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## **Crossing the Boundary**

### **A New Trend of Religious Zionism in the West Bank**

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In recent years, various sectors and groups have started to challenge the traditional Zionist ideology and have attempted to alter the sociopolitical structure of the Israeli regime from within and without. While non-Zionists and post-Zionists are gaining more voices within this regime, neo-Zionists also emerged as a strong social force trying to redefine Israel, Zionism and Judaism and impose their definition on others.

This essay suggests the validity of the approach combining sociopolitical concepts of “moral community” and “moral boundary” and the geographical-spatial analysis of their dynamics to apprehend this situation. This paper applies this approach to the case of religious Zionism and its settlements built in the occupied West Bank, with special focus on the emergence of a new type of settlement called the “mixed community.”

This paper shows that the “mixed community” is a combined result of the isolation and dilemmas facing the national-religious sector in Israel and the economic and social difficulties facing secular settlements in the West Bank, especially in the Jordan Valley. This paper then analyzes, based on fieldwork in one of the “mixed communities,” how the moral communities and boundaries of the national-religious settlers and secular settlers interact with each other and how the process of cross-bordering among the settlers relate with the boundary between the settlers and the Palestinians under the occupation.

It is argued that despite the shared norms among the residents in the “mixed community” regarding the strategic and political importance of the settlement in the Jordan Valley and their common perception to the Palestinians, the previous borders between the national-religious and secular settlers are not only maintained but also strengthened and spatialized due to various social conflicts within the settlement. It will also show that the process of cross-bordering by the settlers does not affect the legal and physical colonial boundary between the “Jewish nation” and the Palestinians, but rather this boundary functions as the “moral boundary” that justifies and sustains the discrimination and exploitation against the Palestinians and serves to maintain the system of colonization in the West Bank.