "What is playing out in Israel," the political commentator Thomas Friedman asserts, "is the same political fragmentation/polarization that is hobbling America: the loss of a shared national narrative to inspire and bind the country as it journeys into the 21st century."[2]

Simultaneously, more and more voices are expressing the position that Israel's current crisis, like any profound crisis, is also an opportunity to reexamine basic questions concerning the state of Israel's future in terms of both the values and the systemic aspect—the "rules of the game"—characterizing the country. The need to revisit national narratives or long-term national paradigms that afffect Israel's future has become particularly critical lately, particularly in light of the sweeping political changes seen in 2021 and the continuing aftershocks of the COVID pandemic.

Israeli society, and the myriad of tribes of which it is composed, yearn for "common ground" on which a longed-for united common camp may again form.
*

The **"organizing principle"** that brought the State of Israel into existence and has accompanied it to this day is **Zionism.** An ideological national movement supporting the existence of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, Zionism was born

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[2] Friedman, T. "Israelis and Americans Both Are Asking, Whose Country Is This Anyway?" *New York Times,* April 6, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/opinion/us-israel-elections.html

in the late nineteenth century as a movement rooted in ancient motives and values derived from both the Jewish religious tradition and the national ideologies then flourishing in Europe. From its inception, its goals were a return to Zion, an ingathering of the exiles, and the establishment of an independent Jewish sovereignty. Benjamin Zeev Herzl, regarded as the modern political founder of Zionism, perceived it as a broad fabric of ideas—among them the aspiration to ethical and spiritual perfection. Since the birth of the State in 1948, the Zionist movement has largely continued to support these ideals while ensuring national security. Lately, however, as stated, the rifts within the Zionist movement have been widening amid the shadows of the profound social processes that Israel has been undergoing. One cannot ignore the simple fact that fully one third of the citizens of Israel—mainly Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews—do not currently identify with the fundamental values of Zionism.

The challenges facing the State of Israel in the coming decades call for an in-depth examination of the paradigms that shape the face of Israeli society and perhaps even a consideration of change in these paradigms – a more difficult task that also entails unprecedented opportunities. Nowhere is there any evidence of an institutionalized and consensual way to redefine a vision for an entire society or state. This is sometimes a task for an exceptional leader, the kind that is not lacking in the history books. In other instances, such processes sprout from the grassroots, either via protest movements or through social activism. Research institutes and academia also have a role to play in these processes by identifying ideas, organizing them systematically, tracking their development, and more.

The Samuel Neaman Institute for National Policy Research has accepted the challenge, launching an intellectual process that attempts to identify and define a renewed organizing principle, or several such principles, on which the image of the State of Israel may rely in the decades to come.

Method: The stage of identifying and pinpointing ideas is usually based on surveys, textual analyses, expert groups, or workshops. Due to the complexity of the topic and the need to get to the roots and subtle nuances of the ideas associated with it, we preferred a different method: personal in-depth interviews

with a series of well-known Israeli personalities, male and female, leaders in various areas of endeavor, positioned all over the political spectrum and of diverse ages and worldviews. Although from the outset we refrained from imposing rigid rules about the composition of a "representative sample," we made sure to include male and female, Jewish, Druze, and Arab, secular, religious and ultra-orthodox (Haredi), and young and older respondents holding a broad range of social, ethical, and political positions. Those interviewed included senior academics, writers and scientists, former politicians, media figures and publicists, rabbis, economists, social entrepreneurs, strategists, and retired military officers. (Their characteristics are detailed in **Appendix 1.**)

On this basis and after exhaustive "accept/reject" discussions, we approached forty people and ultimately interviewed thirty-two of them. Four candidates did not assent to our request (which included a preliminary explanation of the essence of the task) and four others decided, after deliberation, not to be interviewed. This high response rate (80 percent) is indicative, in our opinion, of the interviewees' perception of the importance of the topic and their agreement that we have indeed reached a critical point in our country's history.

Most of the interviews with our thirty-two participants (see **Appendix 2** for their names) were conducted in January–February 2021 and lasted sixty to ninety minutes; all took place on Zoom and were recorded (with the interviewees' consent). In conversations that were characterized mostly by an open and honest atmosphere, the interviewees shared with us their thoughts, concerns and hopes regarding the future of the State of Israel in the coming decades.The participants, each in their own words and style, expressed their viewpoints, their attitudes toward the question of an "organizing principle" (as they perceived it), and the important values (in their eyes) on which Israeli society should be predicated in the decades to come. The researchers-interviewers (E.A. and R.G.) collected, organized, and summarized the contents of the interviews without changing their essential meaning.

