Foreword

In correspondence with the character and aims of our journal this special issue combines the theoretical work in discrete non-linear dynamics with highly practical problems of human interaction such as demographic problems, environmental issues and family planning.

The present collection of papers is based on the results of the work of the group of internationally known scientists whose studies in the last 5 years closely related to the work of Professor Yuval Portugali and his group within The Graduate Program for Environment and Society of Tel Aviv University.

The editor of this special issue, Professor Yuval Portugali, combines in his multidisciplinary perspective the formal academic education with wide professional experience in geography, archeology, history, social theory, urbanism, urban and regional planning.

Professor Portugali was born in Israel, 3rd September 1941. He is married with two children. At present he is a Full Professor of the Department of Geography and the Head of The Graduate Program for Environment and Society of Tel Aviv University. His professional record includes many articles and 11 books and monographs. His major research interests include the following research themes:

Process of self-organization and socio-spatial change in cities and regional systems. In the last

two years he worked on a book *Self-organization and the City* which is due to be published by Springer-Verlag in 1999.

Cognitive maps and spatial information. This research started with editing and writing a book *The Construction of Cognitive Maps* published by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 1996. In that book he developed the notion of the Inter-Representation Networks (IRN) which enables a conjunction between self-organization, cognition and urban dynamics. At a later stage of research Professor Haken and Professor Portugali won a prestigious research grant of GIF (German-Israeli Foundation) to further develop the theory of IRN.

Social geography of Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The results of this on-going research, which started in the end of 1980s, were published as a book, *Implicate Relations: Society and Space in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* by Kluwer Academic Publishers in 1993. A special aspect of the book concerns the dynamic and evolution of nationalism as the generative social order of modern society. Revised Hebrew version of this book appeared in 1996.

Socio-spatial change and urbanism in ancient societies. The essence of this research is to examine theories of socio-spatial change in the light of rich archeological and historical data accumulated in Israel. A book, *Social Morphology*, which presents some recent findings of this research, is currently in press (Hebrew version).

We are glad to present in our journal *Discrete Dynamics in Nature and Society* the multidisciplinary unifying dynamic vision of population, society, and the environment on the verge of the 21st century and we are sure that this collection will attract the

attention of the “discrete dynamics non-linear specialists”.

Vladimir Gontar and Michael Sonis,
DDNS Editors-in Chief.