Immigration and Ethnic Formation in a Deeply Divided Society: The Case of the 1990s Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Israel

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IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC FORMATION
IN A DEEPLY DIVIDED SOCIETY

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IMMIGRATION
AND ETHNIC FORMATION
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The Case of the 1990s Immigrants from the

Former Soviet Union in Israel

BY

MAJID AL-HAJ

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

To my wife, Ibtisam, and my children,
Ibrahim, Hassan, Moa'taz and Nadine

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CONTENTS

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LIST OF TABLES

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LIST OF FIGURES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Israel

Ethnicity has become a major source of social and political mobilization in contemporary societies. Both developing and developed societies offer increasing evidence of the resurgence of ethnicity and the conversion of ethnic affiliation into an effective instrument for social and political mobilization. Confuting traditional approaches, which expected that the power and importance of ethnicity would decline, ethnic-group boundaries are becoming more conspicuous and meaningful.

With the collapse of the bipolar world system after 1989, internal conflicts based on ethnicity, nationalism, or ethnic nationalism have gradually replaced external conflicts between countries (see Rex 1999: 269). The end of the Cold War was one of the main factors in the acceleration of domestic ethnic conflicts within states. The sense of stability created by the "new world order" opened the way for a "new ethnic order" inside countries, as groups sought to employ their ethnic affinity to influence this order and protect their interests in the new setting (Gurr and Harff 1994).

There is abundant evidence that globalization has strengthened, rather than weakened, ethnic identities and ethnic-based organization. The drastic changes in communication, transportation, and other technologies that marked the twentieth century, including the creation of global markets, brought the people of the world closer, redrew traditional socio-geographic boundaries, and created more interest in ethnic and racial boundaries (Banton 1998: 235).

Immigration flows are thought to be one of the major sources for the development of ethnic conflict. These flows may be caused by ethnic conflict in the country of origin, but they may also generate a new conflict with other groups in the receiving society. Such conflict becomes significant when immigrants use their group boundaries as a means for collective action or as an instrument for social and political mobilization. Immigration may also affect the power system in the receiving society by altering its ethno-demographic structure. This is especially true in ethno-national states with an exclusive ethnic

stratification system, in which demography is deeply interwoven with ideology and politics. Immigrants who tend to maintain their culture and ethnic identity may, however, eventually constitute a catalyst for multiculturalism. They may reinforce cultural pluralism by joining in the endeavors of other disadvantaged groups to expand the boundaries of the cultural and political legitimacy of the wider society.

Israel may be an ideal setting for studying the dynamic relationship among immigration, multiculturalism, and ethnic conflict because it is a country that is heavily based on immigration and constantly preoccupied with the absorption of immigrants. At the same time, Israel is a deeply divided society where ethnicity and nationalism constitute basic social and cultural features and central elements in the stratification system. It is a dual system, distributed on two levels, Jews and non-Jews, and with internal clusters among the Jewish population, determined by ethnicity, religious orientation, and length of time in the country. The central groups among the Jewish population are Ashkenazim (of European and American origin) and Mizrahim or Sephardim (of North African and Asian origin); religious and nonreligious; and recent immigrants and veteran Israelis. The Arab population, too, is not homogenous and is divided by religion (Muslims, Christians, Druze) and other social categories.

The influx of immigrants from the former Soviet Union since 1989 has added to this complex structure. Today, there are more than one million immigrants from the USSR/FSU (200,000 who came in the 1970s and 920,000 in the 1990s). These immigrants constitute about 15% of the Israeli population and 20% of the Jewish population, in which they are the largest single country-of-origin group. This influx is undoubtedly one of the most significant sociodemographic developments since the establishment of Israel and poses far-reaching challenges to the ethno-national structure of Israeli society and its political culture.

This monograph deals with immigrants from the Former Soviet Union who have arrived in Israel since 1990 (hereafter "FSU immigrants," Soviet immigrants or, using the common Israel term, "Russian immigrants"). It delineates the motives behind immigration, ethnic formation, types of identity, social and cultural orientation, and political mobilization among these immigrants. In addition, the monograph analyzes the dynamic relationship between immigrants and the veteran Israeli population and the immigrants' impact on the ethnic structure of Israel and the possibilities of developing a civil

society, based on multicultural conception. These issues are analyzed in light of the economic, political, and ideological changes that have taken place in Israel during the past decade, including developments in the peace process and the deterioration in Israeli-Palestinian relations since October 2000.

The following questions are addressed: What are the implications of mass immigration for a deeply divided society that is coping with both internal conflicts (the result of internal cleavages) and external (territorial-national) conflict? What are the main factors affecting ethnic formation, ethnic identity, and ethnic cohesiveness among these immigrants? What forms of political organization and behavior exist among immigrants? Are these patterns based on individual or collective mobilization? What are the attitudes and social relationships between "Russian" immigrants and the various groups in Israeli society? What are the implications of this wave for the social and ethno-national structure of Israel? Will this influx of immigrants from the FSU enhance multiculturalism and civil society in Israel or deepen its ethno-national character?

The study was conducted ten years after the start of the mass immigration from the FSU. As such, it provides an outstanding opportunity for a comparative analysis and re-evaluation of the conclusions in the existing literature about Russian immigrants (for example, the widespread conclusion that the manifestation of Russian-ethnic identity among immigrants is only a transitional phenomenon that may be expected to diminish and disappear after the immigrants master the Hebrew language and overcome the immediate difficulties of settlement and adjustment). The wide range of topics included in the study permits an in-depth understanding of the aforementioned research questions. In addition, because the sociology of immigration in Israel has hardly addressed the immigrants' views about the Arab population of the country, and vice versa, this study is the first to adopt a comprehensive approach toward Israeli society and take into consideration all the major groups in Israel, Jews and Arabs alike.

The monograph consists of eight chapters and concluding remarks. CHAPTER 1 presents a theoretical framework for the analysis of ethnicity and immigration. More particularly, it deals with the main disputes regarding ethnicity: the definition of ethnic group, the basis of ethnic organization in contemporary societies, and the resurgence of ethnicity in post-modern states. Ethnic formation and ethnic solidarity are analyzed in two contexts: (1) migration and nation-state

building; (2) the role of the state in institutionalizing ethnic divisions. Part of this chapter is devoted to the discussion of ethnic mobilization. Different approaches are examined, including the developmental model, the reactive model, rational choice theory and the competitive perspective. The dynamic relationship between immigration, multiculturalism and ethnic conflict is also discussed.

CHAPTER 2 deals with the social structure of Israel. It presents a background to the social fabric of Israeli society and its ethnic and national structure. In this chapter, we analyze the relationship among immigration, ethnicity, and stratification according to the different approaches that prevail in Israeli sociology. Special emphasis is placed on the impact of the gradual retreat of collectivism and of the increasing legitimacy of an individualistic and pragmatic orientation on Israeli society's tolerance of newcomers. The repercussions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the one hand, and of the ethno-national political culture of Israeli society, on the other, are dealt with in the context of multiculturalism and civil society.

CHAPTER 3 offers background information about Jews from Russia and the Former Soviet Union, including the waves of immigration from this community to Palestine and later on to Israel. This chapter provides an overview of the demographic structure of the Jewish community, its socio-economic characteristics, and its cultural orientation. It deals with the different factors that affected the identity of the Jewish community over time, especially the deep acculturation to a secular orientation. The circumstances that existed in the USSR/FSU prior to the mass immigration are also addressed. In addition, this chapter surveys the different waves of "Russian" immigration to Palestine/Israel since the early twentieth century. The 1970s and the 1990s waves of immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel are compared, mainly in terms of motivation and political orientation.

Chapters 4 to 8 are based on the findings of the field surveys. They cover the attitudes and behavior of FSU immigrants in different fields, their orientation toward Israeli society, and veteran Israelis' attitudes toward immigrants. CHAPTER 4 focuses on ethnic formation and identity patterns among these immigrants. This includes the immigrants' attitudes toward cultural continuity and the maintenance of Russian-ethnic organizations in Israel; "cultural pride" among immigrants; their exposure to Russian-language and Hebrew-Israeli

mass media; and their perceived self-identity (Israeli, Jewish, Zionist, a Jew from the FSU, immigrant from the FSU). Self-identity is discussed from various perspectives: how immigrants define themselves, how they think veteran Israelis define them, and how they want veteran Israelis to define them. Based on these findings, primordial elements and instrumental-circumstantial elements in the identity of immigrants are juxtaposed in order to present the complex process of ethnic formation since their arrival in Israel.

CHAPTER 5 deals with the attitudes of immigrants toward multiculturalism and freedom of expression. More particularly, it explores the immigrants' attitudes regarding the character of Israel and several issues associated with freedom of expression at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels. It presents the contradiction that exists between the immigrants' support for the secularization of Israel, on the one hand, and their desire to maintain its Jewish character, on the other. A multivariate analysis is used to trace internal differences in the immigrants' support for multiculturalism and civil society in Israel. Emphasis is placed on the significance of education, intergenerational differences, religiosity, and the distinction between Jews and non-Jews among the immigrants.

CHAPTER 6 covers the patterns of political mobilization among Russian immigrants. It focuses on the immigrants' voting behavior in the 1998 municipal elections and the 1999 Knesset elections. The factors behind ethnic voting, as reflected in the voting for Russian-immigrant parties, are examined against the background of individual, collective, and institutional factors. The main aim is to ascertain whether these patterns are a reactive behavior, affected by the immigrants' satisfaction or disappointment with their absorption, or a pragmatic strategy aimed at promoting their competitive ability in the Israeli stratification system. Political organization among Russian immigrants is analyzed in conjunction with the exclusive character of the power system in Israel, which leaves the Arab population outside its legitimate borders and thereby sharpens the competition between two sectors characterized by group-based voting: Russian immigrants and Ultraorthodox Jews.

CHAPTER 7 examines several facets of the immigrants' orientation toward Israeli society, including their evaluation of the mutual influence between them and Israeli society and their social relationships with veteran Israelis. The latter are examined at the levels of attitudes

and actual behavior. A detailed analysis is presented of the social distance immigrants feel toward the major sectors in Israeli society: secular Jews, religious Jews, Ashkenazim, Mizrahim, Arabs, and immigrants from Ethiopia. The Russian immigrants' orientation toward options of assimilation, collective integration, and segregation is systematically discussed.

CHAPTER 8 focuses on the attitudes of veteran Israelis toward immigrants from the FSU. It deals with the image of immigrants and their perceived influence in the economic, educational, political, and social arenas. In addition, it examines veteran Israelis' tolerance for Russian cultural continuity and the immigrants' maintenance of their own autonomous organizations. The attitudes of Jews and Arabs toward immigrants are compared and analyzed. This makes it possible to provide, for the first time, a comprehensive picture of Israeli public opinion regarding the disputes that have evolved as a result of the present influx from the FSU.

Methodology

The analysis is based on a number of field surveys (of immigrants, of the general population, and of students) and five focus groups, thus incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods.

Our research makes it possible to re-evaluate the conclusions presented by earlier studies regarding immigrants from the FSU, on the one hand, and the perceptions of veteran Israelis toward immigrants from the FSU, on the other. However, our study adds two main important dimensions. The wide range of topics covered provides a more complex approach. In addition, as mentioned earlier, this study allows speaking about the Israeli society as a whole, not only the Jewish majority, because we included the Arabs as part of Israeli public opinion about immigration, which has long been considered to be an internal issue of the Jewish sector. Our methods were as follows.

Immigrants' Survey

This survey was the basic tool that provided most of our findings. It was conducted in August and September 1999 on a total of 707

subjects constituting a representative sample of the adult (18 and over) population that immigrated from the former Soviet Union between January 1990 and July 1999. The statistical error in such a sample is ±3.7%, at a significance level of 0.95. The field work was done as face-to-face interviews in the immigrants' homes, conducted by Russian-speaking interviewers who used an open-ended questionnaire written in Russian.

In order to make sure that the sample was highly representative, the following variables were controlled for when respondents were selected: year of immigration, republic of origin in the FSU, gender, age, and district of residence in Israel. That is, the sample was designed to provide a distribution of the population by the above variables, corresponding to the figures published by Central Bureau of Statistics for 1990–1997 and by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and the Department for the CIS of the Jewish Agency for 1998–1999. The fieldwork, carried out by the Geocartography Research Institute and reported here, indicates a close approximation to the sampling guidelines, which correspond to the distribution of the population, as reflected in the following tables.

Table 1.1
Year of Immigration: Sample Compared to General Population

Year	Sample	Population
1990	24.2%	23.1%
1991	20.9%	18.5%
1992	8.9%	8.1%
1993	8.2%	8.3%
1994	8.6%	8.5%
1995	8.9%	8.1%
1996	5.9%	7.4%
1997	5.8%	6.8%
1998	5.7%	5.8%
1999	2.7%	5.4%
No answer	0.2%	—
Total	100.0%	100.0%
N	707	

Table 1.2
Area of Origin in the Former Soviet Union:
Sample Compared to General Population

Republic	Sample	Population
Russia	30.3%	30.0%
Ukraine	32.2%	31.5%
Belarus	9.2%	8.2%
Moldova	5.8%	5.7%
Baltic states	3.1%	2.5%
Central Asian republics	19.4%	22.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
N	707	

Table 1.3
Age: Sample Compared to General Population

Age	Sample	Population
18–24	12.9%	13.4%
25–34	17.4%	18.8%
35–44	19.7%	19.3%
45–54	16.0%	15.5%
55–64	15.3%	13.1%
65+	17.1%	19.9%
No answer	1.6%	—
Total	100.0%	100.0%
N	707	

This research is among the most detailed studies yet conducted, in terms of sample and contents of the questionnaire, of the 1990s immigrants from the FSU. The questionnaire included a large number of items on different subjects, including: motives for immigration; adjustment patterns in different key areas—housing, employment, acquisition of Hebrew, leisure-time patterns, exposure to mass media, and cultural consumption; the political behavior of immigrants on the countrywide and local levels; the attitudes of immigrants toward the religious and ethno-national character of Israel; the immigrants' social networks and sense of social distance from the other main sectors of the population—Ashkenazim, Mizrahim, immigrants from Ethiopia, secular Jews, religious Jews, Arabs; patterns of self-identity on the individual and group levels, involving the immigrants' Jewish,

Israeli, and Russian components; and immigrants' attitudes toward several issues connected with cultural-ethnic orientation and the extent of their desire for institutionalized cultural continuity. A series of questions on demographic and individual background was also asked.

Survey of the General Population

The immigrants' survey was accompanied by a survey of the general population in Israel, aimed at exploring the attitudes of long-settled Israelis toward Russian immigrants. The survey took the form of a telephone poll of a representative sample of the Israeli adult population (18 years and over), composed of 506 subjects—406 Jews and 100 Arabs. The questions were identical to those in the immigrants' survey. The sample error is $\pm 4.4\%$ at a significance level of 0.95. This survey, too, was carried out by the Geocartography Research Institute in September 1999.

The shortcoming of this survey lies in the limited number of questions we could ask, since it was part of an "omnibus survey" that examined various subjects in a number of spheres.

Students' Survey

The students' survey, which sought to complement the aforementioned survey of the general population, was conducted at the University of Haifa in May 2001. This survey asked more detailed questions about the orientation and attitudes of "veteran-Israeli" Jewish and Arab students toward immigrants. The students' position on several issues associated with multiculturalism, peace, and civil society were also examined. The University of Haifa was selected as the venue for our study because its student body represents the various segments of the social fabric in Israel and also has the largest concentration of Arab students of all institutes of higher education in Israel (roughly 20%).

Our sample was a representative cross-section of students, 254 Jews and 149 Arabs. A three-stage design was employed. First, we randomly selected three of the six university's faculties. Secondly, we randomly selected one department from each faculty. In the third stage, we selected one course from each undergraduate year and one course at the graduate level—a total of twelve courses. In order to

have a sufficient number of Arab respondents for analysis, one additional course was selected from the Arabic department bringing the total number of courses to 13 (meaning that Arab students were over-represented in the sample).

In each course we distributed the questionnaire to all students who agreed to fill it. The overall refusal rate was less than 10%. We used an open-ended questionnaire given to students in their mother tongue (Hebrew for Jewish and Arabic for Arab students).

Focus Groups

After the completion of the aforementioned surveys and the initial examination of the findings we organized five "focus groups" in the period May–November 2001. The technique of focus groups was used as a follow up data collection in order to further explore the meaning of the data. In particular, it enabled us to better understand "puzzling data." The advantage of the focus group lies in the very fact that it gives the opportunity to observe a large number of interactions on a topic in a limited period of time. Also, it allows group members to react and build on the responses of other members. In addition, the results were easy to understand and interpret since we could ask respondents to elaborate and further explain their statements. (For reviews on the technique of focus groups see Smith 1954; Morgan 1988, 1998; Krueger 1994.)

Naturally, the focus groups do not provide a representative sample. But we sought to select groups representing a full spectrum of experiences. In addition, we made sure that the participants selected are affiliated with the main categories of the groups studied.

In the composition of our focus groups, we followed the principle of "homogeneity" in the sense that participants belong to the same group as defined by our study. Thus we divided focus groups into three categories: immigrants, veteran Jews, and indigenous Arabs. This allowed participants to feel comfortable with one another and enabled us to conduct discussion in the mother tongue of each group (Russian, Hebrew, and Arabic). As for the size of each group we sought to follow the principle that each group be small enough for every participant to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions (For a detailed discussion of these principles see Krueger 1994; Morgan 1988).

The recruitment of participants went through several stages. First we published an advertisement about the need for participants in focus groups, presenting the main goal. People who applied were required to fill a questionnaire including personal details and specific experience. The final list of participants was carefully selected, taking into consideration the above-mentioned principles.

Three of the focus groups were composed of students at the University of Haifa for each of the following groups: immigrants from the FSU who came to Israel in the 1990s, veteran Jews, and Arabs. Each group was composed of 10 participants who were recruited through an advertisement, which was circulated among students at the university. The fourth group was composed of 12 participants from the general FSU immigrant population. Among this latter group, eight of the participants are parents of the immigrant students who themselves took part in our discussion group. This fact has given us an important opportunity to examine intergenerational differences in the attitudes and orientation of immigrants.

The fifth focus group was composed of recent immigrant students who take part in the "Selah program" (in Hebrew, *studentim lifnei horim*—students before parents). They are brought to Israel by the Jewish Agency in the framework of a program that aims at encouraging them, and later on their parents, to immigrate to Israel.

It should be mentioned that the site of all focus groups (except for the focus group with students of the "Selah program," which was conducted in Hadera) was the University of Haifa. Our decision was affected by the fact that the location of the University is comfortable and no expenses were involved except for one-time payment for participants.

The discussions of each focus group lasted 90–120 minutes. Professional moderators, with whom we had a detailed conversation about the aims and contents of our study, moderated them. We made every effort to keep a comfortable and open atmosphere. We designed unstructured questions, which were carefully prepared according to specific topics. These discussions were recorded and transcripts were then produced and analyzed. We used strictly qualitative method for data analysis through direct quotation from the discussions.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With the collapse of the bipolar world system after 1989, internal conflicts based on ethnicity, nationalism, or ethnic nationalism have gradually replaced external conflicts between countries (see also Rex 1999: 269). The end of the Cold War was one of the main factors in the acceleration of internal ethnic conflicts within states. The sense of stability created by the "new world order" opened the way for a "new ethnic order" inside countries, as groups sought to employ their ethnic affinity to influence this order and protect their interests in the new setting (Gurr and Harff 1994).