Analyzing the interviews, we detected **shared ideas** that, in many cases, expressed points of consensus among participants who were otherwise far apart in identity and worldview. On the basis of the interviews, we formulated in this

concise document **our proposal for an organizing principle**, focus on **the prerequisites for the fulfillment of its values,** and propose (in a schematic manner only) **constitutive paradigmatic topics** that need to be developed and nurtured. **These demand the kind of thoroughgoing discussion that lies outside the framework of this Report, which serves as a clarion call for broader research that should follow.**

1. Identifying the Organizing Principle

As stated, despite their great diversity, the participants expressed quite a few shared ideas or values that, although phrased differently and given different degrees of emphasis, may be fused into a "common ground." The values that the participants shared most broadly, as enunciated in their interviews, were:

- Zionism (variously interpreted)
- The Law of Return
- Jewish and democratic state
- Liberal democracy
- Equality
- Cultural diversity
- Moral and just allocation of resources
- Israeli citizenship
- A renewed Israeli Judaism
- *Mamlakhtiyut* (state orientation)— striving for the primacy of non-partisan common good
- Solving the Israel–Palestinian conflict
- Integrating into the Middle East

When we began to collect and organize the summaries of the interviews, we found that almost all of these values already appear in one formative document that was composed by the founders of the State of Israel on the eve of its establishment—the **Declaration of Independence** or, to use its official name, **"The Proclamation of the Establishment of the State of Israel."** It was this scroll that David Ben-Gurion read out at the ceremony where independence was declared on May 14, 1948, several hours before the British Mandate for Palestine expired.

Indeed, quite a number of the participants we selected pointed explicitly to the principles enunciated in the Declaration as their vision of a desired and optimal basis **for the organizing principle of the State of Israel** in the decades to come.

In addition, most of the other participants mentioned various elements in this document in the course of their remarks.

In fact, a painstaking reading of the Declaration reveals the presence of all the aforementioned values in this Report, expressed in one way or another. The values mentioned by multiple participants appear in the Declaration as follows:

Table 1: Comparison of quotations from the Declaration of Independence with values expressed in the interviews

Values expressed in the interviews	Quotation from the Declaration of Independence
Jewish state	[We] hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state.
Law of Return, Zionism	The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles
Moral and just resource allocation; social justice	It will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants.
Mamlakhtiyut: human rights, equality, social diversity, Israeli citizenship, democracy	It will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions…
Human rights—liberal democracy	and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
Solving the Israel–Palestinian conflict	The State of Israel is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947.
Solving the Israel–Palestinian conflict (confederation?)	and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.
Equality: Israeli citizenship	We appeal—in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months—to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation

Values expressed in the interviews	Quotation from the Declaration of Independence
	in all its provisional and permanent institutions.
Integrating into the Middle East, aspiring to peace and a solution to the conflict	We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

Thus, the Declaration of Independence undoubtedly includes most of the ideas on which even today, more than seven decades into the State of Israel's existence, one can find a broad consensus. We are not the first to point this out. For example, in a set of recommendations presented to the Minister of Justice in 2013, the late jurist and Israel Prize laureate Professor Ruth Gavison wrote, "The vision offers a basic roadmap that may serve as a compass for most of Israeli society."[3]

We realize that the legal status of the Declaration of Independence is disputed and that the document has no statutory force. However, as Prof. Aharon Barak, who dealt with this issue, once stated,[4] "Everyone agrees that the Declaration of Independence […] is a political act of legal significance [and] constitutes a 'legal norm.'"

Professor Gavison took this even further: **"The Proclamation of the Establishment of the State of Israel** reflects the fullness of the vision in the founders' eyes. This declaration, deliberately not passed into law, acquired its meaning in the historical context in which it was adopted and enjoys a broad consensus. It should be left as it is and should not be exposed to the disputes that

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[3] Ruth Gavison, 2015, "Constitutional Anchoring of Israel's Vision?" Jerusalem: Metzila Center*,* p. 19, http://din-online.info/pdf/mz13.pdf

[4] Aharon Barak, 2018, "The Declaration of Independence and the Knesset as a Constitutive Authority," *Huqqim* 11, pp. 9–36.

cannot but arise in the process that would aspire to make it into a Basic Law, under totally different political and social conditions."[5]

Indeed, legislation is not the only way to give public prominence to an organizing principle that can serve as a basis for a rather broad initial consensus. As several of our interviewees noted, *"The top-down method, the old way of thinking, isn't working anymore, least of all when taken over by individuals motivated by ego and self-interest. Those who have the power to trigger this change today are autonomous and creative grassroots entities."*

It also seems agreed that thought should be given to how one can assimilate ideas and values today by means of media, public debate, and influencing public opinion makers.

On the other hand, many participants stressed the topic of **leadership** as a key determinant in both promoting and implementing this idea of an organizing principle. "*To me, the key indicators* [of leadership] *are **autonomy, sincerity, and collaborativity**. Leaders who treat themselves as a platform."* Furthermore, it is hard to drive meaningful changes from the ground up without executive capabilities. *"It depends not only on leadership but also on **changing the method of governance**. The existing method defeats the politicians because it keeps them busy protecting their personal place."*

It is on the basis of all the foregoing that we present the following proposal as the starting point for public discussion and not as a piece of draft legislation.

> ## The State of Israel should adopt the Declaration of Independence as a document that reflects its vision, essence, and values.

By proposing the Declaration of Independence as a possible basis for a renewed vision and an organizing principle that includes both values and substantive measures, we were able to draft a more complete roadmap for Israel in the decades to come. On this map (Figure 1), the middle level expresses the conditions that must be met to surmount the obstacles and fulfill the vision. Below

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[5] Ruth Gavison, 2015, "Constitutional Anchoring of Israel's Vision?" Jerusalem: Metzila Center, p. 15.

this level are paradigmatic topics that demand creative thinking and adjustment to the new reality.

Figure 1: A Roadmap for Israel in the Decades to Come
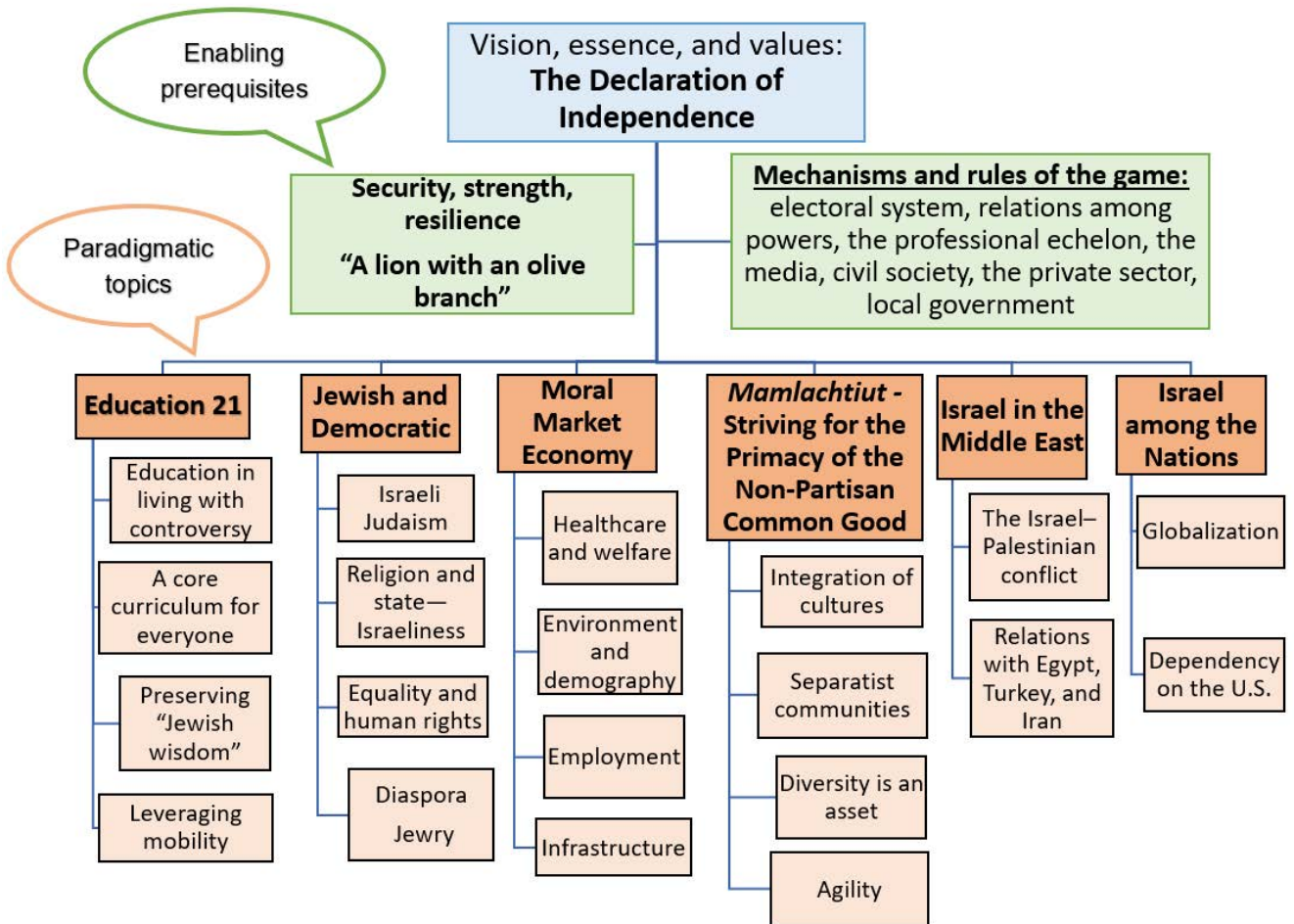
2. Prerequisites to Coping with Obstacles to the Fulfillment and Application of the Values of the Declaration of Independence

Simply presenting a vision is not enough. To fulfill a vision, certain prerequisites must be met. Almost all of our interviewees expressed numerous prerequisites. We classified them into two main fields: **national security** and **rules of the game.** Below we present them on the basis of the participants' own words in context. Their remarks are shown in quotation marks and italics.