There is abundant evidence that globalization has strengthened, rather than weakened, ethnic identities and organization on an ethnic basis. The drastic changes in communication, transportation, and other technologies that marked the twentieth century, including the creation of global markets, brought the people of the world closer, redrew traditional socio-geographic boundaries, and created more interest in ethnic and racial boundaries (Banton 1998: 235).

Ethnic action implies collective behavior, which can take different forms, both peaceful and violent. The former is more likely in core countries, where ethnic competition and mobilization take place within the framework of the existing political order. In peripheral countries, ethnic conflict may be more sporadic; when it does occur, however, it assumes a violent character (Olzak 1998). In any event, such internal ethnic conflicts have become one of the main challenges facing modern and postmodern states (see Ragin 1979; Nielsen 1985; Olzak 1998; Young 1998).

The relationship among immigration, ethnic formation, and ethnic conflict has become one of the major issues in the sociology of immigration (Richmond 1988; Zolberg 1989; Goldscheider 1995; Casels and Miller 1998; Rex 1999). In many cases, immigration is the result of ethnic conflict in the home country and at the same time a catalyst for other ethnic conflicts in the receiving society. Newcomers may increase the competition for available resources and, in turn, raise the potential for tension between themselves and other

competitive local groups (Portes and Stepick 1985). Immigration may also affect the power system in the receiving society by altering its ethno-demographic structure (Richmond 1988; Goldscheider 1992). However, immigration is also synonymous with ethnic diversity, which is an increasingly recognized dimension of the political, cultural, and social policies of countries all over the world (see Young 1998). These challenges have led to the rise of multiculturalism as both an indicator of social structure and as a concept (see Goodstein 1994; Kymlicka 1995; Sleeter 1996).

This monograph, which focuses on immigration and ethnic formation among immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union, raises some major theoretical questions: What factors determine ethnic boundaries? What is the role of ethnicity in contemporary societies? What is the impact of immigration on ethnicity and ethnic formation? What are the bases of ethnic organization among immigrants? What impact do contextual factors in the host society have on the costs and benefits of the preservation of ethnicity by immigrants? How does immigration impact on the development of multiculturalism in ethno-national states? In order to address these questions, we shall first deal briefly with the definition of "ethnic group." Then we shall shift to the basis of ethnic mobilization and the dynamic relationship among ethnicity, immigration, and multiculturalism.

Definitions of "Ethnic Group"

Most definitions of "ethnic group" involve one or more of the following components: objective elements, subjective feelings, and behavioral factors (see, for example, Weber 1922; Barth 1969; Schermerhorn 1970, 1978; Hannan 1979; Hutchinson and Smith 1996). The question that arises is how to classify the factors according to their importance for the existence of a distinct ethnic group. In other words, which of the various objective, subjective, and behavioral components are the central ones that determine ethnic formation?

One of the most widely cited definitions of ethnic group is that of Schermerhorn (1970: 12):

> An ethnic group is defined here as a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements

> defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such sym-
> bolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism
> or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal
> affiliation, nationality, phenotypic features, or any combination of these.
> A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among mem-
> bers of the group (also cited by Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 6).

This definition involves both objective elements (shared historical
memories, cultural focus, and group affiliation) and subjective feel-
ing, as reflected in ethnic consciousness. The importance of this
definition lies in the perception that ethnicity can have a flexible
basis, so that a group's "common ancestry" can be real or putative.
While stating that ethnic consciousness is a necessary component,
however, Schermerhorn does not suggest which is more important—
the objective or the subjective basis.

In his classic work, Max Weber (1922; reprinted in Guibernau
and Rex 1999: 18–19) indicates that the subjective ethnic consciousness
and behavioral-instrumental elements reflected in the activation of
the ethnic group as a political community are extremely important
for ethnic distinctiveness and ethnic formation. Weber emphasizes
that group formation is determined primarily by "subjective belief
of common descent" and not necessarily by "objective affiliation."
According to Weber, then, ethnic groups are "those human groups
that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because
of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of
memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be impor-
tant for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not
matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists." He
also noted that the activation of the group as a political community,
and not mere ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*), is important for the
inspiration of ethnic affiliation. "In our sense, ethnic membership
does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of
any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand it
is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially orga-
nized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity" (ibid.: 19).

In his "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries," Fredrik Barth adopts an
approach similar to Weber's. For Barth, the ethnic group is first and
foremost a social organization; the features to be emphasized are
those considered to be significant by the actors themselves, rather
than the sum of objective cultural differences (1969: 14). Consequently,
"the critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes

the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (1969: 15). According to this approach, the persistence of ethnicity depends mainly on interaction and a marked difference in behavior. In this sense, ethnic boundaries may be maintained through a limited set of cultural features (Barth 1996: 79).

Continuing Barth's work, Hannan (1979: 256) emphasizes that ethnicity is an "organizing principle of populations" that has three main characteristics: it is ascriptive, exclusive, and imperative. Ethnicity is ascriptive, since membership in an ethnic group is both a self-ascription and ascription by others (see also Barth 1969: 13). At the same time it is exclusive, in the sense that ethnic classification means the partition of society into distinct groups (Hannan 1979: 256). When defined as ascriptive and exclusive, the nature of the survival and continuity of ethnic groups is clear: "it depends on the maintenance of boundaries" (Barth 1969: 14).

In his analysis of the basis of ethnic organization, Eriksen combines the political and social elements. He concludes that although the political-organizational aspect is a basic element of ethnicity, the social element is equally important for the creation of ethnic identity (1999: 39). In this sense, ethnic identity is determined through social relationships with and comparison to "others." In his words, "ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction" (ibid.).

Anthony Smith adds the association with a "specific territory" to the basic elements of ethnic affiliation. He defines *ethnies* (ethnic communities) "as named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity" (1999: 27). This consciousness of shared origin is of primary importance for the creation of an "inclusive group" (Banton 1998: 199).

As we can see from the above analysis, the ranking of the different elements according to their importance for ethnic formation is a controversial issue. However, theoreticians highlight the simultaneous existence of various elements in the process of ethnic formation. Even when one element is said to be the most important in this process, it does not eliminate the others, since, as Brass emphasizes, each of these sets of elements has its own shortcoming (Brass 1991, reprinted in Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 85–90). The problem of an objective definition, which assumes the existence of basic cultural elements

that distinguish among different ethnic groups, lies in the difficulty of determining the boundaries of ethnic categories in this way. A subjective definition is hindered by the difficulty of determining how groups of people achieve such a subjective consciousness. Behavioral definitions, which emphasize that cultural differences are expressed exclusively by the dynamics of interaction with other groups, fail to explain how ethnic groups can establish their unique identity without a distinct code of behavior (ibid.: 85).

Thus, ethnic identity should be placed within a wide social map, taking account of the different levels of definition (internal self-definition vs. external other-definition), social categorization, and the contexts of ethnic categorization (see Castels and Miller 1998; Jenkins 1994). Among immigrants, however, some additional variables should be taken into consideration, including the motivation behind migration, background variables associated with the immigrants and home country, the receptivity of the host society, and other pertinent factors, as we can see in the following section.

Immigration and Ethnic Formation

One of the crucial issues at the center of the study of contemporary immigrant flows has to do with immigrants' ethnic identity and cultural orientation. Students of immigration tend to employ several terms for the options available to new immigrants in the host society (see, for example, Goldlust and Richmond 1974; Hurh and Kim 1984; Berry 1992; Alba and Nee 1997). A key question in this context is whether immigrants discard their original ethnic identity in favor of that of the host society or reconstruct their own ethno-cultural boundaries (see Castels and Miller 1998).

Assimilation reflects a strong orientation by immigrants to adopt the majority culture and relinquish their ties to their former culture. The antithetical orientation is segregation or separation, which features strong allegiance to the original culture and aloofness from the new culture. Integration involves identification with and adoption of components of both the original and the new cultures. Marginalization is the opposite of integration and implies the rejection of and disinterest in both the original and the new cultures (ibid.).

Van den Berghe argues that immigration facilitates assimilation because the immigration process tends to reduce intra-ethnic network

ties. In addition, immigrants are dependent on the native popula-
tion; yielding to pressures to learn native ways is directly related to
the immigrants' survival and successful adjustment (1981: 218).

Assimilation is generally defined as "the decline, and at its end-
point the disappearance, of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cul-
tural and social differences that express it" (Alba and Nee 1997: 863).
The term usually relates to the assimilation of minority groups within
the dominant majority. But there are cases in which an immigrant
minority assimilates into another and larger minority, as the case of
the assimilation of earlier Caribbean black immigrants into the African-
American minority in the United States (ibid.).

Two major types of assimilation are usually emphasized: structural
assimilation and cultural assimilation. Structural assimilation refers
to the large-scale entrance of immigrants into the institutions, social
networks, and primary groups of the host society (Reitz 1980: 101).
Cultural assimilation, on the other hand, refers to changes in the
immigrants' cultural patterns to bring them closer in tune with those
of the host society—what is usually referred to as "acculturation"
(ibid.). Gordon (1964: 77, cited by Reitz 1980: 102) argues that cul-
tural assimilation may occur without structural assimilation, that is,
without acceptance by the host society.

Assimilation may occur gradually and on different levels. On the
first level, members of the group assimilate into other groups; on
the second level, they experience conflict among themselves (Kotler-
Berkowitz 1997; Zuckerman 1989). Despite the difference in the con-
text and nature of the interaction, both cases lead to a decline in
group cohesion (Kotler-Berkowitz 1997).

At any rate, Van den Berghe emphasizes that ethnic assimilation
of immigrants should not be taken for granted, since ethnic senti-
ments, which are an extension of kin selection, tend to endure
(1981: 216). People tend to resist assimilation unless its benefits are
overwhelming. Hence assimilation is largely the outcome of cost-
benefit considerations by the members of the group (ibid.: 257).

Van den Berghe offers a model for assimilation that delineates the
conditions favoring ethnic assimilation, based mainly on cost-benefit
considerations. According to this model, the greater the phenotypic
and cultural resemblance between groups, the more likely is assimila-
tion to take place. Likewise, smaller groups and those that are territori-
ally dispersed are more likely to assimilate, because they have fewer
resources relative to the rest of society and because territorial dis-

persion reduces the benefits of nepotism. In addition, groups of lower status are more likely than high-status groups to assimilate, since assimilation has more potential benefits to offer them (ibid.: 218).

Kotler-Berkowitz (1997: 799) proposed a similar analysis. He argued that the social-structural location of ethnic groups affects their ethnic cohesion. There is maximum ethnic cohesion when all members of a group are concentrated at the same socio-demographic or economic location, and minimum cohesion when they are distributed randomly. The level of ethnic cohesion increases proportionally to the degree of ethnic concentration in social structures. In addition, structural concentration enhances the maintenance of cultural activities (ibid.).

Reitz (1980) presents a different approach to the relationship between assimilation and class. He argues that those with low job status have stronger group ties. He adds, however, that middle-class ethnicity is also a well-known phenomenon. Such ethnic survival may be reinforced by the development of ethnic organizations, including ethnic media. The relationship between ethnic survival and ethnic organizations is a two-way street. These organizations may respond to the group's economic and cultural needs, but at the same time they have their own vested interest in its survival (Reitz 1980: 216).

Whereas van den Berghe noted the conditions that facilitate assimilation, other students of ethnicity have inversely highlighted the conditions that facilitate ethnic formation and the maintenance of ethnic cohesiveness (Reitz 1980). Large size, demographic concentration in specific areas, and biological distinctiveness facilitate the survival of ethnicity (ibid.).

Assimilation and ethnic formation-reconstruction should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Immigrants always have the option of integrating elements of both processes at once. Eaton spoke about "controlled acculturation" as "a process by which one culture accepts a practice from another, but integrates the new practice into its own existing value system. It does not surrender its autonomy or separate identity, although the change may involve a modification of the degree of autonomy" (Eaton 1952: 338). By the same token, Rosenthal (1960) spoke about "acculturation without assimilation," which means accepting new cultural forms without giving up one's own ethnic identity and culture. A similar approach was presented by Hurh and Kim, who spoke about "adhesive adjustment" as a pattern of acculturation, in which immigrants acquire new components of the culture

of the host society while maintaining the core of their own culture. In their words:

> Adhesive adaptation is conceptualized as a particular mode of adaptation in which certain aspects of the new culture and social relations with members of the host society are added on to the immigrants' traditional culture and social networks, without replacing or modifying any significant part of the old (Hurh and Kim 1984: 188).

The relationship between ethnic cohesion among immigrants and the extent of their adjustment to the host society is a controversial issue. It has been noted that ethnic identity is not always an asset. It can even be a burden for disadvantaged groups in complex, multi-ethnic societies, because ethnic identity is an imperative, in the sense that the constraints on individual behavior that stem from one's ethnic identity tend to be absolute, continuous, and comprehensive. A study of recent immigrants to Canada concluded that, among ethnic minority groups, stronger ethnic orientation and connection impede educational and socioeconomic achievement (Kalbach and Kalbach 1997: 535).

Some scholars maintain just the contrary. They hold that the formation of a cohesive ethnic community among immigrants may facilitate their adjustment in different spheres. In a study about the "survival technique" of the Hutterites in the United States, Eaton concludes that strong communal organization contributed to this group's adjustment to American society at the individual and the group levels (1952: 339). Community support enabled the Hutterites to experience a slow process of integration without the social crisis that is usually experienced by minorities that make a sudden shift from their original social structure, norms, and values to those of the host society (ibid.).

Trueba and Zou (1998) emphasized the strong relationship between ethnic identity and power. This is especially important for the adjustment of immigrant groups to the host society. According to them,

> As ethnic groups abandon their home countries and towns of origin, they carry with them a worldview, a lifestyle, a language and a family structure that they try to maintain in the host country. For as long as they maintain their cultural markers and other symbolic components of their identity, they seem to muster the energy and courage needed to adapt and survive. In fact, as immigrants and ethnic groups reaffirm and redefine their identities in contrast with other groups as well as

> mainstream peoples, they seem to hold the power to control their des-
> tiny and to succeed in their risky ventures as immigrants (ibid.: 1).

In any event, even if new immigrants maintain or reconstruct their ethnic boundaries, they have to find a way to place their group in the new social and cultural fabric as a part of their adaptation. This involves several levels, among them the cognitive-knowledge and the evaluation-normative. At these levels, immigrants are expected to acquire reasonable knowledge of the social structure, norms, and values of the new society. Immigrants who maintain a continuity of their ethnic and institutional structure are also required to find a counterbalance between their desire to be different and the pressure exerted by the host society to assimilate within the new system (Goldlust and Richmond 1974).

The legitimacy of the immigrants' maintaining their own culture has gained support with the expansion of the multicultural ideology. The origins of multiculturalism can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century and the background of the dispute about the policy that should be adopted toward immigrant ethnic groups (Banks 1981). This debate became stronger in the wake of the failure of the "melting pot" strategy that long prevailed in the United States. Some American philosophers and writers defended the right of immigrants living in the United States to be culturally different, arguing that political democracy should also be accompanied by cultural democracy. The main term used at the time to defend this argument is the "salad bowl," based on the idea that each ethnic culture would contribute and enrich the overall fiber of cultures in the American society (ibid.: 8).

Cultural pluralism began to gain more support after the Second World War, with the shift of attention to internal ethnic conflicts (Banks 1981). In the wake of that war, many societies were confronted with a sharpening of internal conflicts as a result of competition over the reconstruction of the local stratification system and the attempts by disadvantaged groups to improve their status.

The dispute related to multiculturalism gained further impetus in the United States with the Black protest movement in the 1960s and the Blacks' demand for community control of their schools and reconstruction of the curriculum to reflect their own history and culture. Some scholars maintain, however, that Canada, Australia, and Sweden were the first three countries that offered concrete examples

of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism was adopted officially in Canada in 1971 in the Charter of Rights and Liberties and incorporated into the constitution in 1982 (Wieviorka 1998).

Since the 1970s we have been witnessing an increased interest in multiculturalism, both as a concept and as a strategy for legitimizing diversity (see, for example, Banks 1981, 1997; Lynch 1986; McLaren 1995; Sleeter 1996; Kymlicka 1995; Giroux 1997; Wieviorka 1998). Despite the huge body of research that has grown up about multiculturalism, there is still a deep theoretical confusion about the meaning of multiculturalism as a basis for organizing relations between and within ethnic groups, and whether cultural diversity is a desideratum.

The various approaches toward multiculturalism may be classified under two main headings: mainstream and critical multiculturalism. Mainstream multiculturalism emphasizes the right to be different and the importance of recognizing cultural diversity (Goodstein 1994: 107). However, this approach adopts the literal definition of diversity as reflecting the existence of numerous cultures that contribute to the richness of the national or global community (ibid.). Mainstream multiculturalism, which merely highlights "otherness," does not question the basic issue of the ideological hegemony of the dominant culture (Giroux 1992: 18; cited by Schwartz 1995). Furthermore, in this type of multiculturalism, the term "diversity" and its content are defined by those who hold power. Thus disadvantaged groups, immigrants, and other minority groups who are engaged in such discourse are generally forced to use a language not of their own making (Estrada and McLaren 1993).

Unlike mainstream multiculturalism, critical multiculturalism does not view "diversity" per se as a goal. It argues, instead, that diversity should be framed "within a politics of cultural criticism and commitment to social justice" (ibid.: 31). In addition, critical multiculturalism does not perceive culture as "non-conflictual, harmonious, and consensual" (McLaren 1995: 40–41). In this sense, cultural diversity harbors a potential for cultural conflict. Therefore it is important that the different groups, including minorities, take an active part in the discourse about multiculturalism (see Kymlicka 1995; Sleeter 1996).

Such cultural diversity may be perceived as a threat by the dominant group. Hence, in societies heavily based on migration, veterans or certain dominant segments of the receiving society may perceive multiculturalism as the "enemy from within," since it might lead to

the dismantling and deep fragmentation of society (see Cummins and Sayers 1996).

For this purpose, a dialectic approach was suggested, one based on a combination of principles derived from multiculturalism and melting-pot ideologies (Kuinan and Auriam 1994). This approach is inspired by the writings of Habermas, which call for a cultural dialogue between the different groups within the same societal context (1987; cited by Kuinan and Auriam 1994). Such dialogue can be peaceful or conflictual, but in either case it aims to create a common cultural framework that combines the different cultures. Thus newcomers play an active role not only as "cultural receivers" but also as "cultural producers," through their contribution to the expansion of the host culture (see also Kuinan and Auriam 1994: 402). Such an approach takes the aforementioned approaches of "controlled acculturation" (Eaton 1952), "acculturation without assimilation" (Rosenthal 1960), and "adhesive adjustment" (Hurh and Kim 1984) one step further: from a situation that assumes maintenance of the original culture together with the exclusive influence of the host society, to a mutual-influence dialogue between the two cultures—the immigrants and the host society.

One of the key questions involves the relationship between length of time in the new country and ethnic formation among immigrants. Castels and Miller (1998: 29) hold that ethnic formation among immigrants is the fourth stage of the migratory process, associated with permanent settlement. The outcome of ethnic formation depends on the reaction of the state and the host society. Openness and acceptance of diversity drives immigrants toward the formation of ethnic communities that become an integral part of a multicultural structure. At the other extreme, denial and rejection of cultural diversity leads immigrants toward the formation of ethnic minorities. Most countries of immigration fit somewhere between these two extremes (ibid.).