2.1 National Security, Strength, and Resilience

This triad of national security, strength, and resilience represent the necessary conditions for realizing the values of the organizing principle. The three concepts partly overlap and all refer to the internal strength of Israeli society to cope with crises and disruptions.

It is important to emphasize that *"The reference to national security is inclusive and doesn't pertain to military power alone."* It includes, among other things, solidarity, social resilience, and basic trust in the leadership and mechanisms of government. The COVID-19 crisis offers the best possible demonstration of how essential this combination is when crisis erupts. Furthermore, the perception of national security in question does not clash with—it actually sometimes strives for—the prevention of confrontations and attainment of peace accords (*"a lion with an olive branch"*).

2.2 Mechanisms and "Rules of the Game"

A central topic in this respect is **governability,** *"in the sense of how to manage Israel's complexity in economics, political science, and international relations."* The question focuses on how **resources are allocated:** whether they are *"allocated efficiently to attain 'the common good' of the public and its future sustainably, or to attain short-range goals that serve pressure groups."*

"The democratic mechanisms that are responsible for allocating resources and overseeing their use are the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the

judicial branch. They are joined by nongovernmental mechanisms that also make an impact: external gatekeepers (the media), the private sector, and civil society."

As expected, many participants drew attention to the lack of a **constitution** in Israel and the difficulties this causes in many fields. Almost all agreed, however, that the country's Basic Laws must be relied upon for the time being, provided they remain consensual and sustainable.

"A constitution that lays down overarching principles of values in all fields, including the identity, rights, and relations among the branches, is the factor that can put the rules of the game into order." "Israel squandered the 'constitutional moment' of its founding; and [since then,] we have been basing ourselves on Basic Laws that are pieces of a future constitution." Apparently, *"it will be very hard to amass a consensus around a constitution at the present time."* Therefore, it is important *"to solidify the status of the Basic Laws, prevent hasty legislation that serves the narrow interests of this or that player, and refrain from amending existing laws frequently."*

Some participants expanded the scope of their attention to events in other countries and noted the decline in respect for orderly processes and political rivals. For them, this emphasized the critical importance of clear democratic rules of the game.

"The political reality in many countries is a retreat from democracy and the ascendancy of extreme populistic fascist regimes. It's being abetted by developments in technological communication that enable leaders to maintain direct and frequent contact with their citizenry." "Today's leaders don't lead their nations; in fact, they're led by the mob."

"Israel's regimen of coalition government and coalition discipline has almost destroyed the barrier between the legislative branch and the executive branch, gravely impairing the Knesset's ability to do its job." It also sets both of these branches at loggerheads with the judiciary. To enable the state to be run efficiently, it is necessary *"to regulate the relationship among the three branches [and] lay down mechanisms of checks and balances along with conflict-resolution mechanisms." "The way civil servants are appointed, their professionalism in the corridors of goverment, and optimizing their abilities"* also need to be examined.

The current state of **structural difficulties** in Israel is such that a discussion about **revising the method of governance** is needed, *"for example, set[ting] term limits for officials and establish[ing] long-term objectives."* In most participants' opinion, **the current electoral method** should be revisited because the situation it creates has undermined the stability of rule: *"The majority finds it hard to carry out its policies because it has to submit to the demands of a minority without which it cannot create a coalition."*

Accordingly, this discussion leads to our second proposal:

Reconfigure the rules of the game:

- **Adjust the electoral system in order to create stability in governance and inhibit the excessive power of fringe groups;**
- **Define relationships among the branches (establish checks and balances);**
- **Set rules for the appointment and status of the professional echelon in the civil service.**

3. Paradigmatic Topics Demanding Creative Thinking and Adaptation to the New Reality

3.1 Education

The participants agree broadly—almost unanimously, in fact—that Israel's education systems need meaningful change **in structure and contents** if they are to be able to adapt to the current era: *"Education 21,"* as several of them called it. Many find it supremely important to educate in **critical but accommodative thinking**—education in *"living with controversy (a characteristic of the Jewish legal discourse in all generations) and nurturing the ability to accommodate different groups and cultures,"* accompanied by education in **values.** In all of these respects, *"The change has to begin with the education system."*

Most participants agreed on two points. First, it is necessary *"to assure core studies for all children in Israel,"* particularly in *"the three languages: Hebrew, Arabic, and English, and in Mathematics."* By accomplishing this, the education system would also fulfill its role as *"a facilitator of social mobility."* Second, education and study of the Jewish **cultural legacy** in connection with its Israeli ramifications – ***"Jewish wisdom,"*** as one of the participants expressed it – should be bolstered.

Finally, in view of the twenty-first-century perception of teachers as serving not only as conveyors of knowledge but also as educators in learning methods along with personal development, many participants stressed the need for a paradigm shift in the state's attitude toward **the status and quality of teachers.**

Accordingly, our recommendation in the field of education:

Make a strategic investment in adapting the education system, in terms of its structure and contents, to the twenty-first century in the following:

- **education as leverage to social mobility;**
- **the roles of a teacher in the twenty-first century;**
- **education in "Jewish wisdom."**

3.2 Jewish and Democratic State

A strong consensus (including among some Arab interviewees) coalesced around the importance of sustaining and fulfilling this **nexus** between the Jewish and the democratic nature of the state, despite the contradictions that often emerge.

*"The **organizing principle** should be able to accommodate **both**: Israel as a national home for the <u>Jewish people</u> forever and, concurrently, a civil society <u>for everyone living here</u>, Jews and Arabs alike, forever. Both Jewish and democratic."* Many noted the need to retain the Law of Return and singled out the stinging absence of the value of equality in the Nation-State Law. Participants associated with Arab society generally and, most notably, Druze society found the latter topic profoundly meaningful.

The process of creating a *"renewed Israeli Judaism"* would help to reinforce the bond between "Jewish" and "democratic."

Many interviewees emphasized the importance of discussing the relationship of religion and state and, perhaps, of religion and politics. Such a discussion, they said, would yield a clearer view of *"a concept of 'Israeliness' that also accommodates segments of the non-Jewish population."* The participants' remarks signal the need for a gradual transition **from national language to civil language:** "The narrative of *'aliya* [Jewish immigration], defense, and settlement should be replaced with a civil narrative." *"The three principles—Greater Israel, Jewish majority and character, and full democracy—cannot coexist; any two of them excludes the third."* "The Declaration of Independence strikes a balance between

the collective freedom—a Jewish state—and sensitivity to individuals of whatever identity."

In this context, a "civil language" need not be a non-Jewish one: Many regard equality and upholding of human rights, as reflected in the Declaration of Independence, as distinctively **Jewish characteristics,** the kind that generate a *"connection with liberal democratic values and the strengthening of social values."*

In many cases, the participants found support for their remarks in statements that **Ben-Gurion** made in Israel's early years. In February 1950, for example, Ben-Gurion declared the following in the Knesset: *"Jews as Jews can exist only in a land [that assures] freedom of the minority, freedom of elections, freedom of thought, freedom of movement, and freedom of resistance to the government within the boundaries of the law—that is, in a democratic regime."* Addressing the Israel Defense Forces high command on April 6, 1950, he added: *"It is no wonder that this people's sages set the Torah atop on one great rule: 'Love your fellow as you do yourself.' And loving your fellow applies not only to the Jewish citizen: 'The stranger who sojourns with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and you shall love him as you do yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God' (Lev. 19:34). Even in antiquity, a universal, pan-human outlook was dominant in Judaism."*

The distinction between nationalist democracy and liberal democracy was noted repeatedly: *"Coupling nationalist democracy with 'Jewish' would void democracy of its substantive content."*

Most participants gave considerable weight to the topic of Israel's relations with **Diaspora Jewry** in their remarks, not least due to the fact that about half of the Jewish nation lives in the Diaspora. *"The shared heritage is the code that links these communities. Today, some of Israeli Jewry no longer recognizes the shared heritage, including customs—making the code hard to preserve."* In this matter, most interviewees assign the State of Israel a leading role:

"We need to maintain social and cultural relations with Diaspora Jewry and to keep the connection mutual. We should cultivate a common dialogue among intellectuals but shouldn't dictate anything. Maintaining the connection at its various

levels is what matters." "We in Israel should be careful not to lose the 'network' characteristic that's typical of the Jewish people."