In the words of Castels and Miller:

> At the one extreme, openness to settlement, granting of citizenship and gradual acceptance of cultural diversity may allow the formation of *ethnic communities*, which are seen as part of a multicultural society. At the other extreme, denial of reality of settlement, refusal of citizenship and rights to settlers, and rejection of cultural diversity, may lead to formation of *ethnic minorities*, whose presence is widely regarded as undesirable and divisive (Castels and Miller 1998: 29).

Nahirny and Fishman argue that "ethnic heritage, including the eth-
nic mother tongue, usually ceases to play any viable role in the life
of the third generation" (1965: 311). They reach the paradoxical
conclusion that ethnic consciousness does not disappear, so that in
some conditions there may be a resurgence of ethnicity despite accul-
turation. In their words,

> Despite acculturation, as reflected in the abandonment of the ethnic
> mother tongue and many other ethnic patterns of behavior, the sons
> continue to remain acutely conscious of their ethnic identity. It is most
> likely that under different social conditions, more of these same accul-
> turated sons might have embraced ethnicity as a cause (ibid.: 323).

While agreeing that ethnicity may be manifested by the third gen-
eration, Gans argues that this type of ethnicity is mainly symbolic,
since groups are "less and less interested in their ethnic cultures and
organizations; instead they resort to the use of ethnic symbols"
(1979: 1). According to Gans, symbolic ethnicity "is characterized
by a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation,
or that of the old country; a love for and a pride in a tradition that
can be left without having to be incorporated into every day behav-
ior" (ibid.: 9). This type of ethnicity is "effortless." It does not require
functioning groups or networks. Nor does symbolic ethnicity require
practicing a culture, even if the symbols are borrowed from it.

According to Gans (1979: 14–15), although there are several pos-
sibilities for the survival of symbolic ethnicity beyond the fourth gen-
eration, it is more likely that those patterns that interfere with other
aspects of life and require active membership will decline or disappear.

Hansen, who studied the Swedish and other historical associations
in the United States, goes further and argues that acculturation and
assimilation are temporary processes; ethnic consciousness can rise
again after a longer stay in the host society. The third generation
can afford to remember what the first generation tended to forget
because of the traumatic process of Americanization (1938, 1952;
cited by Gans 1979: 4, 11).

In the context of ethnic formation among immigrants, we ought
to consider some additional factors, in particular the identification
of new immigrants by the host society, their reception by the host
society, and the possibilities of integration in the new setting. Barth
gave special attention to the different levels of ethnic identity in his

classic *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). He differentiated between "internal definition," in which actors signal their self-defined identity to members of the in-group, and "external definition," in which individual members or a group is defined by others (see also Jenkins 1994: 198–199).

Gans (1996: 152) argues that ethnic behavior, orientation, and even identity are determined not only by the characteristics of the ethnics, but also by developments in the wider society and in particular by how it relates to ethnics. In this sense, both "self-definition" and "other-definition" must be taken into consideration to understand ethnic formation among immigrants (Castels and Miller 1998). In addition, it is important to take account of cultural features (mainly language) and group labels (Lithuanians, Flemish, etc.) as perceived by the others and in particular by the media. Such group labels are essential for legitimizing a distinct ethnic identity.

It is important to note that, in nation-states, the reception of immigrants by the host society—both formal institutions and the public at large—may be affected by the immigrants' perceived motivation. It has been argued that an ideological affinity between immigrants and the host society may facilitate their absorption and increase the possibilities of their assimilation into the new setting (Portes and Borocz 1989: 618). This situation is typical of ethnic diasporas that rejoin their co-nationals and enjoy a sympathetic and supportive reception (ibid.).

When we speak about ethnic formation in general, and among immigrants in particular, we have to differentiate between ethnic consciousness and the activation of ethnic borders. The first is measured by knowledge of one's ancestry, ethnic identification, and the subjective importance attached to one's ethnicity. The second is measured by the exploitation of ethnicity for specific pragmatic needs. Since, as indicated by Weber, ethnic consciousness may facilitate ethnic formation but does not guarantee the existence of an exclusive ethnic group, the behavioral elements must come into play for an ethnic category to be recognized as a distinct ethnic group (see also Barth 1969; Reitz 1980). Such behavioral elements include interaction among group members and activation of ethnic boundaries as a basis for social, economic, or political mobilization.

Ethnic Mobilization

Susan Olzak (1998: 187–88) defines *ethnic mobilization* as "collective
actions in pursuit of collective ends by groups organized around some
feature of ethnic identity such as skin color, language, regional loca-
tion, or customs." This definition highlights three main components
that are an integral part of ethnic mobilization: (1) *the pursuit of col-
lective ends, by means of* (2) *collective action, which is based on* (3) *ethnic
boundaries.*

Collective action does not necessarily mean that all group mem-
bers are involved or that they all benefit equally. Even in mobilized
ethnic groups members display different degrees of involvement and
activity, determined mainly by group identification and social inter-
action among group members (Reitz 1980). In addition, collective
interest does not imply that group members benefit equally. The
returns on ethnic mobilization can be distributed unevenly or lim-
ited to a small elite that manipulates ethnicity in order to further its
own goals (Adam 1989). In this case, the symbols and explanations
created by the leadership become a living reality for the followers
who, in turn, "perceive and interpret their individual life experiences
in terms of the dominant values of their reference group" (ibid.: 19).

In order for a leadership to mobilize its group, however, the ends
must be persuasively presented as a common cause. This process
was defined by Adam and Giliomee (1979: 61) in their analysis of
the mobilization of Afrikaners in South Africa. They emphasized that
"ethnic mobilization delineates the process by which mere pluralis-
tic interests become a common cause. This cause then is embraced
by most group members as their own entitlement against others."

An additional factor in this approach involves the replacement of
out-group by in-group relationships in order to overcome intergroup
differences and conflicts and present a powerful collective action
(ibid.). Hence ethnic identity, whether real or fictitious, is extremely
important for ethnic mobilization (Barany 1998: 310).

Two other factors are required for a mobilization process to be
powerful: the goals presented must be perceived as achievable and
the group members must be convinced that the best way to attain
them is by collective action (Adam and Giliomee 1979). Consequently,
the identification of tangible general goals is crucial for increasing
ethnic ability to take joint action (Enloe 1973: 183; cited by Zoltan
1998: 312).

It remains to be determined, however, whether ethnic mobilization is a reactive behavior—a result of grievances, low status, discrimination, and alienation—or a pragmatic strategy to advance group status, regardless of the extent of integration in the broader society. This question stands at the center of two theoretical perspectives: the reactive perspective and the competitive perspective (see Barany 1998; Ragin 1979; Olzak 1983, 1998; Ben-Rafael and Sharot 1991).

The Reactive Perspective

The reactive ethnicity perspective argues that the social-structural differentiation associated with modernization may sharpen ethnic boundaries and thereby increase their importance as a basis for mobilization. Such ethnic connectedness is, however, largely involuntary, the reaction of peripheral groups to their disadvantaged position in the stratification system as a result of exclusion from the power center by the core group (Ragin 1979; Hechter 1975, 1978). According to this model, ethnic solidarity is the reaction of a culturally distinct periphery against exploitation by the center. Reactive solidarity also emerges as a reaction to continuing discrimination and the cultural division of labor.

Hechter (1975) applies the colonial model, which is used mainly for analyzing relationships between core and periphery countries, to the internal level within a single country. Here the periphery is considered to be an "internal colony." While the diffusion models of development, which assume that increased contact between core and peripheral groups tends to introduce new opportunities and thus narrow the economic gap between them, the internal colonialism model offers a completely different scenario (ibid.: 30–32). It postulates that uneven industrialization over a territorial space actually widens the gap between core and periphery as colonial development produces a cultural division of labor. In this sense, high-status occupations tend to be preserved for members of metropolitan cultures, while members of the indigenous culture cluster are relegated to the bottom of the stratification system.

While the dominant group seeks to stabilize its dominance and perpetuate the existing situation, the subordinate group seeks to change the distribution of resources to its advantage. The core group may utilize the state system in order to institutionalize its dominance;

the peripheral group attempts to achieve its aim by increasing its power through political organization. Because the division of labor is based on cultural distinctiveness, one of the main bases of such organization is "cultural similarity, or the perception of a distinctive ethnic identity in the peripheral group" (Hechter 1975: 34).

The cultural division of labor approach assumes, however, that groups on the periphery necessarily develop a high degree of ethnic solidarity. Group formation and solidarity are rather determined by the extent of stratification among these groups and their interaction (Hechter 1978). That is to say, in a stratification system where the division of labor does not coincide with cultural boundaries, ethnicity becomes irrelevant for political and economic mobilization.

Economic models of ethnicity may be also classified with the reactive models of ethnic mobilization. These models share the assumption that economic roles determine the degree to which ethnic solidarity exists (Olzak 1983). Among them is the split labor-market model, which refers to "a difference in the price of labor between two or more groups of workers, holding constant their efficiency and productivity" (Bonacich 1976: 36). An ethnically split labor market leads to a high degree of ethnic conflict and antagonism and deepens divisions on an ethnic basis (Bonacich 1972, 1976).

Goldenberg (1989) presents a similar approach to core-periphery conflicts to explain ethnic awareness. He argues that ethnic awareness can be seen as one kind of collective response to location in the opportunity structure, where those who have power seek to retain it and those who lack it will use any resource to achieve it (ibid.: 136). Thus ethnic mobilization responds to and is fuelled by people's grievances and their relative deprivation (Adam 1989: 19; Gurr 1993). Economic theories attempt to explain the direct relationship among discrimination, the maintaining of ethnic boundaries, and participation in segregated ethnic institutions (Woodrum et al. 1980; cited by Olzak 1983: 361).

A variety of causes may lead to ethnic mobilization, including actual or perceived discrimination or denial of political, social, or economic goods (Zoltan 1998). In addition, Adam and Giliomee emphasize the psychological need for ethnic mobilization as a response to the sense of insecurity in an unfamiliar environment (1979: 65).

While adopting the reactive approach to explain ethnic survival, Reitz (1980) highlights the cultural needs that must be taken into consideration in addition to economic needs. He emphasizes that

poverty, hardship, segregation, social stigma, and lack of opportunities usually encourage ethnic survival (ibid.). He adds that certain factors can facilitate ethnic mobilization, and especially pride in one's own culture: "The pride in one's ancestral heritage . . . [is] a weapon for those handicapped with ethnic stigma" (1980: 2). This reiterates Weber's argument that "ethnic honor" is a very important factor for group solidarity, because it is exclusive to the members of the group. As Weber put it, "the sense of 'ethnic honor' is a specific honor of the masses (*Massenehre*), for it is accessible to anybody who belongs to the subjectively believed community of descent" (Weber 1922; reprinted in Werner 1996: 58).

The Competitive Model of Ethnic Mobilization

The competitive approach holds that ethnicity and ethnic boundaries are used as an instrument for mobilization with the objective of increasing a group's access to economic, social, and political resources, regardless of its location in the stratification system. In other words, ethnic mobilization may exist among both disadvantaged and well-established groups (Olzak 1982; Goldenberg 1989).

The competitive approach argues that changes brought by modernization, including the transition from particularistic to universalistic criteria, cut across the traditional system of ascribed status. Members of different groups increasingly compete for the same occupations and rewards. Hence ethnic boundaries are more likely to be used for mobilization purposes in order to maximize the group's returns from such competition (see Nielsen 1985: 133–134; Ragin 1979; Olzak 1982, 1983, 1998; Hannan 1979). Unlike the reactive perspective, the competitive model postulates that ethnic mobilization is less likely in less-developed areas or in those characterized by cultural division of labor (Ragin 1979: 627). In addition, the competitive approach emphasizes that regional development, increased ethnic inclusion, and a decline in ethnic inequality produce ethnic movements as they release forces of competitive exclusion and conflict (Olzak 1998: 187, 201).

The competitive approach further argues that ethnic solidarity and mobilization may even increase when there is an improvement in the socioeconomic standing of an ethnic group and a decrease in the ethnic division of labor (Ben-Rafael and Sharot 1991; Olzak 1982). Ethnic mobilization is fuelled by the desire of a group to

improve its standing and circumstances vis-à-vis other ethnic groups when new competitive opportunities are introduced or when a dominant group attempts to impose its hegemony on newly competing groups (Ragin 1979; Barany 1998).

Criticism of the Reactive and Competitive Approaches

The reactive and competitive approaches to ethnic mobilization have been criticized repeatedly. Some scholars have suggested a perspective that combines elements from both approaches. In addition, the literature on ethnicity suggests that both models have some merit in specific countries and time periods (Nielsen 1985). Each perspective may be correct in the case of a particular country or for a particular era, "depending on which trends have major causal effects in the situation. If this is the case, one would expect to find instances in which each model is appropriate, in the sense that the social correlates of ethnic solidarity differ from one social system to another and over time" (ibid.: 147).

   In his article about American ethnicity, Rose highlights several forms of activation of ethnic boundaries among minority groups, some based on reactive and some on competitive elements. "Some minority-group members cling almost exclusively to their ethnic bases, especially those who are most stigmatized. Others use them as launching pads, as do many of the marginal minorities or middleman minorities like Jews or ethnic Chinese. Some maintain their connections only symbolically and use them when they are appropriate, as it were, instead of other available political or social supports" (1989: 155). Rose concludes, however, that ethnicization is used mainly for instrumental needs, because "power is still the name of the game" (ibid.: 157).

Rational Choice Theory

The aforementioned models of ethnic mobilization have also been criticized for their emphasis on the group level and concomitant assumption that individual interests are submerged within that of the group. In his analysis of ethnic modeling and national relations, Banton emphasizes that a better theoretical approach "starts not from any prior conception of the ethnic group or the nation, but from the human individual" (1994: 2). This approach goes hand in hand with "rational choice theory," which perceives the individual

as the main actor, whose actions and allegiances are based on rational calculations. In this sense, ethnicity or other forms of identity can be manipulated by elites and eventually joined by individuals seeking to maximize their gains (ibid.: 12–14).

The roots of rational choice theory can be traced to Parsons, in his *Structure of Social Action* (1937), where he sought to establish "a Voluntaristic Theory of Action" (Abell 1999: 254). It has grown by adding a number of basic assumptions:

> *Individualism*—it is only individuals who ultimately take actions and social actions that cause the macro social outcomes or events we wish to explain.
> *Optimality*—individuals' actions and social actions are optimally chosen, given the individual's transitive preferences, across the opportunities he or she faces.
> *Self-regard*—individuals' actions and social actions are entirely concerned with their own welfare (ibid.: 260).

Taking these elements into consideration, rational choice theory assumes that the extent of individuals' ethnic allegiances is the outcome of rational choice, which is based on the calculation of net benefits and expected costs. Therefore, the extent of continuity or change of ethnic allegiances is also the outcome of rational calculations. As Hechter concludes, "the more costly it is for people to choose a traditional course of action to achieve a given benefit, the more likely it is that they will consider an innovative alternative to reach the same end" (1986: 269).

Rational choice theory can make an important contribution to understanding ethnic mobilization in contemporary societies, thanks to its emphasis that such mobilization is "individual-centered" rather than "group-centered." It also adds an important element by considering the costs and benefits of collective action as a key term in the equation of ethnic mobilization. Its shortcoming is that it exaggerates the role played by the individual and shortchanges that of the group. Thus the different approaches—the reactive and competitive models and rational choice theory—all overlook the dynamic interaction between the group and the individual.

The Role of the State

Another argument raised against the above mentioned perspectives is that they do not pay sufficient attention to the role played by the

state in the process of ethnic mobilization. Examining the resurgence
of ethnicity in modern societies within the framework of collective
action, Nielsen juxtaposed the reactive ethnicity model and the com-
petitive model of ethnic mobilization and argued that they are struc-
tural theories of ethnic solidarity. Therefore, they are incomplete
because they "ignore possible feedback effects on solidarity" as a
result of central-government intervention in ethnic formation and
divisions (1985: 135).

Indeed, several studies have found that the role of the state is cen-
tral in determining the salience of ethnicity and the outcome of eth-
nic competition (Frisch 1997; Nielsen 1985; Hechter 1975). The state
has become more than a bureaucracy and turned into a decision-
making body that largely determines legitimacy, and thus the divi-
sion of power among different sectors and groups (Thomas et al.
1979). The power of the state over its citizens, both at the individ-
ual and the group levels, has increased over time, giving the state
more control over the mobilization of ethnicity at the center and
periphery (Chase-Dunn and Rubinson 1979; Hannan 1979).

The state may play an important role, explicit or implicit, in en-
hancing ethnic identity among ethnic groups, as a means to assert
its domination and control. It may also affect a group's ethnic collec-
tive identity by promoting a traditional leadership rather than young
and modern leaders (Frisch 1997: 580).

State citizenship policies can also play a decisive role in the eth-
nic orientation of minority groups. This idea is stressed by Waters,
who studied ethnic identity among groups of German emigrants in
six different countries. He concluded that discrimination by the state
and the denial of citizenship and other basic rights leads immigrants
to form ethnic enclaves and has a major influence on the preserva-
tion of their ethnic identity (1995: 538).

Nagel (1979, 1982; cited by Nielsen 1985: 135) argues that central-
government recognition of ethnicity as a legitimate basis for politi-
cal organization perpetuates ethnic divisions and promotes new forms
of ethnic mobilization for previously unrecognized groups. There is
increasing evidence that in certain circumstances politics may be the
main force that creates individuals' sense of belonging. Politics can
also sharpen social divisions between ethnic communities (Enloe
1980: 7).

In this sense, Horowitz (1985) argues that there is an intimate

relationship between the ethnic nature of a society and the ethnic structure of the political system. Societies that are deeply sundered by ethnic cleavages tend to produce ethnic party systems, which exacerbate ethnic conflict (ibid.: 291). What is more, political elites may play a major role in reinforcing ethnic solidarity because, as Horowitz (1985: 295) put it, "leaders are inclined towards politics that produce electoral victory." Thus, Horowitz notes, ethnic parties derive their power from two sources: internal group cohesion and external imperatives, where the name of the game is power and control (1985: 294).

In states where national security plays a major role, the state and state elites have a crucial effect on ethnic boundaries and ethnic saliency. Enloe (1980: 15) argues that in such situations, state elites imagine "ethnic state security maps" on which they trace the dependability of the various ethnic groups. Each group's estimated risk or positive contribution to state security determines its location in the reward system.

This brings us to the importance of examining the relationship between external conflicts between countries and internal conflicts within a country. Unlike the aforementioned models of ethnic mobilization, some scholars maintain that ethnicity should not be analyzed only as local phenomenon, but also as a social reality that is affected by changes at the international level and relationships between states. One of the central issues worth mentioning here is the impact of the resolution of external conflicts on domestic ethnic relationships. Smith argues that war has been a powerful factor in shaping crucial aspects of ethnic community and nationhood (1981: 375). He says that war has both direct and indirect implications for ethnic formation, identity, and forms of mobilization. Protracted wars, in particular, are more likely to disseminate the sense of ethnic belonging and ethnic sentiment, which elites capitalize for mass mobilization. On the other hand, warfare has a number of indirect consequences, notably the reinforcement of state power. In turn, "territorial and bureaucratic centralization help to weld and homogenize quite diverse populations, turning them into a culturally distinct 'nation'" (ibid.: 391–92).