Accordingly, our recommendation in the field of a Jewish and democratic state:

> - **Strengthen the Jewish value of "Love your fellow as you do yourself."**
> - **Strengthen the concept of "Israeliness" as a civil value that coexists with "Jewishness."**
> - **Regulate the religion–state relationship.**
> - **Redesign the Israel–Diaspora relationship.**

3.3 Moral Market Economy

Globally and in Israel, the COVID-19 crisis is creating a paradigm change in how the state's role in providing its citizens with an up-to-date safety net is viewed. One of our interviewees, a major authority in this field, expressed exactly this point: *"A **moral market economy** may be an organizing principle."* Namely, the welfare state needs to be refitted to accommodate the new reality. *"Income distribution is a matter that will occupy us a great deal." "We find ourselves in a privatized market state that's an attenuated welfare state."* Public expenditure in Israel is far below the OECD average. We need to act *"to improve the quality of life and the standard of living continually, with an eye on values, equal opportunity, and better income distribution." "The tax system is causing the black-market economy to grow and is suppressing people's motivation to be honest." "**Serious reform is needed."***

The prolongation of life expectancy, coupled with population growth leading to significant urbanization, demonstrates the need to reexamine resource allocation and the conventional paradigms. *"The struggle for resources will be hard. It's not only an ideological struggle; it's also about how to conduct oneself."* **Environmental protection, information technologies,** and the world of **energy** also appear to need a pragmatic, updated approach in view of the changes they

are undergoing. *"The great global revolution now under way bases itself on mammoth changes in our ability to process energy and information. Therefore, the place to begin isn't Zionism but global changes."*

Significant technological changes, decentralization of supply chains, the lifting of borders, and the global financial market have led to rapid changes in the **realm of employment**. This accelerated process and the dilemmas it creates demand a reexamination of the paradigms in this area as well, for example, *"by strengthening the value-chain economy."* Nearly all of our participants agreed that the COVID-19 crisis is creating **opportunities for a new form of treatment,** from a **long-term perspective** that combines a market economy and a value economy and promotes physical and communication infrastructures, higher education, innovation, human capital, and social capital.

Accordingly, our recommendation regarding a moral market economy:

> **A moral market economy:**
> - **Israel as a welfare state in the twenty-first century: a market policy combined with social sensitivity;**
> - **Stringent long-term examination of the resource-allocation strategy;**
> - **Systemic tax reform.**

3.4 Mamlakhtiyut—Striving for the Primacy of the Non-Partisan Common Good

"A fundamental problem – that is also a great advantage for Israel – is the country's cultural, religious, and political diversity. It's important to find a way for everyone to live as they choose and not at the other's expense or against the other." "Diversity is an asset."

Many participants used the Hebrew word *mamlakhtiyut,* which we translate as **"Striving for the Primacy of the Non-Partisan Common Good,"** to denote two important necessities. First, a non-partisan approach that does not hinge on any

specific ideology. Second, it is also an overarching concept that allows all complexions of society to be **accommodated and accepted.**

"Mamlakhtiyut *means eschewing ideological fundamentalism and strengthening cohesiveness, maintaining a contested vision and political aspirations while placing the common interest above all." "Seeking the common good." "We need to engage in second-order change. Controversy is a given; now, how shall we live together?"* This approach permits cultural integration and demands far-reaching, accommodating attention to separatist elements in society, like the ultra-Orthodox and Arab populations. A *mamlakhtiyut* approach such as this is typified not only by the ability to tolerate and include, but also by *"creative agility."*

Accordingly, our recommendation on *Mamlakhtiyut*:

> **Mamlakhtiyut, Primacy of the Non-Partisan Common Good:**
> - **Diversity is an asset—accept the "other" and those who disagree with you.**
> - **Promote tolerance and inclusion as leading social values.**
> - **Take a non-partisan approach toward seeking the common good.**

3.5 Israel in the Middle East

In its values, Israel takes a dialectic approach to Western democratic culture and technological progress, coupling these with recognition of *"our proximity to Middle East countries that cannot be ignored, just as the geopolitical significance of their proximity [cannot be ignored]." "We have to maintain a Western orientation; that's where we have an advantage right now. Concurrently, we should pursue practical integration into the Middle East"* while testing our progress in relating to "the civilizational powers in our region—Iran, Turkey, and Egypt." Since the interviews took place several months after the Abraham Accords were signed, the interviewees were aware of this proof that Israel can normalize its relations with Arab countries without—or before—resolving the Israel–Palestinian conflict. Just

the same, several interviewees noted that *"One cannot overstate the importance of peace, the best basis for development and integration into the global world."*

Most participants—but not all—noted that finding a solution ("perhaps confederative") to the conflict with the Palestinians is an inevitable stage in the matrix of relations with the Middle East: *"The situation that emerged from the Six-Day War was defined as temporary by those across the full spectrum of views (from Begin to Yaari)."* Conversely, several noted that *"recently the situation has been given an ostensible legitimacy,"* and others remarked: *"It's hard to be optimistic about putting together a sustainable solution."* Concurrently, some claimed that *"Israeli society and Palestinian society are already inseparable. One may, perhaps, consider a model of non-territorial self-determination and, perhaps, having one parliament with two additional parliaments operating alongside it."* The aforementioned confederation idea also attracted several supporters.

Many interviewees, however, mentioned the continuation of the occupation as something that threatens the internal stability and moral identity of the State of Israel first and foremost. "*When your values don't square with reality, you change the reality or you change your values.*" *"The dissonance of values and reality isn't sustainable forever. The preservation of this situation is warping the values of Zionism. Why should there be a Jewish majority if the Arabs don't have freedom and the right to vote? That's not democracy."*

Accordingly, our recommendation on Israel in the Middle East:

- **Maintain a Western orientation along with practical integration into the Middle East;**
- **Settle the Israel–Palestinian conflict as soon as possible;**
- **"Seek peace and pursue it"—interact and maintain a discourse with all Arab countries, with special attention to the historical cultural powers in the Middle East.**

3.6 Israel among the Nations

Economic, cultural, and social globalization have a great impact on the State of Israel and obliges the country *"to examine the existing paradigms in [its] relations with the various world powers"* [state and non-state]. The current crisis may very well lead to change. Globalization is typified the world over by impediments to the unrestricted flow of people and goods, policies designed to protect domestic products, fear of the growing strength of the status of multinational corporations, and fiscal policies that help address the crisis at the local level.

In view of all these, *"The existing paradigms in Israel's attitudes to its international status should be reviewed."* Israel needs to step up its ***"soft power"*** exports, manifested in, among other steps, technological developments, advanced agriculture, and a drive to establish full-fledged multinational firms headquartered in Israel. Moves such as these will help to counterbalance Israel's current image, which mainly highlights military matters and defense industries. In the evolving multipolar era, Israel should keep open its channels with most global powers. *"It's immensely important to have the ability to discern changes and adjust to them."* In this context, several interviewees noted: *"Israel's dependency on the United States should also be examined"* while preserving America's standing as Israel's greatest friend and giving attention to the importance of **American Jewry** for the continued survival of the Jewish people.

Accordingly, our recommendation on Israel among the Nations:

> - **Make strategic preparations for possible changes in the global balance of forces;**
> - **Examine Israel's dependency on the United States: its importance and its challenges to Israel's future;**
> - **Shape Israel's relations with nonstate global players (corporations, etc.);**
> - **Promote and develop "soft power" exports.**

4. Conclusion

The **organizing principle** that gave birth to the State of Israel and that continues to accompany it is **Zionism**. In the past decade or two, however, as Israel has been undergoing a number of deep processes of change, the validity of the original Zionist idea as a central organizing principle for today's modern country has increasingly been questioned. Amplifying this point is the simple fact that fully one-third of the citizens of Israel—mainly Arabs and ultra-Orthodox Jews—do not identify with Zionist values at present.

This report is the outcome of a focused effort to conduct, analyze, and integrate the contents of more than thirty in-depth interviews with influential opinion-makers in Israel in order to create an **agreed-upon roadmap** that includes an alternative organizing principle and several leading paradigms that, together, may serve as a "common ground" for the diverse voices and "tribes" that make up Israeli society today. The justification, as well as the rationale, for seeing this as a common roadmap arise from the discovery of a rather broad common denominator; even among these holders of diverse and divergent views, there is nearly virtual unanimity that the tenets of the **Declaration of Independence** should serve as the organizing principles for the future of the state of Israel. Almost everyone interviewed agreed that the existing situation is undermining the foundations that support the Zionist idea as the founders defined it, and that the need to formulate organizing principles has become clear, imperative and urgent. Almost everyone, deliberately or inadvertently, pointed to the Declaration of Independence as a document that constitutes a broad basis for valid organizing principles.

Our working method was based on personal in-depth interviews with a series of well-known Israeli personalities—women and men, Jews, Druze, and Arabs, secular, religious, and ultra-Orthodox, young and less-young—who hold a wide variety of social, value, and political views. Among them were senior academics, writers and scientists, former, media personalities and publicists, rabbis, economists, social entrepreneurs, strategists, and retired senior army officers. (For a list of the participants, see Appendix 2.)

The interviews with these thirty-two people were conducted largely in January–February 2021. Most of the interviews were sixty to ninety minutes long; all took place on Zoom and were recorded (with the interviewees' consent). Those interviewed, each in their own words and style, expressed their viewpoints, their attitudes toward the question of an "organizing principle" (as they perceived it), and the important values (in their eyes) on which Israeli society should be predicated in the decades to come. The investigator-interviewers (E.A. and R.G.) collected, organized, and summarized the contents of the interviews without changing their essential meaning. The interviewees' remarks as they appear throughout this document are set in quotation marks and italics.