What is the relationship between immigration and ethnic formation in Israeli society? What factors determine ethnic boundaries? What are the bases of ethnic organization among immigrants? What

has been the impact of the external Israeli-Palestinian conflict on
ethnic relations in Israel? We shall address these questions in the
next chapter, which presents the background of the development of
ethnicity, nationalism, and nation-state building in Israeli society.

ISRAELI SOCIETY: A BACKGROUND

Immigration and the Construction of Social Boundaries

The establishment of Israel and the swapping of minority-majority status by Palestinian Arabs and Jews, in the wake of the 1948 Israel-Arab war, gave the Zionist project and its ultimate goal, the "ingathering of the exiles", an added impetus. The declaration in the Proclamation of Independence that Israel opened its gates for Jewish immigration (aliya) symbolizes the major importance this issue has for Israeli nation-building (Hacohen 1998: 57). For this purpose Israel enacted the Law of Return (*hoq ha-shevut*) in 1950. This is one of the most important laws on the books, since it is intimately bound up with the Jewish-Zionist character of Israel and was enacted in order to secure and further reinforce this character.

It is an ethnocentric law that applies exclusively to immigrants of Jewish origin. It allows every Jew, "except for one who acts against the Jewish people or is liable to endanger public health and state security," to settle in Israel and automatically acquire Israeli citizenship (Horowitz 1996; Shuval 1998).

The Law of Return was amended in 1970 because of the lack of clarity about the definition of "Who is a Jew" in the Population Registry. This vagueness had led to a number of court cases and one coalition crisis during the 1950s and the late 1960s (Weiss 2001). The amendment expanded the Law of Return and stipulated, in paragraph 4a, that the right of return applied also to the non-Jewish child, grandchild, or spouse of a Jew, as well as to the children's and grandchildren's spouses. In this way, the right of return and citizenship was extended automatically to many who were not Jewish according to halakhah (Jewish religious law) or some other criterion (ibid.). Decisions about eligibility under the law are usually based on documentary evidence or testimony (DellaPergola 1998: 53).

Relying on this law, all Israeli governments have actively promoted the value and possibility of immigration to Israel throughout the Jewish Diaspora. Consequently, "such activity has become a foreign

policy value rather than just another foreign policy objective" (Jones 1996: 10).

This value system extends to the definition of the relationship between Israel and the Jewish diaspora. The dominant approach holds that the establishment of the State of Israel created a new bipolar situation: a sovereign Jewish polity in Israel and Jewish communities in the Diaspora (Horowitz 1996). Immigration to Israel (making aliya) is a major and indispensable component of being a Zionist. Arye Dulzin, treasurer and later chairman of the Jewish Agency executive in the 1970s, defined the difference between a Jew and a Zionist as follows:

> "What is a Zionist?" That is, what are the obligations and the practical commandments which the Jew, as a Zionist, should be ready to assume, of his own free will, in addition to the three commandments to which most Jews in the world are ready to subscribe: love for Israel, concern over Israel's fate, and financial contributions for Israel. Among the additional commandments I see two whose performance is a test for anyone who calls himself Zionist: the obligation of *Aliya* and the obligation of giving his children a Jewish and a Zionist upbringing. Without assumption of these obligations, being a Zionist is merely so much lip service. (Dulzin 1975: 11)

Later, however, Dulzin softens his definition of a Zionist to include those who have at least one family member "who makes aliya" (ibid.).

Immigration, ethnicity, and class structure in Israel have become the subject of an ongoing dispute between two main approaches: the establishment-positivist approach and the critical approach. The first approach, which is based on the functionalist-modernization perspective, is more coherent and emerged as an integral part of the nation-building process (Kimmerling 1992: 457). Not only does it mirror the formal-establishment ideology, it also played a considerable role in shaping and legitimizing it (ibid.). The critical approach, which was first voiced in the mid-1970s and gained momentum in the 1980s (with the advent of a new generation of historians and critical social scientists), has one common denominator: its rejection of the starting point and conclusions of the establishment-functionalist approach. Except for this, it is affiliated with many different schools of thought. Accordingly, the conclusions of its advocates are not always identical and are frequently even contradictory (see critical overviews of Israeli sociology, including Kimmerling 1992; Ram 1995; Shafir 1996).

One of the essential issues of controversy between the different approaches, and one that is relevant to our analysis of immigration and ethnic formation, has to do with the putative uniqueness of the Zionist project. Here we shall present a brief review of two main points of the controversy regarding this issue:

Unique vs. Typical Immigration

One of the by-products of the view of the Zionist project as unique has been the invention of unique terms for demographic processes associated with it. Israeli sociologists have considered Jewish immigration to Palestine and later to Israel to be a unique phenomenon that cannot be compared to any other migratory movement.

Shuval (1998) notes that this assumption stems from the view that migrants to other destinations generally leave a place they consider home to find a new home. In terms of the Israeli construction, Jews have been "strangers" in their countries of origin and seek to find a new home by means of migration (1998: 1; see also Benski 1994).

Immigration (or *aliya*, to use the Israeli term) has always been perceived not as a demographic movement but as a value process that expresses the crux of Zionism (Horowitz 1996). Hence it is part of the society's system of overriding values (Bar-Yoseph 1968). This value system is reflected by the terms used by both policymakers and the general public regarding immigrants and immigration: Jews who immigrate to Israel are called *olim*—ascenders; those who emigrate are called *yordim*—descenders (ibid.).

Eisenstadt, one of the leading sociologists of this "uniqueness approach," postulates that while typical migration is motivated by push, demographic, and socioeconomic factors, "aliya" is motivated by ideological factors. Also, regular immigrants identify with the basic values of the home country, whereas "olim" reject those values (1969: 272).

Throughout his analysis, Eisenstadt presents an idealized harmonious relationship between olim and the receiving society, devoid of conflicts, alienation, and group-stratification interests. He argues that this situation resulted from the strong identification among the successive waves of aliya (mainly during the pre-state period) and the feeling of mission (*shlihut*) and pioneering (*halutziyut*). This identification greatly minimized the manipulation of economic and social position by veteran groups and opened it to most new arrivals (Eisenstadt

1969: 274). Thus, unlike "immigrants," olim had almost no experience of social crisis and intergenerational contradictions as a result of their movement to a new society, because they arrived with a strong desire to adopt the culture and structure of the new society, which for its part facilitated their immediate acculturation and integration (ibid. 276). It is clear, though, that by "host society" Eisenstadt means the veteran Jewish settlers, not the indigenous Palestinian population.

In recent years, a number of Israeli sociologists have questioned the myth of the uniqueness of Jewish immigration to Israel (see Shuval 1998). Based on a thorough survey of the global Jewish migration system before and after the establishment of Israel and a comparison with international migratory movements, DellaPergola (1998) concludes that the perception of "aliya" as a unique phenomenon should be reconsidered, because this immigration, like that to other destinations, has largely been determined by economic, political, cultural and socio-demographic factors rather than by the ideology of the "ingathering of the exiles." Basically, the ideological factor connected with the decision to move to Israel was "necessary but not sufficient to generate large-scale migration." What is more, the importance of the ideological factor in immigrants' decision to move to Israel has gradually decreased in favor of other pragmatic universal factors (ibid.: 88).

Shuval, however, concludes that despite the many changes that have occurred in the characteristics and motivation of immigration to Israel, the "tradition of uniqueness" remains strong in the sociology of migration to Israel, which is accordingly better understood in a global context of theory and practice (1998: 20).

An Ideological Value or a Means to Achieve Political Goals

One of the main questions addressed is whether the declarations by Zionist leaders are compatible with their actual goal in terms of Jewish immigration? In other words, is Jewish immigration an ideological value that has been applied equally to various Jewish communities, or is it rather a political means used by the Zionist leadership in pursuit of its own interest?

The leadership's decisions on the issue of selective migration vs. an open-door orientation may partly answer this question. The Zionist leaders, especially in the Jewish community in Palestine (the *yishuv*), favored a selective and controllable immigration (Shilo 1994; Gilbar

1998). As a movement established by an Eastern European elite, Zionism's main aim was to rescue Eastern European Jewry and establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine (Smooha 1978). But this principle contradicted that of selectivity by which the movement sought to bring to Palestine an elite cadre of "pioneers" who would form a solid basis for the building of the desired new Jewish society (Hacohen 1994).

Ben-Gurion expressed this orientation very clearly at the Zionist Congress in 1933:

> Eretz-Israel needs today not simply immigrants, but pioneers. The difference between them is simple: an immigrant comes with the aim to take from the country, while a pioneer comes to give to it. Therefore, we want to accord priority to pioneer immigration. We see such a pioneer immigration as a precondition for the fulfillment of Zionism. (Hacohen 1994: 16)

Ben-Gurion reflected the stance of most of the Zionist leadership. Thus, even after the Balfour Declaration (in favor of a Jewish National Home in Palestine) and the opening of Palestine to Jewish immigration, most Zionist leaders thought that priority should be given to the immigration of a selected group of wealthy investors, professionals, and able-bodied young people (ibid.: 17).

This approach was modified in the 1930s, however. Developments in Europe, including the rise of Nazism, which endangered the Jewish communities there, and the Palestinian-Arab revolt of 1936–1939 changed this orientation. For the first time, Ben-Gurion launched a plan for mass Jewish immigration, with the target of bringing one million Jewish immigrants to Palestine (ibid.).

Even after the establishment of Israel, the open-door policy was questioned (Shuval and Leshem 1998). One of the major issues that surfaced as early as the debates over the Law of Return in 1950 involved the status of those who were not Jewish according to *halakhah*. The debate focused on the right of non-Jewish women to accompany their Jewish husbands to Israel and obtain Israeli citizenship (Hacohen 1998). (Note that, according to *halakhah*, a child's Jewishness depends on that of its mother.) This debate was spearheaded by the religious parties, in the wake of the considerable number of such cases in the first wave of mass immigration from Europe (ibid.). These parties also demanded a definition of "who is a Jew" before the Law of Return could be enacted. In the end, however, a compromise was

reached and the law was passed without reference to what remains a controversial issue to the present day (Hacohen 1998: 85).

The movement's attitude toward large-scale immigration by non-European Jews has been always ambivalent and to some extent even projectionist (Gilbar 1998). This was very obvious in the discussions of mass immigration from Arab and Islamic countries toward the end of the Second World War. The declarations by Zionist leaders reflected a clear preference for "qualitative" immigration from Anglophone countries and strong fears of a "backward" immigration by Oriental Jews (Mizrahim) (ibid.).

In these discussions, Eliezer Kaplan, treasurer of the Jewish Agency at the time, warned about absorption problems that would be associated with the "quality" of immigrants, mainly Orientals (cited by Gilbar 1998: 280).

Moshe Shertok (Sharett), the head of the Agency's political department in the 1940s, expressed a clear-cut preference for encouraging immigration from Anglophone rather than Middle Eastern countries. He had this to say:

> There is a big question . . . not only of quantity, but also of quality. What does it mean to bring at once several hundred of thousands Jews from the Levant to Eretz-Israel, as they are, not as we would like to see them after education and acculturation? . . . We have to approach the issue of American Jewry differently. We have to recruit this reservoir and demand from them an essential large-scale immigration. (Minutes of the meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive, 20 June 1944, pp. 10–11; cited by Gilbar 1998: 280)

Critical sociologists argue that the Zionist movement began showing interest in oriental Jews mainly after the establishment of Israel, in order to satisfy the economic, demographic, and military needs of the newly created state with its Ashkenazi elite. As a result, Israel initiated the "import" of the Jewish survivors in Europe and mass immigration from Arab and Islamic countries according to its own needs and priorities, not necessarily those of the Jewish communities (Swirski 1995). Zionist organizations and state agencies used an apparatus of emissaries, who in turn operated a network of local activists that functioned as an alternative to the authentic leadership of these communities (ibid.: 35).

This argument has been raised repeatedly by other sociologists. Analyzing the relationship between the Zionist leadership and the

Iraqi Jewish community, Shenhav (1999) argues that the conceptual model that guided it was paternalistic and based mainly on the narrative and interest of the Ashkenazi elite. He concludes that the manner in which Iraqi Jews were "imported" to Israel served merely to perpetuate the Ashkenazi hegemony and silence the protests by Iraqi Jews (like other Oriental communities). When the Jewish community in Iraq did not cooperate with the goals of organized Zionism, the Zionists did not hesitate to dismantle the authentic leadership and replace it with a "more reliable alternative" (ibid.: 624).

Immigration and Ethnic Formation in Israel

Ethnic relations are a central issue in Israeli sociological discourse and research, addressed in most discussions of the country's social, cultural, political, or economic structure (see, for example, Eisenstadt 1954; Bar-Yoseph 1968; Ben-Rafael 1982; Smooha 1978; Swirski 1981; Herzog 1983; Shamir and Arian 1983; Weingrod 1985; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1986; Goldscheider 1995; Lissak 1999). Most students of ethnicity, regardless of their sociological approach, have usually seen ethnicity as bound up with immigration and absorption even though there is a profound controversy between the establishment-Zionist approach, which perceives ethnicity as an integral part of nationalism, and recent critical approaches, which emphasize that such a relationship is not self-evident (see Kimmerling 1992; Shenhav 1999).

It is worth noting that ethnic relations in Israel are usually handled from one perspective only, in which the Oriental communities (*edot hamizrah*) are the object of study. When scholars speak about ethnicity (*adatiyut*) they usually mean Oriental communities, whether they discuss ethnicity as a whole or refer to a specific topic such as ethnic culture, ethnic identity, ethnic music, and the like (Swirski 1981: 74). Swirski emphasizes that the problem is not only a matter of categorization. It is both evidence of a concrete historical situation of discrimination and dependency and a mechanism that perpetuates its existence (ibid.).

Background of Jewish Ethnicity

Historically, there were three main subdivisions among Jews: Oriental Jews, who never left the Middle East and North Africa; Sephardim,

whose language (Ladino) and ethnic culture derived from Spain be-
fore the 1492 expulsion; and Ashkenazim (originally from central
Europe), whose language was Yiddish (Shamir and Arian 1983).

The establishment of Israel was followed by a redefinition of eth-
nic relations as a whole and of ethnic divisions in particular. The
three categories have been reduced to two: Ashkenazim of European-
American origin and Sephardim-Mizrahim or *Edot hamizrah*, the Jews
of Asian and North African origin (see Smooha 1978). In the mid-
1970, official statistics in Israel started classifying ethnic origin accord-
ing to the father's country of birth, creating three categories: Asia-Africa,
Europe-America, and Israeli-born. This division, however, is also
problematic. First, the category of "Israeli-born" includes members
of both groups (Ashkenazim and Mizrahim). Second, it is not a clear-
cut definition according to geographic basis, since immigrants from
South Africa are typically classified with the Ashkenazim while those
from Turkey (for example) are classified with the Mizrahim. This is
a result of the fact that ethnic classification in Israel has a mainly
cultural basis.

At the start of the 1990s, official statistics automatically counted
all FSU immigrants in the American-European category. Beginning
in 1996, however, they were divided into two groups: those from
the European republics (constituting some 79.7% of immigrants) were
accounted Ashkenazim, while those from Central Asia and the
Caucasus (20.3% of the immigrants) were counted as Mizrahim (SAI
2000: 5.4; for the breakdown of former Soviet immigrants by repub-
lic, see Ministry of Absorption 1999: 8).

Ethnic Composition over Time

When Israel was founded, most of the Jewish population was of
European (Ashkenazi) origin (92%); only 8% was of Asian-African
(Mizrahi) origin (Schmelz et al. 1991). This was because most of the
pre-1948 Jewish immigration to Palestine originated in Eastern and
Central Europe.

Between 1919 and 1948, 61.3% of the Jewish immigrants to
Palestine came from Eastern Europe and the USSR, 24.1% from
Central and Western Europe and America, 4.2% from the Balkans,
and only 10.4% from Asia and Africa (Bachi, col. 669, cited by
Kleinberger 1969: 17).

This picture changed after the establishment of Israel, thanks to the mass immigration of Jews from Islamic and Arab countries in the 1950s (Goldscheider 1992). By the mid-1970s, their higher rate of natural increase had pushed the Mizrahim to counterbalance the Ashkenazim (Schmelz et al. 1991). Before the 1990s influx from the former Soviet Union, 41.5% of the Jewish population in Israel was of Mizrahi origin and 36% of Ashkenazi origin.

However, as noted earlier, the ethnic composition of the Israel-born category (who constituted 22.5%) remains unclear according to official statistics (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1
Jewish Population of Israel by Origin, 1948–1998

Year	Origin*						
	1948	1961	1972	1983	1989	1990	1998
Israel	–	5.5	8.4	15.9	22.5	22.3	27.6
Asia-Africa	8.0	42.3	47.4	44.1	41.5	39.3	32.7
Europe-America	92.0	52.1	44.2	40.0	36.0	38.4	39.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Origin reflects father's country of birth.
Based on *Statistical Abstract of Israel* 1990, p. 86; 1999, 2.55.

In our analysis we will relate to immigrants from Muslim and Arab countries as Sephardim, Orientals, or Mizrahim, and to those from Western countries as Ashkenazim. Immigrants from the former Soviet Union will be treated as an independent third category. When we deal with official statistics, however, we have no choice but to stick with the official classification of ethnic groups.

Ethnicity as a Socio-Cultural Rift

It has been argued that the meaning of ethnicity in Israeli society is structured by basic Zionist ideological codes (Lewis 1985: 149). Based on the conception that the ingathering of Diaspora communities aims at creating "one nation," the Zionist paradigm rejects ethnicity as an ultimate reality, while acknowledging it as a de facto attribute of social life (Lewis 1985: 149; Weingrod 1985). In this sense, the mass immigration of Oriental Jews in the 1950s posed a

real challenge to the Zionist idea (ibid.). No less important, the Mizrahi immigration from Arab and Islamic countries constituted a serious cultural challenge to the hegemony of the European-Western ethnocentric Zionism (Smooha 1978; Swirski 1981). It has also been argued that this elite feared that "the 'backward' Orientals would dilute the Western culture and upset the political democracy of the newly founded state" (Smooha 1978: 260).

These issues strongly affected the approach of the veteran Ashkenazi elite toward immigrant absorption and thereby eventually determined ethnic structure and stratification in Israel (Halper 1985). This approach (the "establishment-modernization approach") is based on two interconnected processes: the modernization-westernization of Oriental Jews and their fusion into the Ashkenazi melting pot. In the following section an attempt will be made to delineate the basis and the main ideology behind this.

The Modernization-Establishment Approach

As indicated earlier, the sociology of immigration and ethnic relations in Israel was long dominated by the approach developed by Eisenstadt and his students. Critical sociologists tend to call it the modernization-establishment approach, because it is identical to that of the dominant Ashkenazi establishment (Swirski 1981; Smooha 1984).

According to the establishment approach, immigrants remain "external" to the social system until they have learned the roles expected of them by the absorbing society and thus become "fully functioning members of the society." After reaching this point they can enter the different spheres of the absorbing society through a process that Eisenstadt called "institutional dispersion." He summarized this process in his widely cited book, *The Absorption of Immigrants* (1954: 9):

> The process of absorption, from the point of view of the individual immigrant's behavior, entails the learning of new roles, the transformation of primary group values, and the extension of participation beyond the primary group in the main spheres of the social system. Only insofar as these processes are successfully coped with are the immigrant's concept of himself and his status and his hierarchy of values re-formed into a coherent system, enabling him to become once more a fully functioning member of society.

Eisenstadt adds that the *institutionalization* of the immigrant's behavior takes place within a given social structure. Within this structure, cer-

tain demands and expectations develop toward immigrants, just as immigrants have a particular image of the new society (ibid.).

The following conditions must be fulfilled for a group or an individual immigrant to be fully absorbed in the new setting: acculturation, satisfactory personal adjustment of the immigrants, and full dispersion of the immigrants as a group within the main institutional spheres of the absorbing society (ibid.: 11).

This model assumes that successful and complete absorption takes place only when the immigrants stand as individuals, learning and acquiring the values and the culture of the new society and abandoning his/her own former identity. In other words, cultural assimilation is a precondition for successful and full absorption. Therefore, Eisenstadt emphasizes, "it is assumed that full absorption has not taken place unless the migrant group ceases to have a separate identity within the new social structure" (Eisenstadt 1954: 13). Based on this conception, any tendency among immigrants to organize as a group is considered to be "disintegrative" and "deviant behavior" (ibid.).

A similar approach is expressed by Eisenstadt's student, Rivka Bar-Yoseph (1968). In her article, "Desocialization and Resocialization: The Adjustment Process of Immigrants," Bar-Yoseph delineates the basic characteristics of successful absorption, according to the "melting pot" ideology. She argues that the process of immigration and absorption in the new society involves the disintegration of the person's role system and the loss of social identity. Therefore, "the absorption process is then the successful resocialization, and the establishment of a new identity and role system" (ibid.: 27–28). But in order to have a smooth "resocialization" process, immigrants must first experience a "desocialization" process that eliminates the former value-system. Thus, a successful adjustment is seen as "a dynamic balance of desocialization and resocialization, where the desocializing tendencies are slowly eliminated while the resocializing forces expand" (Bar-Yoseph 1968: 43).

The Melting Pot Ideology

The school of thought presented above formed both the intellectual basis and legitimizing force of the melting-pot approach adopted by the Israeli absorption system. Based on the conception that socio-cultural differences among Jewish communities are a symbol of "Diaspora existence," it was expected that the demographic transition of

Jewish Diasporas to Israel—the ingathering of exiles—should be fol-
lowed by a cultural-psychological *mizzug galuyot* or fusion of exiles
(Ayalon, Ben-Rafael, and Sharot 1985).

Behind the *mizzug galuyot* concept lies the belief of the Israeli-
Zionist establishment that cultural elements of Diaspora origin are
part of a "false Diaspora identity" that should be replaced by an
"authentic" Israeli one, so as to turn the ingathered exiles into a
unified Jewish society in Israel (Halper 1985: 114). Therefore, adher-
ence to their original culture by new immigrants was perceived as
negating the principle of Jewish-Israeli solidarity.

It is obvious that the melting-pot ideology is not aimed at creating
a new culture or at creating a blend of elements from all contributing
cultures. It clearly meant the melting of all Oriental groups into the
veteran Western-Ashkenazi culture (Halper 1985; Lissak 1999). As
such, it is based on a paternalistic-Eurocentric Ashkenazi orientation
that perceives Oriental culture as "primitive," "backward," and "infe-
rior." This approach was inspired by the Western-colonial model.
Patai highlighted this issue in his *Israel between East and West* (1970):

> The old-fashioned and shortsighted view, which unfortunately is expressed
> only too often both orally and in writing in Israel, holds summarily
> that the Oriental Jews are in need of a complete re-education, that
> their entire being and thinking must be reshaped in the European
> Jewish image, and that, where this cannot be achieved by suasion and
> example, the situation calls for legislative measures.

This viewpoint was typical of the approach of the colonial powers
to their subject peoples, the "natives" of their colonies (ibid.: 27).

The ethnocentric stand toward Orientals was not restricted to the
ruling political elite. It was supported by the Israel establishment at
all levels: policymakers, absorption agencies, mass media, and mem-
bers of the mainstream academic community (Halper 1985: 115).

A widely cited text that exemplifies how the Oriental Jews were
perceived by the veteran Ashkenazim in the 1950s is an article by
Arye Gelblum, which appeared in the highly respected Hebrew news-
paper *Ha'aretz* on April 22, 1949 (see Patai 1970: 294–6; Halper
1985: 116; Lissak 1999: 65).

> A serious and threatening question is posed by immigration from North
> Africa. This is the immigration of a race the like of which we have
> not known in this country. It would seem that certain differences
> exist between the immigrants from Tripolitania, Morocco, Tunisia and

> Algeria, but I cannot say that I was able to discern the quality of these differences, if they exist at all. . . .
>
> Here is a people whose primitiveness reaches the highest peak. Their education level borders on absolute ignorance. Still more serious is their inability to absorb anything intellectual. How many obstacles have to be overcome in educating the Africans. . . .
>
> In the living quarters of Africans in the camps you will find dirt, card-games for money, drunkenness and fornication, . . . not to mention immorality and stealing. Nothing is safe in the face of this asocial element, and no lock can keep them out of anywhere.

Note that the writer uses the expression "Africans," not "North African," as would have been more appropriate to their countries of origin. It might be argued that he used this expression in order to link Oriental Jews with a clear-cut race while speaking about the distinction between East and West. More striking are the racist expressions the writer used to describe how the Oriental immigrants "lacked . . . all requirements" to adjust to life in Israel (as a Western country):

> But above all these there is a basic fact, no less serious, namely, the lack of all the prerequisites for adjustment to the life of the country, and first of all—*chronic laziness and hatred of work*. All of them, almost without exception, lack any skill, and are, of course, penniless. All of them will tell you that in Africa they were "merchants"; the true meaning of which is that they were small hawkers. And all of them want to settle "in the town."

What, therefore, can be done with them? How to "absorb" them?

> . . . Has it been considered what will happen to this country if this will be its population? And to them will be added one day immigration of Jews from Arab countries! What will be the face of the state of Israel and its level with such a population? (cited by Patai 1970: 294–6)

This position reflected the mainstream approach of the Ashkenazic elite, both political and intellectual (Halper 1985). This group, which claims to its credit that it was the leading force in the establishment of the Jewish community (Yishuv) in Palestine and later in the establishment of Israel, perceived the Oriental mass immigration as a threat to its political and cultural dominance. Hence warnings were voiced about the "danger" of the "orientalization and levantization of the Yishuv" and the need to instill into these oriental immigrants the spirit and culture of the veteran Ashkenazi group.

Ya'akov Zerubavel, one of the leaders of Po'alei Zion–Left and a member of the Jewish Agency Executive, wrote:

> The great spiritual entity produced through arduous labor and pioneering effort, along with all the rest of the basic enterprises of the Zionist movement, may come to naught if it does not have successors who act in the spirit of the Pioneers. The mass immigration now flowing in from backward, primitive countries to Eretz Israel may inundate all our work. Work therefore has to be done now to pass on the experience and will of the Pioneers. How can we bequeath to them the Pioneers' experience so that they feel themselves to be pioneers through their actions? (cited by Lissak 1999: 65)

Policymakers, too, adopted this paternalistic perception. Ben-Gurion, who was one of the key Israeli leaders in the shaping of the official absorption policy in the 1950s, argued that this policy would benefit both these immigrants and the State of Israel (see Lissak 1998). His "optimistic view" was presented, however, in a paternalistic and arrogant way, since in Ben-Gurion's eyes the main challenge was how to turn this "human dust" into a "civilized nation." In his introduction to the *Israel Government Yearbook* (1960/61: 25) Ben-Gurion wrote:

> The vast majority of [the Oriental] Jews are destitute. They are bereft of the property and capital that were taken from them, and they are oppressed in the sense of the education and culture that were not provided to them. . . . But a large proportion of the immigrants come to us without knowing the alphabet, without a trace of Jewish or humanistic education. . . .
>
> The spiritual absorption, blending, and molding of these immigrants, turning this human dust into a civilized, creative, independent nation with a vision, is no easy job, and the difficulties are no less than the difficulties involved in the economic absorption. A tremendous effort, moral and educational, is needed—an effort accompanied by pure, profound love for bringing together these castaways—to impart to them the nation's assets and values, to implant these distant, oppressed exiles in our society, our culture, our language, and our creative endeavors, not as benefactors—but as partners in destiny.
>
> Even the success that we, the Yishuv old-timers, have produced, the material and spiritual success, we did not really achieve with our own hands. Rather, we, too, received a valuable heritage from our fathers' fathers and stood on the shoulders of the generations that came before us. This inheritance of ours is the inheritance of the entire Jewish people, and only as the inheritance of the entire nation will it survive. Latent in the educationally deprived immigrants are all those special qualities and potentials that have so far made the builders of the Yishuv

what they are, and none of what we have done until now—econom-
ically, politically, militarily, and spiritually—will eventually be inacces-
sible to these immigrants, too, if we give them the assistance and care
that we once received from our parents and our communes.

The implementation of the melting-pot principle, especially toward
immigrants of Asian-African origin, was obvious in all spheres, includ-
ing types of occupation, settlement, family planning, education, and
even personal hygiene (Lissak 1999: 69). Policymakers presented the
process as essential for modernizing and westernizing the Oriental
immigrants and promoting mobility opportunities for the new gen-
eration of these immigrants (Kleinberger 1969).

    Based on this approach, the establishment depicted ethnic socio-
economic inequalities in Israel as a natural result of the persistence
of cultural differences between Oriental and Ashkenazi Jews and the
failure of the former to modernize and adjust to the norms of the
wider society (Lewis 1985: 145–6).

Counter-approaches to Ethnic Relations

Already in the early 1950s the modernization-establishment approach
was criticized by a number of social scientists who suggested that
the cultural uniqueness of each group should be recognized (see for
example Frankenstein 1953: 21; Kleinberger 1969: 51). However,
this idea of recognizing the relative values of different cultures was
a minority view amid the massive support for the melting-pot strat-
egy, which also directed educational policy.

    It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that broad criti-
cism of the establishment modernization-cultural approach started to
be voiced by a number of sociologists. Although they were affiliated
with different schools of thought, they shared a number of basic
assumptions: The disadvantaged status of Oriental Jews and the wide
disparity between them and the Ashkenazim is not the outcome of
the former's cultural inferiority or inability to modernize. The true
reason is to be found in the absorption process itself, which was
designed and implemented by the veteran Ashkenazi elite in order
to maintain and reinforce its dominance (Smooha 1978; Bernstein
1981; Swirski 1981).

    Despite the similarities in the critical sociologists' rejection of the
establishment modernization approach, there are a number of cardinal
differences among them, which may be classified as the dependency-
class approach and the pluralistic approach.

Based on a neo-Marxist center-periphery model, the dependency
approach would concentrate on analysis of the historical processes
of social formation and division of labor. Accordingly it questions
the concept of "social gaps," which is a basic element in the plu-
ralistic approach. The dependency school focuses on the division of
labor, not the gaps per se, since the latter are only a consequence
of the former (Swirski 1981: 11). Its advocates maintain that the
absorption process created a close dependency between Oriental
immigrants and the ruling Ashkenazi elite, which persisted despite
the relative improvement in the Mizrahim's conditions and status
(Swirski and Bernstein 1980; Bernstein 1981).

As to the overlap between class and ethnicity, the dependency
approach recognizes the basic class division of labor in Israel. It
argues, however, that the Israeli structure is unique, the result of the
unique development of the Israeli economy, which has left the Israeli
bourgeoisie mainly Ashkenazi and the Jewish proletariat overwhelmingly
Mizrahi. Hence the class struggle is not simply that of the prole-
tariat, but that of the Mizrahim (Swirski 1981: 356–57).

The dependency approach rejects as fallacious the assumption of
the modernization approach that Mizrahi protest is a temporary phe-
nomenon and will disappear in the wake of increasing moderniza-
tion and decreasing social gaps. On the contrary, it can be expected
to expand, as the emergence of a cultural division of labor creates
a Mizrahi identity that will be translated into a major political fac-
tor (ibid.).

The pluralistic approach falls somewhere between the dependency
and the establishment-modernization approaches (see Smooha 1978)
and attempts to bridge between them. Thus, whereas the dependency
approach speaks of a system of domination controlled by Ashkenazim,
which leads to perpetuation and even intensification of the ethnic
conflict, the pluralistic approach speaks of two contradictory but co-
existing systems—inequality and solidarity—with the first intensify-
ing and the second weakening ethnic conflict. The former is manifested
in the wide gaps between the dominant Ashkenazim and the disad-
vantaged Mizrahim in all spheres of life. The Ashkenazi dominance
is first and foremost political; through this control of the political
system they control other fields (economy, mass communications,
education, etc.). At the same time, Israeli society has developed a
systematic mechanism of solidarity that includes a formal ideology
of integration and national solidarity, a subsidized economy that pro-

vides opportunities for mobility, and the readiness of the Ashkenazi elite to pay the price of co-optation so as to prevent ethnic organization by Mizrahim. Another consolidating factor stems from the Israel-Arab conflict and the preference given to Mizrahim over the Arab citizens of Israel and the Palestinians in the territories (Smooha 1978, 1984). The pluralistic approach argues that the two systems are at work simultaneously, so that the potential for ethnic conflict is somewhere in the middle. Ethnicity is expected to weaken in the future and the ethnic dominance is gradually being eroded (ibid.: 195).

The dependency and pluralist approaches agree that the characteristics of the absorption process are responsible for the marginalization of the Oriental Jews. However, while the dependency approach postulates that discrimination and exploitation of Mizrahim by the Ashkenazi apparatus are the responsible factors (Swirski 1981; Bernstein 1981), the pluralistic approach holds that, in addition to discrimination, there are a number of other objective factors (such as the Oriental Jews' weak starting point and the state's urgent priorities) that should be taken into consideration when dealing with social gaps between the two groups (Smooha 1984: 200).

Since the early 1990s there has been a growing debate about establishment vs. critical sociology (see Kimmerling 1992; Ram 1995; Lissak 1996). A cursory review of the arguments and counter-arguments advanced in this debate generates confusion about the classification of sociologists in the "establishment-engaged" and the "critical–nonengaged" camps. Moreover, there are almost no scholars today who overtly champion the establishment approach and the melting-pot ideology.

There has been growing diversity of sociological approaches toward immigration and ethnicity since the early 1990s. The debate is no longer exclusively between the establishment and critical approaches. Several scholars who take an eclectic approach have seconded the criticism of the "mistakes" made by the absorption authorities during the mass immigration in the 1950s and suggested reconsideration of the paradigmatic approaches (see Shuval and Leshem 1998; Lissak 1999). There is broad agreement among sociologists that there has been an increasing improvement in the socio-economic status and political integration of Mizrahim. Also, there has been an erosion of the ethnic element through a considerable percentage of Ashkenazi-Mizrahi intermarriage. However, despite the improvement

in the Mizrahim's status, even in the second generation there remain disparities between them and the Ashkenazim (in favor of the latter) in almost every conceivable field (Hertman and Ayalon 1975; Peres 1976; Smooha and Kraus 1985; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1986; Shavit 1990; Cohen 1998). Income disparities have actually widened over time, along with the growing inequality in Israel as a whole since the mid-1970s (Cohen 1998). In any event, there is still a wide dispute about the extent and basis of ethnic stratification in Israel and the perceived utility of ethnic mobilization.

Ethnic Mobilization

The relationship between ethnic affiliation and political mobilization is one of the main subjects that has been addressed by students of ethnicity (see Matras 1965; Lissak 1972; Peres 1976; Shamir and Arian 1983; Peres and Shemer 1983; Herzog 1985; Ben-Rafael and Sharot 1991; Peled 1998). Two patterns of ethnic mobilization have been noted: individual voting and group organization. In both cases, however, the main emphasis has been placed on the behavior of Mizrahim and less on that of Ashkenazim.

Until the late 1970s, individual voting among Mizrahim largely followed a reactive pattern. It was manifested in protest voting against Mapai and its successors (the Alignment, the Labour party), which Mizrahim perceived as an establishment party run by the Ashkenazi elite and responsible for their "cultural humiliation" and disadvantaged status (Shamir and Arian 1983; Peres and Shemer 1983). This protest vote took the form of Mizrahi support for Herut and its successors, Gahal and later the Likud, led by Menachem Begin. A clear correlation between ethnic origin and voting behavior, with Ashkenazim tilting toward Mapai-Labour and Mizrahim toward Herut-Gahal-Likud, began to emerge by the late 1950s (Matras 1965). What is more, ethnic voting has increased over time. The massive Mizrahi support for the Likud in 1977 brought it to power after 28 years of Mapai-Labour dominance (Shamir and Arian 1983).

The 1981 Knesset elections saw an unprecedented crystallization of voting patterns along ethnic lines. In these elections, the two main parties came close to being "ethnic parties": about two-thirds of Alignment voters were Ashkenazim and a similar percentage of Likud voters were Sephardim (ibid.: 97).

It must be noted that the leadership of both the Likud and the Alignment remained mainly Ashkenazi. At the same time, both parties attempted to attract Mizrahi voters by placing Mizrahi candidates in safe spots on their lists and in positions at various levels of the organizational apparatus. Despite this, many Mizrahim still perceive Labour as the "establishment" and responsible for their disadvantaged status.

At the same time, a trend toward ethnic organization also emerged. This trend, which constituted the basis for ethnic political mobilization among Mizrahim, was evident even before the establishment of Israel. In the first elections for the Zionist Assembly in mandatory Palestine (*Asefat Hanivharim*), held in 1920, there were a number of ethnic lists, including the Sephardi Federation, the Yemenite List, the Young Orientals, and others (Herzog 1983). However, the establishment of Israel served as a major catalyst for ethnic mobilization. Ethnic lists based on group boundaries have been around since the first Knesset elections in 1949. With the exception of 1969, at least one ethnic party has contested every Knesset election (Herzog 1985: 160). Most of the ethnic Oriental lists, failed to clear the threshold and win seats in the Knesset. However, it is difficult to speak about any tangible success of ethnic mobilization at the group level before the establishment of Shas in the mid-1980s. The establishment of this Mizrahi party was initiated by a small group of ambitious cadres who had been educated in Ashkenazi *haredi* (Ultraorthodox) yeshivas (Friedman 1989). Without a doubt this party has been the most successful attempt by Mizrahim to mobilize politically along ethnic lines. Its Knesset delegation grew from four seats in 1984 to six in 1988 and 1992, ten in 1996, and seventeen in 1999—making it the third-largest party in Israel. It should be noted that the power of Shas decreased in the 2003 elections, when it received eleven seats. Notwithstanding this fact, however, Shas remains one of the most successful attempts by Mizrahim to organize on ethic lines.

The rise of Shas reflects the increasing replacement of general national-ideological motifs by ethnic ones. Votes for Shas came at the expense of the National Religious Party and Agudat Yisrael (Don-Yehiya 1990). This overlap between ethnic and religious boundaries in Israeli society will be examined in the following section.

Ethnicity and the Religious-Nonreligious Divide

The historical basis of the religious-nonreligious divide among Jews goes back to the second half of the eighteenth century and the start of the process of secularization and emancipation. It began in Western Europe and later expanded to Eastern Europe; taken together, the two regions were home to some 80% of world Jewry until the late nineteenth century (Shapiro 1998). Jews, especially the young generation, started to neglect Jewish traditions in favor of the urban secular lifestyle (Friedman 1989, 1990). Among the Mizrahim, the process of secularization, which lasted more than three centuries among Ashkenazi Jews, did not begin until the early twentieth century (Smooha 1978). As a result, Oriental Jews have remained more religious and traditional than the Ashkenazim (ibid.).