The surprising parallel that we found between the interviewers' comments and the text of the Declaration of Independence (Table 1) prompted us to proffer a central recommendation in this document:

The State of Israel should adopt the Declaration of Independence as the document that best expresses its vision, essence, and values.

The contents of the interviews may be summarized at two additional levels. The first comprises several essential preconditions without which the aforementioned central principle cannot be promoted. One may classify these conditions into two main areas—national security, strength, and resilience; and mechanisms and "rules of the game." The first area is clear. The second (and principal) level is composed of six paradigmatic topics that require creative thinking and adjustment to the new reality; their application will fill the renewed vision with practical content.

The six paradigmatic topics are the following:

- **Education;**
- **Jewish and Democratic State;**
- **Moral Market Economy;**
- *Mamlakhtiyut* **—Striving for the Primacy of the Non-Partisan Common Good;**
- **Israel in the Middle East;**
- **Israel among the Nations.**

In the Report proper, we analyzed and expanded on each of these topics, and included representative quotations from the interviewees.

Thus, the main purpose of this Report was to produce an initial sketch of a roadmap that will help Israel navigate its journey in the next few decades. The various entities that are striving to establish a new government of Israel as we write may, to our best understanding, use this map—which, as stated, has received broad public consensus—to guide their efforts.[6]

We would like to express our profound gratitude to each of the thirty-two interviewees whose views and ideas served as the basis of this Report.

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[6] A new government has been formed on June 13th, 2021, after completing this report.

5. Appendices

5.1 Distribution of the Interviewees' Characteristics and Areas of Endeavor

5.1.1 Characteristics

Men—25; women—7

Young / middle-age	5
Minorities	3
Religious or ultra-Orthodox	7
Public figures	13
Academics	9

5.1.2 Specializations and Areas of Endeavor

Political Science	6
Literature / Philosophy / History	9
Sociology / Psychology / Economics / Science	9
Law	7
Business and Industry	10
Education	3
Media	3
Defense	4

5.2 Interviewees (in alphabetical order by last name)

First name	Last name	Description
Ms. Adi	Altschuler	Social activist and founder of "Krembo Wings" and "Inclu-Inclusive Schools" Network
Mr. Eli	Amir	Author, former Director General of Youth Aliyah, the Jewish Agency for Israel
Ms. Emily	Amrousi	Media, former spokeswoman for YESHA Council
Ms. Adina	Bar-Shalom	Founder of Haredi College Jerusalem and Israel Prize laureate
Dr. Yossi	Beilin	Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice
Prof. Shlomo	Ben-Ami	Historian, former Minister of Foreign Affairs
Dr. Avishai	Ben-Haim	Journalist
Dr. Orna	Berry	Former Chief Scientist, leading high-tech entrepreneur
Rabbi Dr. Yoel	Bin-Nun	Co-founder of Yeshivat Har Etzion
Mr. David	Brodet	Former Director General of the Ministry of Finance and former Chair of Bank Leumi
Mr. Avraham	Burg	Former Speaker of the Knesset
Prof. Nissim	Calderon	Hebrew Literature, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
Mr. Yitzhak	Devash	Founder of the Atudot Leadership (Reserves) Project for Israel and partner in a life sciences investment fund

First name	Last name	Description
Mr. Aharon	Fogel	Former Director General, Ministry of Finance
Mr. Roy	Folkman	Former Member of Knesset
Prof. Asad	Ghanem	Political Science, University of Haifa
Maj.-Gen. (Res.) Gershon	Hacohen	Commander of the IDF Military Colleges, commander of General Staff corps
Dr. Samer	Haj Yehiya	Chair, Bank Leumi
Prof. Moshe	Halbertal	Jewish Thought and Philosophy, Hebrew University
Lt.-Gen. (Res.) Dan	Halutz	Former Chief of General Staff and Commander of Israel Air Force
Mr. Yisrael	Harel	Former chair, YESHA Council, and publicist
Brig.-Gen. (Res.) Hason	Hason	Former military attaché to the President of the State
Mr. Eli	Hotoveli	Senior official, Mifal Hamerkava, IDF
Prof. Eva	Illouz	Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University
Rabbi Mordechai	Karelitz	Former Mayor of Bnei Brak
Ms Yehudit	Karp	Former Deputy Attorney General
Ms Tsipi	Livni	Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice
Mr. Dan	Meridor	Former Minister of Finance and Minister of Justice
Prof. David	Passig	Futurist, Bar-Ilan University
Prof. Yossi	Shain	Political Science and International Relations, Tel

First name	Last name	Description
		Aviv University and Georgetown University
Prof. Yedidya	Stern	Law, Bar-Ilan University, President of the Jewish People Policy Institute
Prof. Manuel	Trajtenberg	Economics, Tel Aviv University

Long-term Planning

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