The religious groups, however, are not monolithic. They are split by two main factors: their attitude toward Zionism and the ethnic (Ashkenazi-Mizrahi) division. The relationship between Ultraorthodox (*haredi*) groups and the Zionist movement, and later the state of Israel, has been always complex and problematic. Ultraorthodox Jews reject the basic secular ideology of the Zionist movement and hold that the Jewish people are above history. The creation of a Jewish state by secular Zionism effaces this uniqueness and sows the seeds of social and religious corruption (Levi 1990). Hence Ultraorthodox Jews are not only non-Zionist, but even anti-Zionist (Friedman 1989). National-religious Jews, on the other hand, thought it preferable to take part in the building of the Jewish state and work to strengthen the religious-Jewish character of Israel from inside the Zionist system (Smooha 1978). As a result, they have adopted a strategy of participating in the institutions of the state, including military service.

For pragmatic reasons bound up with the very existence of the Jewish community in Eastern Europe, though, Ultraorthodox groups had to find a modus vivendi with the Zionist movement (Friedman 1990). Pragmatism has also shaped the behavior of the *haredi* leadership after the establishment of Israel, especially the decision to sit in the Knesset and join government coalitions, in order to share power and maintain their autonomous organizations (Peled 1998).

Ethnic differentiations within religious groups have become more obvious over time. For a long time, the religious elite, both Ultraorthodox and national-religious, was mainly Ashkenazi. Ashkenazim dominated organizations of these groups and Mizrahim were rele-

gated to the status of clients or junior partners. The governing rab-
binical council of Agudat Yisrael—the Council of Torah Sages—had
no Mizrahi members. This was the background to the establishment
of Shas in 1983. Within a few years the new party became a lead-
ing force among Oriental Jews. According to its religious orienta-
tion, Shas should be located somewhere between religious-traditional
and *haredi* (Friedman 1989). While exploiting Mizrahi grievances and
ethnic pride, Shas has chosen to follow a pragmatic-instrumental
rather than a reactive-primordial strategy (Peled 1998).

The relations between religious and nonreligious (secular) Jews in
Israel are complex. Religious and nonreligious groups differ in their
lifestyles, orientation, and attitudes on cultural and social issues (Weller
1991). There is significant residential and social segregation between
the two groups. The existence of separate education systems for the
religious groups widens the social distance between religious and non-
religious youth (Friedman 1989). Despite the fact that they are a
numerical minority, the religious do not admit their minority status
or behave like a minority group, because they believe that they rep-
resent what Jewish society and culture ought to be (Dan 1997). The
vast majority of the *haredim* do not serve in the army and even man-
ifest animosity toward military service, although the army stands at
the center of the national consensus in Israel (ibid.). This creates a
strong potential for tension and conflict between the two groups
(Gordon 1989).

The State of Israel has created a unique system to alleviate reli-
gious-nonreligious conflicts, based on the inclusion of religious groups
in the national consensus. This step was an integral part of the
redefinition of the collective identity of Jews as congruent to that of
the State of Israel (Arian 1985; Liebman 1990). The Zionist social-
ist leadership, which was secular, worked to define this identity in a
way that combined the national with the religious components (Shapiro
1998: 669).

The inclusion of the religious groups within the Israeli consensus
was based on the creation of "status quo–consociational" arrange-
ments (Cohen and Zisar 1998). These arrangements were fortified
by a number of laws, which embodied concessions made by both
groups, although some argue that the secular groups conceded more
(ibid.). The religious groups, for their part, used the status quo to
establish their institutional autonomy, reflected, in part, in religious
groups' autonomous control of their own educational systems. Thus,

while such autonomy was denied to Mizrahi immigrants and Arabs, it was granted to the religious (but Ashkenazi) sector of the Jewish population. The 1949 Compulsory Education Law and the 1953 State Education Law recognized three separate Jewish school systems: state schools, state-religious schools, and the Independent school system run by the Ultraorthodox Agudat Yisrael (Kleinberger 1969: 118–124).

As can be appreciated from the foregoing, religious-nonreligious relationships walk a tightrope. The attempt by the secular leadership to include the religious groups within the redefinition of the Jewish collective identity after the establishment of Israel has created a sort of national consensus, which, though fragile, has survived several challenges. Its survival may be attributed to two main factors: the pragmatic needs of both groups and the Israel-Arab conflict. The latter has created a mythical solidarity and overshadowed social and ethnic divisions. The occupation of Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, in 1967, created a new agenda for Israeli society as a whole and for the religious sector in particular. These groups, with support from the secular leadership of Labour and later the Likud, sought to fulfill the historical dream of "Greater Israel" (Goldberg and Ben-Zadok 1986). This created a formula for a relationship between state and settlers, in which the latter manifest intermittent antagonism toward the state and effectively prevent any territorial compromise to resolve the Israel-Arab or Israel-Palestinian conflict (ibid.: 70).

For radical religious groups, bringing all of mandatory Palestine under Jewish control provided a means for releasing them from their tie to the state, with its secular meaning, and opened the door for the re-establishment of an authentic Jewish bond (Friedman 1989: 66). The secular elite, for its part, evidently exploited the new situation as a means for manipulating religious and ethnic tensions within Israel.

The Palestinian Intifada that began in 1987, and later the peace process that followed the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993, radically altered the aforementioned equilibrium. The transition from conflict to peace has sharpened the internal divisions within Israeli society. National, ethnic, and religious divisions, long overlooked, came to the surface and presented a real challenge for the internal stability of Israeli society (Al-Haj 1997).

In the new situation, the religious-nonreligious divide becomes

sharper. The most radical faction among the religious, led by the settlers, perceived territorial compromise with the Palestinians as the strongest challenge to their ideology since 1967. Therefore, they sought to change this reality by all means, including illegal ones. This campaign peaked in the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in November 1995 (Cohen and Sizar 1998). This act seriously jarred the state-and-religion consociational arrangements and accelerated the pressure by both groups for a clear-cut decision on the state-religion issue (ibid.).

The foregoing analysis presents the basis for the development of Jewish society in Israel and the creation of the ethnic stratification that characterizes it. We have seen that the Ashkenazi elite systematically operated a well-organized apparatus through which it dominated Jewish society before and after the establishment of Israel. This apparatus created a "system of exclusion" through which the elite determined the nature and boundaries of the collective identity and thus the nature of legitimacy for each group. This system comprises two levels: The Jewish-Jewish level and the Jewish-Arab level. Oriental Jews were excluded by cultural, ethnic, and class elements, while the Ashkenazi Ultraorthodox were excluded mainly by theological and ideological elements. The Sephardi Ultraorthodox (represented by Shas) are excluded on both accounts. But the Zionist-Jewish character of Israel has been used to draw the legitimate borders of Israeli society along ethno-national lines that, while including all Jewish groups (regardless of ethnic affiliation and religious observance), exclude the Palestinian citizens of the country.

The above mentioned exclusion system was rightly described by Yiftachel as "ethnocracy" (1999b). Such an ethnocratic regime is characterized by a number of basic principles. It creates a structural and ideological apparatus, which safeguards the rights and privileges of the "dominant ethnos" and excludes indigenous or rival minorities. Although the latter groups are granted some civil and political rights, the ethno-national character of the state determines the allocation of resources and the borders of legitimacy, thus creating a constant tension between the democratic and ethnocratic principles. Also, in such regimes political residential, and economic segregation and stratification occur on ethno-national and ethno-class levels (ibid.: 368, 382).

Now we shall turn to the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel. The argument is that the exclusion systems that operate against Mizrahi

Jews and Arabs have considerable overlap, mainly in cultural-Oriental and class elements. Nevertheless, the national division—that between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel—is the deepest. These two groups differ in nationality, national goals, religion, language, and other cultural attributes. There is extensive segregation between Arabs and Jews with regard to residence, education (through high school), and other social environments. Therefore, the borders of legitimacy in Israel are basically defined on a Jewish-Arab ethno-national basis.

Here we shall present the background for the Palestinian citizens in Israel, who became an involuntary minority after the 1948 Israel-Arab war. We shall briefly analyze the main trends in their economic and socio-political developments and attempt to delineate the main factors underlying the status of the Palestinians in Israel and their location in the social structure of Israeli society.

The Jewish-Arab Divide

Background

After the establishment of Israel, only 156,000 Palestinians remained in its territory and became Israeli citizens. They constituted 13 percent of the total Israeli population. The Arabs were a weak and isolated group, cut off from their kin who became refugees in the Arab countries. The vast majority, 80 percent, were villagers. The bulk of the urban Arab middle and upper class—merchants, professionals, and the clergy—evaporated as a result of war and exodus (Al-Haj and Rosenfeld 1990: 24). Only six percent of the 200,000 Arabs who formerly lived in cities remained there after the war (Lustick 1980). In addition, some 20 percent of the Arab population in Israel were "internal refugees," forced to relocate to new communities when their original villages were destroyed during and immediately after the war (Al-Haj 1988).

Since the establishment of Israel, the number of its Palestinian citizens has increased more than sixfold, thanks to high fertility and decreasing mortality rates. In 2000 there were over one million Palestinians in Israel (or 17 percent of the population, not including East Jerusalem) (*Statistical Abstract of Israel* 2001: 2–50).

Policy toward the Palestinians in Israel

Three main factors have guided official policy toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel: the democratic character of the state, the Jewish-Zionist nature of the state, and security considerations. When the three principles are juxtaposed, the latter two gain the upper hand (Al-Haj and Yaniv 1983; Rouhana 1989; Smooha 1990). The democratic character of Israel is stated in its Proclamation of Independence, Basic Laws, and institutions. Free, democratic, and proportional elections are conducted at both the local and national levels. This has given the Palestinians in Israel room for political organization and activity, through which they have sought to improve their status and bargain for the advancement of the Palestinian case. Their collective struggle for equality and peace has become an integral part of the citizenship and national components of their identity.

However, Israeli democracy is not always compatible with the ethno-national character of the state. Israel was founded by Jews to be the national home of the Jewish people. This vocation is reflected not only in the collective and formal identity of the state but also in its institutional structure, allocation of resources, spatial policies, and determination of national priorities (see Lustick 1980; Smooha 1990; Rouhana and Ghanem 1998; Yiftachel 1999a).

The ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict has served to deepen the schism. Because of the link between the Arabs in Israel and those in neighboring countries, and especially the Palestinians outside of Israel, Jewish Israelis tend to perceive the former as constituting a "hostile minority" and "security risk." This perception has had a major influence on relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel and on the official policy of surveillance and control (Lustick 1980; Smooha 1989; Al-Haj 1995). In the shadow of the ongoing conflict, security has come to occupy the center of the political, social, and cultural experience and has legitimized militaristic tendencies in Israel at the expense of its civilian character (Ben-Eliezer 1999). Therefore, the principle of security considerations has ethnocentric meaning as well, intimately associated with the Jewish-Zionist character of the state. This principle serves the Jewish majority, whereas the Palestinian population is considered to be part of the "security problem."

The problematic overlapping identity of the Arabs in Israel, between their national and citizenship affiliations, came to the forefront during the first Palestinian Intifada (1987–92). This Intifada sharpened

the status of the Arabs in Israel as a "double periphery," located simultaneously at the margins of both Israeli society and the Palestinian national movement (Al-Haj 1993a). The Arabs' unequivocal identification with, and support of, the Intifada, although within the confines of law, were perceived by large segments of the Jewish Israeli population as being anti-Israeli, since, as indicated earlier, loyalty of the Arab citizens to the national cause is considered by most Jews as contradictory to their loyalty to Israel. Thus the image of the Arab citizens as a "hostile minority" has been strengthened, pushing them even further to the periphery of Israeli society. On the other hand, the political behavior of the Arabs highlighted their marginal role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the fact that they are placed at the periphery of the Palestinian National Movement (ibid.: 73).

The above-mentioned factors have deeply affected social change among the Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel, their relationships with the Jewish majority, and the potential of sharing the power system in Israel, as will be analyzed in what follows.

Social Change

The Palestinians in Israel have experienced conspicuous social changes, reflected in various fields. The rise in the level of education may be the most salient development. Whereas the median schooling among the adult Arab population (15 years and over) was 1.2 years in 1961, by 1999 it was 10.8 (*Statistical Abstract of Israel* 2000: 22.12). At the same time, there has been a steady increase in higher education, with the number of college and university students per 1000 population increasing from 0.2 in 1965 to 6.3 in 1996 and 12 in 1999 (Al-Haj 2001).

The quantitative change was coupled with one in quality. The educational increase encompassed the different Arab religious groups, urban and rural population, and men as well as women. In 2001, women constituted 51 percent of Arab university students and 33 percent of Arab university graduates (ibid.).

Contact with the Jewish population, who constitute the Arabs' reference group in terms of socioeconomic development, has increased gradually. Arabs in Israel have experienced profound processes of bilingualism and biculturalism. This has facilitated their exposure to the mass media and mass communication, in both Arabic and Hebrew (see Smooha 1989).

The Palestinians in Israel have also experienced a process of politicization, accompanied by a deep shift in their identity: from a local traditional identity to a national consciousness (see Mari 1988). As a result, they have become strongly aware of their status as a national minority (Miari 1987). The traditional leadership has been increasingly replaced by a young, educated, and sophisticated leadership (Rouhana 1989).

However, the "modernization" process among the Palestinians in Israel has been only partial, and to a large extent also selective. Although education is considered to be one of their main achievements, their returns from it have been relatively low. Educated Arabs have not found employment in senior governmental positions or in the Jewish private sector (see Ben-Rafael 1982; Rekhess 1988; Al-Haj 2001). The relatively rapid growth of education among Arabs, coupled with the much slower expansion of the Arab economy, has resulted in fewer appropriate job opportunities for the educated and highly skilled (Lewin-Epstein 1990: 31). In addition, military service and security considerations form a screening mechanism that has been used to exclude Arab candidates from senior positions in the Jewish sector. Thus, there is a paradoxical situation in Israel where the more the Arabs are educated the less chances they have to be absorbed in the Jewish sector (Al-Haj 1995).

While social change has increased the aspirations for socioeconomic mobility, ethnic stratification has erected a mobility ceiling for the Arabs (see Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1985). The rise of the standard of living among the Arab population has not diminished the disparities with the Jewish population. Gaps still exist in several areas and in some cases have even widened (see Haidar 1990; Al-Haj and Rosenfeld 1990). Moreover, the individual modernization among Arabs has not produced new and modern social and political institutions or genuine integration in the existing countrywide ones.

We may conclude that the Palestinian citizens of Israel experienced a "controlled social change." Advances at the individual level have not been reflected at the group and collective level. The prevailing ethnic stratification blocks any possibility of translating individual achievements into real assets for changing the group status of the Palestinian population. The Arabs are absorbed in low-ranking positions on the margins of the system. In this sense the Palestinians in Israel have scant prospects, because of their low starting point and because of the fact that their elite is largely territorialized in all life spheres.

The state's control of social change among the Arabs in Israel was made possible through a model of control that involves simultaneously "territorialization" and "deterritorialization" elements as will be shown in the next section. These notions are borrowed from the general "model of territoriality," in which territoriality might reinforce group status under specific conditions and weaken it under others (see Storey 2001). In this model, territoriality is defined as "a control of space in order to affect, influence or control resources" (ibid.: 14). In this sense, territoriality includes two main components: space and power. However, territoriality is not automatically affiliated with the attaining and retaining of power; and, therefore, it is of crucial importance to know whether it is a voluntary action or a reactive behavior affected or determined by outside constraints. In deeply divided societies, territorialization, which is imposed through racial, ethnic, and class lines, may further weaken disadvantaged groups. This kind of territoriality highlights "otherness" and thus facilitates discrimination against and the control of minority groups (Short 1996).

As will be shown in the analysis to follow, the impact of territoriality on the status of the Palestinian minority in Israel is rather complex. Although social territoriality has played a major role in reconstructing the Arab community and maintaining its culture and national identity, Israeli authorities have used the dynamic of territorialization and deterritorialization as major components in a model of control that has restricted the development of the Palestinian minority and facilitated its exclusion from the power system. In this sense, social territorialization among the Arab population has been accompanied by imposed spatial and economic deterritorialization. In addition, cultural territorialization has not been accompanied by cultural autonomy, but rather by a continuing policy of control of the education system. Moreover, although Arabs share free democratic elections at the local and national levels, they have been politically territorialized, in the sense of having their power limited to the local level and being excluded from sharing the opportunity structure.

Economic Deterritorialization

Arabs in Israel have been subjected to an ongoing process of economic dependency, which may be termed "economic deterritorialization." It is manifested in the eradication of the local Arab economic

base and amplification of dependency on the Jewish center (see Rosenfeld 1978). Land confiscation was an important element of this policy. Arab-owned land has been reduced to less than one-third of what it was during the British Mandate (Abu-Kish 1981: 31). Most of this land was expropriated during the first decade after the creation of Israel, when the Arabs were weak and under the tight control of the military government. Several laws and regulations were enacted by the Israeli government for this purpose. The Absentee Property Law (1950) authorized the confiscation of the property of Palestinian refugees, including those who were living in Israel (the so-called "present absentees") (Al-Haj 1988). Several regulations were used by the military government to assert state control of Arab lands: "closed area" and "security zone" regulations, the Cultivation of Wastelands Ordinance, and the Mandate-era Defense (Emergency) Regulations of 1945 (see Jiryis 1981).

Land expropriation, combined with internal social processes and countrywide elements connected with the Israeli economy, have resulted in a deep process of proletarianization (for a detailed analysis of these processes, see Rosenfeld 1964, 1978). This has brought a radical transformation of the Arab economy, from one based on agriculture to one based on wage labor, mostly outside the Arab localities. In 1955, about 49 percent of the Arab labor force worked in agriculture. This decreased to 40 percent in 1967, 17 percent in 1977, 4.3 percent in 1996, and only 2.3 percent in 1999 (see Tel Aviv University Report on Agriculture 1979: 11; *Statistical Abstract of Israel* 1989; 1996: 298; 1999: 12.28).

The Arab labor force occupies the bottom rung of the ladder. It is concentrated mainly in the services, construction, and manual jobs in industry (Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1986). Economically, the Arab minority is considered to be an underdeveloped group (see Ben-Shahar and Marx 1972: 11). While a broad Jewish middle class has developed and prospered in areas such as finance, import-export, industry, and entrepreneurship of every size and description, it is essentially a middle class created and subsidized by the state and excludes Arabs—although some Arabs have entered its periphery and others share its benefits (Rosenfeld 1978).

Despite the improvement in the standard of living among the Arabs, the gap between them and the Jewish population has remained constant and in some ways has even grown wider (Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1986: 350). This is reflected in the relative distribution

of the Arab and Jewish labor forces. In 1999, only 6.5% of Arabs
were university-educated professionals (compared to 13.8% among
Jews) and 1.2% worked as managers (6% among Jews), while 44%
worked in construction, services, and industry (17.6% among Jews)
(*Statistical Abstract of Israel* 1999: 12.28–29).

The Arabs' weak economic status is also reflected in their over-
representation in poverty and unemployment rates. According to
official statistics for 1999, one out of every two poor children in
Israel was an Arab. In addition, 42.3% of Arab families in Israel
are below the poverty line (National Insurance Institute 2000: 5).
Poverty among large Arab families increased from 50% in 1998 to
61% in 1999 because of increased unemployment in Arab localities
(ibid.).

Political Territorialization

The Arabs in Israel have always had the right to vote in the free
and democratic elections for the Israeli parliament. Nevertheless, the
Arabs' share in the national power center has been restricted. The
prevailing circumstances among the Arab population in the after-
math of Israeli statehood facilitated "political territorialization" of the
Arab minority, in the sense of restricting the Arabs' political power
to the local Arab-Arab competition. The lack of national leadership,
along with the weak political consciousness among the Arab citizens
at the time, made it possible for the traditional *hamula* leadership to
exercise control of the entire population via a few key people and
at the same time perpetuated internal divisions among the Arabs
and prevented the formation of a collective national identity or any
rapprochement with the left-wing parties (see Rosenfeld 1978; Al-
Haj and Rosenfeld 1990).

Until the late 1960s, Arab-affiliated Knesset lists were one of the
most efficient instruments for channeling Arab votes (Landau 1969,
1993; Abu-Gosh 1972). These satellite lists were initiated and backed
by Zionist parties, mainly Mapai-Labour, which was the principal
political force until 1977 (Shokeid 1982: 122). The object of these
lists was not the political mobilization of the Arab populations but
rather the "capture" of Arab votes.

Starting in the early 1970s, the Palestinians in Israel experienced
a process of politicization accompanied by both a national awaken-
ing and an intensifying struggle for civic equality. These simultane-

ous trends reflect the collective identity of the Palestinians in Israel, with its national (Palestinian-Arab) and citizenship (Israeli) components. As a result, most Arab parties have shifted their campaign from the "politics of protest" to a pragmatic approach of "power-sharing" (Al-Haj 1997).

Despite the politicization process and the increasing pragmatic orientation of the predominantly Arab parties, the Arabs have remained outside the borders of legitimacy in the Israeli political culture and have been denied all access to the national power center.

Since the establishment of Israel, no Arab party has ever been allowed to be a full partner in a government coalition, including those based on Labour and the left wing. A good example is the situation of the predominantly Arab parties during the period of the Rabin-Peres government (1992–1996). Even though these parties' support for the government was a crucial component of its parliamentary majority, they were permitted only to support it "from the outside" as part of the "blocking majority" that made it impossible for the Likud to form a government. This situation actually turned the predominantly Arab parties into a "blocked minority," permanently denied access to any share in the benefits of the power center, which is exclusively Jewish (Al-Haj 1997).

The political exclusion of Arabs becomes abundantly clear when they are compared with Jewish groups who have similar mobilization patterns, mainly the Ultraorthodox and immigrants from the former Soviet Union. These three groups are of almost equal voting weight (11%–12% of the electorate each). Theoretically, each of them should have a strong bargaining position, thanks to the stalemate between the major political blocs that has prevailed since 1984. In fact, only the Ultraorthodox and FSU immigrants manage to benefit from the situation. Although the three groups are ostensibly of equal importance before elections and the mainstream parties make every effort to attract their voters, the situation changes totally after election day, when the issue becomes one of sharing power. The Arabs quickly discover that, once again, they have been used as a "reservoir of votes" and can now be ignored, whereas the other two groups join the haggling for coalition status.

The 1999 elections offer a good example. Even though 95% of the Arab voters supported Ehud Barak, he ignored the Arab parties when it came time to form his government. Once again they were relegated to the status of a "permanent opposition" (see Smooha

1990; Ghanem and Ozacky-Lazar 1999). On the other hand, the larger of the two Russian parties (Yisrael Ba'aliya) and the Ultra-orthodox parties won seats at the government table, even though the former never expressed unambiguous support for Barak during the campaign and the latter had openly supported Netanyahu.

Cultural Territorialization without Cultural Autonomy

When Israel was established, there was a serious discussion among policymakers about whether to apply the assimilation strategy (imposed on Oriental Jews) to the Arabs in Israel. However, there was no intention of extending the exclusively Jewish melting-pot value of *mizzug galuyot* to cover the indigenous Arab minority. The idea in the Ministry of Education was rather to assimilate the Arabs into Israeli society and eradicate their national-Arab identity, creating a "new non-Jewish Israeli" (see Al-Haj 1995).

Eventually, the assimilation option was deserted in favor of a strategy that may be termed "controlled territorialialization" (ibid.). This model is based on administrative and sectarian segregation between the Jewish and Arab Education systems. As a matter of fact, this segregation responds to both the Jewish and the Arab orientations, where both groups support the continuity of their cultural uniqueness (see Smooha 1990). This segregation has enabled Arabs to use Arabic as a medium of instruction in Arab schools, and thus to retain their cultural uniqueness (Al-Haj 1996). However, such "cultural territorialization" has not been accompanied by cultural autonomy, in the sense of giving the Arab population administrative control over their education system and the right to determine their curriculum. Instead the Arab education system has been subjugated to Jewish control of the administration, staffing, resources, and, most important of all, the content of the school system (see Mari 1978; Mazawi 1994; Amareh and Mari 1999). Its main objective has been to legitimize the ideology of the state (as a Jewish-Zionist state), enhance loyalty to it, maintain order and stability, and educate for a Jewish-Arab co-existence in which Arabs accept their inferior status (Peres et al. 1968; Mari 1978; Al-Haj 1994).

Multiculturalism vs. Sectarian Identities in Israeli Society

As we can see from the foregoing analysis, Israel is a society rent by deep ethnic, religious, and national divides. One of the main factors behind the increasing potential for conflict is undoubtedly the wide gap between the social structure and the official culture of Israel. In terms of its social structure and relative to its population, Israel is probably one of the most pluralistic and multicultural societies in the world. The population of nearly six million (1998) includes a Jewish majority that originated in about 100 countries and about a million Palestinians (*Statistical Abstract of Israel* 2000: 2.48). There are also more than 200,000 foreign workers, who constitute 9 percent of the labor force and about half of all workers in agriculture and construction (Fisher 1999: 15). As elsewhere, this group, which arrived as temporary workers, is becoming an integral part of the local population, affecting not only the economic structure of Israel but also the social and cultural spheres (Nathanson and Achdut 1999). The Arab population, too, is not homogenous and is divided by religion (Muslims, Christians, Druze) and other social categories.

Despite this deep cultural pluralism, no broad multicultural perception has developed in Israel, whether at the level of Jewish-Arab relations or of inter-group relations within the Jewish sector. The ethno-national structure of Israel and the lack of separation between state and religion have retarded the emergence of an all-inclusive civil circle. As a result, the potential for an umbrella identity based on a shared civility has remained extremely weak. In this situation, the identities of the different groups in Israel have developed as mutually contradictory. What is more, in most cases the legitimization of one identity automatically means the delegitimization of the counter-identities (Mautner, Sagi, and Shamir 1998).

This situation has reinforced a sectarian orientation in Israeli society that may be designated "tribalism." Each group increasingly concentrates on its own interests and constructs its mobilization strategy and relationships with other groups and the national authorities accordingly. Thus in recent years we have been witnessing a struggle over sectarian rights rather than a dialogue between the different groups. Each group is preoccupied with defending its own territory (ibid.: 69).

This trend is fueled by the government policy of "ethnicizing" society. Successive Israeli governments have responded to political pressures exerted by sectarian parties on the basis of political considerations; the prime desideratum is keeping the government coalition intact. Because the Arab parties are a priori excluded from the coalition, they have limited room for maneuver. Once again the needs of the Arab population are relegated to a very low priority.

In light of the weak civil circle in Israeli society, sectarian divisions actually expanded with the Israel-Palestinian peace process (or more precisely, the transition from war to conflict resolution) in the early 1990s. As far as the Arabs in Israel are concerned—and unlike the common misconception—the peace process has not improved their status. On the contrary, it has merely reinforced their status as a "double periphery" (see Al-Haj 1993a).

On the Israeli side, the main motivation for peace is the need for separation between the Palestinians and the Israelis, so as to preserve the Jewish-Zionist character of the state and prevent its conversion into a binational state. Both left-wing and right-wing parties present this argument. Hence the start of the peace process has, paradoxically, reinforced the ethnocratic political culture instead of opening an avenue for multiculturalism (Al-Haj 2000). As a result, even as the Jewish majority in Israel is becoming more open towards a compromise in terms of the external Palestinian-Israel conflict, it is becoming more closed toward compromises regarding internal conflicts within the Israeli society, especially when it comes to the Jewish-Zionist character of Israel (Al-Haj 2003).

The second Palestinian Intifada, which broke out on September 28, 2000, has exacerbated the already tense relationships within Israel and the area (Ozacky and Ghanem 2001). The wide participation by Israeli Palestinians in mass demonstrations (mainly at the beginning) and the killing of thirteen of them by police forces has further deepened the Jewish-Arab fissure in Israel, because they amplified the two side's mutual fears of the other and increased the existing alienation. In addition, this al-Aqsa Intifada has caused the Israel-Palestinian peace process to deteriorate from stagnation to total disintegration (ibid.).

As a matter of fact, this Intifada merely laid bare the deep rifts that existed previously. But the Jewish majority's feeling that it is a "society under siege," which has been tremendously reinforced because

of the Intifada, has given an impetus to national consensus among
the Jews, pushed peripheral political groups among the Jewish pop-
ulation toward the center, and helped legitimize what were hitherto
perceived as radical anti-Arab ideas.

This was the background for a conference sponsored by the
Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliyya, with the participation of some
300 distinguished personalities, all of them Jewish and the vast major-
ity Ashkenazim, representing various Israeli elites—military, acade-
mic, business, education, humanities, social sciences, and political—plus
representatives from the Diaspora (see Arad 2001).

The discussions of this conference were published in what came
to be known as "The Herzliyya Document" (ibid.). Here we shall
confine ourselves to the main points related to our above analysis.
The discussions focused on crucial question of the best ways to deal
with the challenges facing Israel and safeguard its future and its
national security. Although different points of view were presented,
they all pointed in one major direction: strengthening the Jewish-
Zionist-Western ethnocratic structure of Israel at the expense of its
democratic-civil-multicultural structure.

The report highlights the need to safeguard the character of Israel
as a Jewish-Zionist and democratic state (a state for all its citizens,
as the report indicates [p. 41]); but there is no mention of any con-
tradiction between the two principles. The participants do not see
that such a contradiction exists, and when the different principles
are juxtaposed, the ethno-national character of Israel, combined with
national security, gain the upper hand (see Arad 2001: 11–47).
Accordingly, Israel's security is intimately connected with the Zionist
ethos. In this sense, "the security of Israel without the Zionist ethos
is a security without Israel" (a statement by Efraim Halevy, reported
in Arad 2001: 42).

The strategy proposed for strengthening national security excludes
not only Arabs, but also—because they are non-Zionist—Ultraorthodox
Jews as well. Hence it is suggested that every effort should be made
to ensure "governments that are mainly Jewish-Zionist." "Second-
best" would be the formation of a "joint political forum, composed
of Jewish-Zionist Knesset members," to reinforce the vital internal
basis of "national security" (p. 363).

The demographic issue received special attention in the conference
proceedings. According to the report, the "demographic danger" lies

in the "natural increase" of the Arab citizens in Israel. A number of measures were suggested for minimizing the Arab population and maximizing the Jewish population. They include preventing any repatriation of Palestinian refugees to Israel, a "voluntary" transfer of the Arab citizens, and "suggesting that the Arab residents of the 'Little Triangle' join the Palestinian state" (p. 27). In addition, a number of restrictions on Arabs were suggested (such as a connection between military service and citizenship), in order to drive at least part of them to renounce their Israeli citizenship (p. 358). That is to say, two forms of transfer were suggested: a "physical transfer of citizens" or a "political transfer of citizenship."

A number of steps to increase the Jewish population were suggested, including enhancing "qualitative" Jewish immigration from Western countries, mainly the United States, the integration of expatriate (Jewish) Israeli citizens by granting them the right to vote for Knesset and prime minister, enshrining in law the right of Diaspora representatives to take part in major decisions concerning the Jewish-Zionist character of Israel (and denying this right to the Arab representatives in the Knesset), and taking economic and educational measures to encourage (Jewish) fertility (p. 357).

The conference envisioned a clear Western orientation for Israel, in terms of social, economic, and cultural relationships. Thus, according to the conference, peace will be aimed first and foremost at strengthening the Jewish-Zionist character of Israel and ensuring its security, with nothing to give Israel a bridge for any kind of integration into the Middle East. One suggestion was to "stop talking about peace arrangement" and start talking about "political arrangements." In the framework of such a peace, economic relationships are important, not economic integration. Of course "cultural integration" is out of question. The document emphasizes: "There is no need for us to have syndrome of 'embracing the Arabs.' A cold peace that reflects mutual strategic interests is enough" (Arad 2001: 47).

How does this background affect Israeli attitudes toward the 1990s wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union? What is the effect of the ethno-national structure of Israel on the identity and adjustment strategy adopted by them? Will immigrants from the FSU assimilate within the bipolar ethnic structure (Ashkenazim-Mizrahim) or rather present a challenge to the Zionist project? Can this influx of Russian immigrants be expected to increase the pluralistic-civil culture in Israel or deepen its ethno-national character?

These questions will be examined through the analysis of our data in the following chapters. We begin with a historical background of the immigration and the background of the Jewish community in the former Soviet Union.

JEWS OF RUSSIA AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION: BACKGROUND AND WAVES OF IMMIGRATION

In the Soviet Union, the Jews were defined as a nationality, one among 110 legally recognized as such (Gitelman 1995: 23). Nationality in the Soviet Union was not determined by language, territory, or subjective preference, but by the national origin of one's parents (ibid.). Jews constituted the sixteenth-largest nationality (Hirszowics 1991: 274).

The demographic structure of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union was characterized by "accelerated erosion," mainly for internal reasons: negative natural increase, high proportion of the elderly, unbalanced sex ratio, emigration, and intermarriage (Tolts 1995: 365). According to official statistics, the Jewish population decreased by nearly 40% between 1959 and 1989 (ibid. 366).

According to the Soviet census of 1989, the Jewish population of the USSR was 1,480,000, based on the aforementioned formal Soviet definition of a Jew as the child of two Jewish parents. The number of non-Jews according to *halakhah* who were nevertheless eligible to come to Israel under the Law of Return ("aliya eligibles") was estimated at 888,000 (making a total of 2,368,000 prospective immigrants under the Law of Return; see the reports by the Institute for Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, cited in Ministry of Immigrant Absorption 1999: 11).

In 1998, there were 1,046,000 aliya eligibles in the FSU: 540,000 halakhic Jews and 506,000 non-Jews (ibid.). Thus, the pool of potential immigrants to Israel decreased by 64% since 1989, due to emigration and negative natural increase.

The official policy toward Jews in the Soviet Union changed substantially during the decades of the country's existence, starting with the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. At the outset, the new regime followed a complex policy toward the Jews. On the one hand, Jewish religious identity and institutions were suppressed. On the other hand, the regime encouraged secular Jewish culture, including support for Yiddish schools, theaters, and literature (Jacobs 1981: 3).

From the 1930s on, Soviet Jewish policy was directed toward assimilation. It was one example of the policy toward groups that were classified as extraterritorial minorities—that is, minorities that had lost their national attributes (the most conspicuous were the Germans and the Jews; see Pinkus 1991). At the same time, Soviet Jews were permitted to preserve some aspects of their culture until their "natural assimilation" could be completed. The autonomous cultural institutions included various forms of Yiddish culture (Chernin 1995: 234). From the early 1930s on, only Jewish culture in Yiddish had a legal right to exist. Publications in Hebrew were considered to be Zionist propaganda and outlawed (Kelner 1990: 23).

Thus the Jews of the Soviet Union came to be described as the "Jews of silence." They were defined by their Jewish identity, but this definition was only formal, since they were not permitted to build their own social and cultural institutions (Markowitz 1995).

The Jewish community in the Soviet Union experienced several changes in its identity and national-religious orientation. Gitelman (1994) notes several events that played a major role in the formation of Soviet-Jewish identity in the twentieth century. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Jewish community made a conspicuous transition from a strong Jewish cultural-religious identity to one deeply acculturated in Russian culture and society.

Later, however, the collective memory of the Holocaust reinforced the perception of the uniqueness of Jewish identity and of the shared destiny of the Jewish people. Immediately after the Second World War there was a revival in religious activity among Soviet Jews, reflected in the increasing activity of synagogues and Jewish community institutions, initially treated with relative apathy by the authorities (Ro'i 1995). This attitude, however, was short lived; by the early 1950s, the pre-war assimilation process had resumed (ibid.).

The establishment of Israel offered additional substance to their Jewish identity. Israel's international activity on behalf of Soviet Jews (direct, or indirect through lobbying in Western countries) strengthened Jewish consciousness among Soviet Jewry (Pinkus 1984).

The reform that began in the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s also inspired a revival of Jewish life, including cultural organizations, theaters, musical ensembles, and periodicals (Kelner 1991). In 1990, there were around 55 Jewish periodicals and newspapers in the Soviet Union in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Russian. This included official periodicals (such as *Birobidzhaner Stern and Sovetish Heymland*) and underground

publications (such as the *Leningradsky evreisky almanakh*) (Beizer 1990, cited by Kelner 1991: 23).

A survey of the Jewish press in the Soviet Union at the start of the 1990s found that the Jewish newspapers and magazines had systematically supported the reforms, because they were in keeping with their own interest and the Zionist cause. One of the main features of this press was support for Zionism and full understanding and support for emigration to Israel (Kelner 1991: 29).

But the Jewish revival in the waning years of the Soviet Union came too late to prevent the deep acculturation process, as reflected in various domains. Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews peaked in the 1970s and the 1980s. In 1978, the intermarriage rate was 43% among Jewish women and 58.3% among Jewish men (ibid. 32). This increased to 62.8% and 73.2% (respectively) in 1988. In the latter year, of every 100 marriages in which one partner was Jewish, there were 81 intermarriages and only 19 Jewish-Jewish marriages (Altshuler 1992: 32). Kupovetsky reports that, despite the strengthening of Jewish identification in the FSU in the 1990s, official statistics show that the rate of mixed marriages there was 80%–90% (2000: 135).

Over time, the acculturation process among Soviet Jews has become assimilation, reflected in minimizing their link to Jewishness and a deep sentimental connection with the Russian language and culture. At the same time, this assimilation led to alienation from the Jewish national culture and tradition (Pinkus 1984: 15).

Various studies have found that the Soviet Jewish community was among the most assimilation-oriented of all minorities in the USSR. In the 1979 census, for example, only 14.24% of Soviet Jews claimed a Jewish language (mainly Yiddish) as their mother tongue; an additional 5.35% claimed one as their second language. The same census revealed that 97.03% of Soviet Jews knew Russian, "making them the most Russified minority in the USSR" (Hirszowicz 1991: 275).

The passive state of Yiddish was also reflected in its feeble use in literature. In the period 1981–1986 (when there were 1,800,000 Jews in the Soviet Union), only 41 books were published in Yiddish, with a total print run of 61,000; by comparison the Baskirs, whose population was almost the same (1,751,000), published 798 books in their national language, with a total print run of 6,991,400 (ibid.: 281).

The deep acculturation of Soviet Jews was the outcome of the

longstanding official policy aimed at strengthening the national-Russian identity and co-opting the elites of other national groups, abetted by the active participation of the Jewish elite itself (see Altshuler 1992). The Soviet Jewish intelligentsia, based mainly in the large cities of Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev, was a success story in terms of economic and social achievements (Friedgut 1980). For the most part, its Jewish identity was diffuse and weak (ibid.).

A 1992–93 study of the meaning of being Jewish for the Jewish population of three Russian cities concluded that "Judaism plays a very small role" in the respondents' concept of Jewishness. It also found that the Jews' culture and consciousness were largely Russian (Chernyakov, Gitelman, and Shapiro 1997: 280). The researchers added that "at present, not more than 6 percent of adult Jews can be called, with a reasonable degree of certainty, believers in the Jewish faith" (ibid. 295). They suggested, however, that the community in the FSU might be following the model that has evolved among most American Jews to their civil religion, which comprises Jewish-secular elements and "symbolic ethnicity."

These results may be better understood against the background of the unique meaning of Jewish identity in the FSU, which is detached from religion (Gitelman 1995: 24). According to Gitelman, "Jewish identity was and is understood differently in the FSU from the way it is understood in most other places: it was and still is official- and state-determined; it has nothing to do with religion; it is defined very much by society and by the individual" (ibid.).

Because Soviet Jews lacked factual knowledge and intellectual insight into Jewishness, many Soviet Jews had "only dim emotional memories of their Jewish identity, which [was] sometimes maintained chiefly because of external pressures" (Friedgut 1980: 7).

It should be noted that the Jewish communities in the Central Asian republics were always much more committed to Jewish religion and tradition than those in the European republics (Gitelman 1988). For the Jews of central Asia and the Caucasus, like their Muslim and Christian neighbors, life in a traditional atmosphere facilitated the maintenance of theological values and traditions (ibid. 88).

Starting in the late 1980s, however, Soviet/FSU Jews experienced two parallel processes: mass emigration to Israel and the West, and adjustment and Jewish revival in their home countries (Rivkina 2000: 221). The second trend is reflected, among other things, in the establishment of national Jewish organizations, notably the Russian

Jewish Congress, the Federation of Jewish Organizations in Russia
(the Va'ad), and various religious organizations (ibid.). At the same
time, Jews are eagerly and gradually finding their way into senior
positions in the various levels of public life and government. Unlike
the Soviet period, when Jews were found mainly in academic, scientific,
and cultural life, since the early 1990s they have been penetrating
politics and business, too (Rivkina 2000: 224).

Emigration by Russian/Soviet/FSU Jews

The First Waves to Palestine

In 1881 the Jewish community in Russia was subjected to waves of
pogroms, which first erupted in Yelizavetgrad in the Ukraine. Sup-
ported by Jewish organizations (such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle,
based in France), thousands of Russian Jews emigrated to Western
Europe and the United States (see Laskov 1989: 351–352).

The Alliance refused to see Palestine as a possible destination,
since it was not convinced that Jews who moved there would be
able to support themselves (ibid.). Nevertheless, a sizable number of
Russian Jews (estimated at 25,000), mostly those who could not go
elsewhere, moved to Palestine, in a disorganized way, without sup-
port, and mostly without ideological motivation (Goldscheider 1992: 6).
This wave doubled the size of the Jewish community that existed in
1880 (ibid.).

Laskov notes that, after the pogroms, some Jewish youth in Russia
concluded that there was no hope of any change or equality in the
circumstances that prevailed there. This inclined them to the revo-
lutionary parties, a proclivity that took them away from Judaism.
This group served as a major focus of the search for a challenging
new life in Palestine and as the core of the second and the third
waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine (Laskov 1989: 354–5).

Tzur estimates that some 35,000 immigrants came to Palestine in
the second wave of immigration, between 1904 and 1914 (1997: 282).
It seems to have included about 5,000 pioneers who were inflamed
ideologically and carried with them the idea of the "Zionist revolu-
tion." They came as individuals, without families, because they sought
a drastic change in their lives (ibid.).

It has been argued that the basis for autonomous organizations,
the "state in the making" created by Jewish settlers in the pre-state

period, was laid by the second wave of Jewish immigration from Russia to Palestine (see Shilu 1997: 117). These organizations included the nucleus of the socialist labor parties (Ahdut Ha'avodah in 1919, Mapai in 1930, and the Labour party in 1969), labor associations, collective settlements (such as the kibbutz), and the first stages of Hebrew press and military organizations (Shapiro 1975; Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984; Ratzabi 1993: 299). In addition, the social thought brought by this wave became the cornerstone of the Zionist ideology among the Jewish settlers (Shilo 1997).

The local Palestinian population opposed the immigration of Russian Jews. As early as 1891, Arab leaders organized a public demonstration against Jewish immigration and land purchases in Palestine (Al-Kiali 1970). The opposition to Jewish immigration gained momentum in the early years of the twentieth century, when Arab leaders exerted pressure on the Ottoman government to ban it. The protest was joined by the Arab press, political groups, and intellectuals, who composed the elite of the Palestinian community (Yassin 1981). At the beginning, the Arabs' campaign was motivated chiefly by their fear that the Zionists intended to expand Jewish settlement in Palestine, alter its socio-demographic structure, and compete for economic resources. The national-ideological factor started to gain momentum with the continuity of these protest actions (Al-Kiali 1970).

The resistance to Jewish immigration intensified after the First World War and the establishment of the British Mandate. The Balfour Declaration of November 1917, issued in the name of the British government, which viewed "with favour" the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine and promised to facilitate its achievement, set off demonstrations and strikes by Palestinian Arabs and clashes with Jewish settlers (see Porath 1977: Al-Hut 1979).

At the end of the Mandatory period, in 1947/48, Palestine had a population of about two million—two-thirds Arabs and one-third Jews (see Gilbar 1987: 43, 56). Of the 630,000 Jews, 110,000 were Russian speakers; that is, one out of every six Jews was of Russian origin. However, they behaved as a "Jewish," rather than a "Russian," group. Consequently they did not establish "Russian" cultural organizations and there was no Russian-language press (Ben-Ya'cov 1998a: 2). Also, no major trend of immigration from the Soviet Union to Israel occurred till the late 1960s.

Immigrants from the Soviet Union in the 1970s

Students of Soviet Jewish emigration distinguish three post-1948 waves: after the 1967 war (more specifically in 1969–1974)—hereafter the 1970s wave; between 1975–1989, mainly to the United States; and since 1989—hereafter the 1990s wave—mainly to Israel (see Gitelman 1995: 16; Lissak 1995: 4). About one-third of the third wave went to the United States or Western Europe (DellaPergola 1998: 51).

   The 1970s wave brought 156,651 immigrants from the Soviet Union to Israel. An analysis of its trends and composition reveals some interesting facts. First, more than 50% of these immigrants came during the three years before the 1973 Israel-Arab war. Right after the war there was a drastic drop in the number of immigrants, down almost to zero in 1980. Second, more than one-third of these immigrants came from the Caucasian and Asian republics; during the early 1970s they accounted for more than 40% of the total.

   The Jews from the Caucasian and Asian republics are classed as Mizrahim; those from the European republics are Ashkenazim (see Litvak, Yehoshafat, and Magor 1981). The former are traditional communities who feel a strong bond to Jewish religious observance and values and a strong pull to Israel (ibid.).

Table 3.1
The 1970s Immigrants from the Soviet Union to Israel,
by Republic of Origin

Year	Immigrants from European republics		Immigrants from Asian republics		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
1968–1970	3,863	91.0	400	9.0	4,263
1971–1973	48,613	62.0	29,335	38.0	77,948
1974–1976	20,345	62.0	12,281	38.0	32,626
1977–1980	28,338	68.0	13,476	32.0	41,814
Total	101,159	64.6	55,492	35.4	156,651

Source: Adapted from Yosef Litvak, Avraham Yehoshafat, and Nono Magor 1981. *The Jews of Georgia, Bokhara, and the Caucasus. Aliya Potential for the 1980s.* Jerusalem: Ministry of Immigrant Absorption (Hebrew).

Ideology has been viewed as one of the main reasons for the 1970s wave from the Soviet Union to Israel (see Lissak 1995). Even among

those immigrants, however, there were internal differences; a considerable number came because of pragmatic rather than ideological reasons. Evidence of this is the fact that this wave dried up almost completely after the 1973 war, probably because Israel was licking its wounds (Lissak 1995: 4). In addition, Israel's economic and security difficulties after the 1973 war and the worsening of the moral and political climate in Israel played a major role in Soviet Jews' preference for North America over Israel as a destination (Gitelman 1977).

Pinkus notes that there was a transition among Soviet Jewry from aliya (the ideological Zionist term for Jewish immigration to Israel) to typical immigration in the years 1973–1974. This symbolized the transition from a "Jewish immigrant" with a strong ideological consciousness to a "regular immigrant" orientation (1984: 26). Gitelman (1995) reports that, to judge on the basis of four representative surveys that he conducted over two decades, starting in 1972, among Soviet immigrants in Israel, the ideological-Zionist motive decreased from central in the early 1970s to marginal in the 1990s (ibid.).

As a result, after 1973 most Soviet Jewish emigrants went to the United States—66,252 between 1973 and 1979 (Gilison 1981: 31). Those who moved to the United States were strongly motivated by expectations of better economic and social opportunities. For them, Israel was an "endangered land" because of continuing wars and economic risks (Jacobs 1981: 8).

The period from the mid-1970s to the early-1980s also witnessed an increasing rate of "dropouts"—Jews who left the Soviet Union on Israeli visas but proceeded to other destinations (mainly the United States) instead of Israel. Pinkus reports that while the dropout rate was only 2.1% in 1968–1973, it increased to 23.1% in 1974–1975, to 59.7% in 1976–1979, and to 70.6% in 1980–1982 (1984: 23). It continued to rise throughout the 1980s, reaching as high as 90% in 1989 (Tabory 1991: 291).

Ethiopia: A New Reservoir of Immigrants

With hopes for large-scale immigration from the Soviet Union and Western countries seeming to be unrealistic, the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency sought an alternative in Africa. The situation recalled, to some extent, that of the 1950s, when Israel and the Zion-

Figure 3.1
Trends in Ethiopian Immigration to Israel, 1948–1998
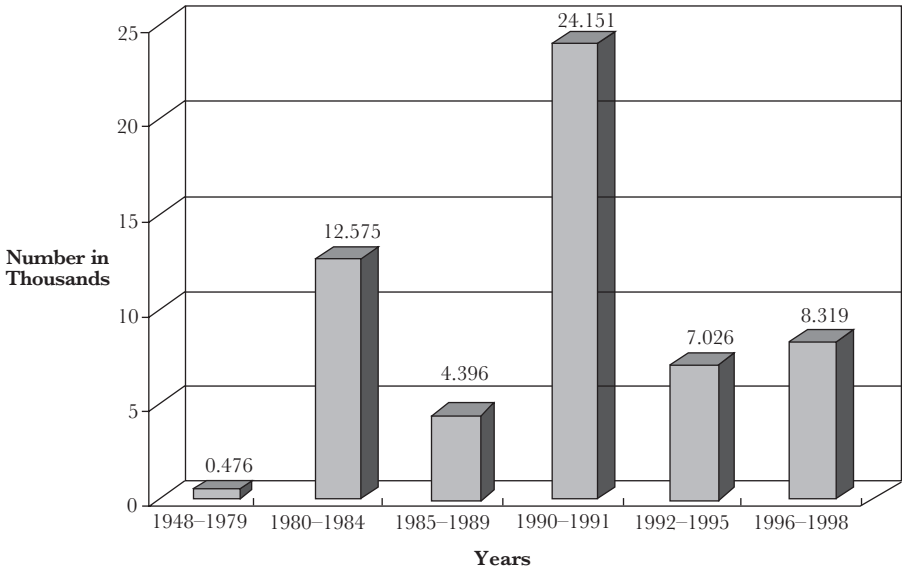
Source: Central Bureau of Statistics 2000. *Immigration to Israel 1998*. Publication No.
    1132, pp. 40–41. Jerusalem.

ist organizations encouraged Oriental immigration after the Ashkenazi
reservoir had been depleted (see chapter 2). The Jews of Ethiopia,
who had been an almost-forgotten community of dubious Jewish ori-
gin, became a main target for immigration agencies (Herzog 1998).

Government and Jewish Agency emissaries were dispatched to
Ethiopia and other countries to prepare a mass aliya (ibid.). Some
20,000 Ethiopians immigrated to Israel during the 1980s, including
nearly 8,000 in the secret Operation Moses. Official efforts to bring
Ethiopian immigrants continued in the early 1990s. They culminated
in Operation Solomon, which airlifted more than 14,000 Jews to
Israel in one weekend in 1991. During the balance of the decade,
another 21,000 came to Israel, bringing the total number of Ethiopian
immigrants from all waves to 62,287 (Ministry of Immigrant Absorp-
tion 2001).

Ethiopian immigration was vital to Israel, because it filled a num-
ber of functions. The immigrants were relatively easy to manipulate
and direct according to the authorities' perception of "national needs"

(Halper 1985). They occupied the bottom rungs in the Israel stratification system as manual workers in services, agriculture, and other blue-collar jobs (Schwarzwald and Tor-Kaspa 1997; Ellenbogen-Frankowitz and Levy 1997). No less important, the Ethiopians accepted, at least at the beginning, the "socialization" and "re-education" methods imposed on them (Weinstein 1985). They were given Hebrew first names, new birthdates, and Western clothing. They were pressed to undergo token conversion and assimilate into the religious Jewish community (Halper 1985: 126). Thus an entirely new identity and appearance were imposed on them (ibid.).

But the Ethiopians could not satisfy the establishments' desire for "quality" immigration. They came from an African traditional society, with a cultural background that has been described as "backward" and even "primitive." As a result, many veteran Israelis developed a negative stereotype of Ethiopians and relate to them as "outsiders" (Goldberg and Kirschenbaum 1989: 53). The Ethiopians' dark skin, too, exacerbates their integration difficulties (Weinstein 1985).

Aspirations for Aliya from the West

With the radical slowdown of immigration from the Soviet Union and the continuing decrease in the fertility rate among Israeli Jews, many voices began to be raised in the late 1980s, calling attention to the demographic situation. From the perspective of the dominant Zionist-Ashkenazi-secular elite, there were two parallel demographic trends of concern: the increasing percentage of Palestinians both in Israel and in the territories and the ethno-religious balance in the Jewish sector, where Mizrahim had become the majority, and especially in light of the increasing power of religious groups (mainly Shas) among the Mizrahim.

On the Jewish-Arab level, the situation was described as a "demographic danger" (see Soffer 1988a, 2001). The fear was that the Jews would lose their majority status, which is one of the bases of the Jewish-Zionist state. Geographer Arnon Soffer, one of the loudest voices on this issue, used every available means to express his ideas, including a policy paper entitled, "On the Demographic and Geographic Situation in Eretz Yisrael: The End of the Zionist Vision?" (1988a).

One of the main elements of Soffer's demographic projection was that the "expected mass Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union is not coming." In order to prevent the "catastrophe" of the "demographic danger," the solution should be "maximum security and minimum Arabs" (ibid. 36). Hence, in addition to considering ways to minimize the Arab population in Israel, including "voluntary transfer," Soffer also suggested an Israeli withdrawal from large parts of the occupied Palestinian territories (ibid. 37).

The first Palestinian intifada, which began in 1987, merely increased the confusion and sense of insecurity among Jewish society in Israel. A survey conducted by the Guttman Institute (March 1990) found that 58% percent of the Jewish population reported that their fears had increased since the start of the intifada (Katz, Al-Haj, and Levinson 1991).

Against this background, the expectations that mass immigration from the USSR could alleviate these fears increased. As indicated in chapter two, immigration has been always perceived as a remedy for Israel's problems and always has been used by the ruling elite according to the needs and priorities of the state. As a primarily secular and non-Mizrahi group, Soviet immigrants were especially important because they could treat two other fears of the dominant Ashkenazim: the fear of the "Levantization" of Israel society (a Mizrahi majority and dominance) and the fear of its "haredization" (in which Orthodox and Ultraorthodox groups dominate its culture and political system).

In the late 1970s Israeli officials spoke of the need to increase Jewish immigration from Western countries in order to balance the increasing number of Mizrahim. The Ashkenazi-Western elite has always perceived Mizrahi aliya as burden, which it shouldered paternalistically in order to "save" the Mizrahim from physical and spiritual danger; Western immigrants, by contrast, have been perceived as an asset to Israel. A good example can be found in the attitude of Pinhas Sapir, who was chairman of the Jewish Agency executive in the 1970s. He thought that Israel's survival, development, and quality of life could be provided only through Western immigration:

> Fully 60% of Israel's population consists of Jews from oriental origins. Interested as we are in a full-fledged ingathering of the communities of Israel, we have devoted tremendous efforts to gather in Jews from Yemen, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, and other oriental

states, and we have thereby saved them from physical and spiritual oppression. We are proud of the fact that the great majority of these Jews has been ingathered and is now living in Israel.

At the same time, while the children of these immigrants are being given the benefits of modern education and upbringing, the parents themselves are in no position to contribute to the country's quality of life. This can be provided only by having in Israel more and more university-education *olim* from the West (Sapir 1975: 7).

As noted above, in the late 1980s, the Levantization of Israeli society started to take on an added dimension with the rise of Shas and the fears of the Jewish secular group (which is mainly Ashkenazi) that it might lose its dominance. These fears are reflected in Soffer's paper mentioned above. Alongside his warning against the "demographic danger" posed by Arabs, Soffer also warned against the cultural-political danger posed by *haredi* Jewish groups:

The frustration, and the sense of no way, the escape of youth (emigration by secular young Israelis), and the high natural increase among the haredi, the semi-haredi, and the traditional groups at different levels . . . will shift the trend in Israeli society from secularism to religiosity, and those who dominate the society will be the fanatic. This development may lead to a harsh culture war within the Jewish society (We already see its first stages today). This war will push more and more secular people from Israel and eventually extreme religious groups will take over the Jewish community in Israel. Their achievements will lead to further disengagement from Israel by non-Orthodox Diaspora Jewry and the crystallization of a society that adheres more to the Middle Ages and less to the twenty-first century. (Soffer 1988a: 54)

The 1990s Wave

The influx of Soviet immigrants to Israel became possible after the Soviet Union totally revamped its exit policy in 1988 and the United States and other Western countries, not without Israeli pressure, introduced new entrance restrictions (Trier 1996; DellaPergola 1998). As a matter of fact, most Jewish Soviet immigrants in the period 1987–1989 preferred the United States to Israel, as they had in 1974–1980 (Jones 1996: 51). Jones indicates a number of pragmatic and value-linked reasons for this phenomenon, including the low levels of Jewish cultural identity among these immigrants, the negative image of Israel and Zionism conveyed by the Soviet media, and the

fears of the economic and social hardships associated with immi-
gration to Israel (ibid.).

After the gates of the Soviet Union were opened for Jewish emi-
gration and Israel became a major destination for emigrants, the
momentum intensified and was maintained through the intensive
activity of the Jewish Agency, which deploys *shelihim* ("emissaries").
These emissaries help increase the motivation of Jews to leave the
FSU and choose Israel as their destination (Jones 1996).

In Israel, the activity of these *shelihim* was criticized after the eco-
nomic and social burden caused by the mass movement became evi-
dent. These *shelihim* were accused of inflating both the real threat to
FSU Jews posed by antisemitism and the economic benefits that
immigrants would receive after arriving in Israel (ibid. 121).

Main Trends

About 920,000 immigrants from the USSR/FSU arrived in Israel
between 1989 and 2001 (based on the statistics of the Liaison Bureau,
cited by Dymerskaya-Tsigelman, 2002: 98). Some 40% of them came
in only two years—1990 and 1991. Since then, the average annual
number has been around 60,000 (Figure 3.2).

The main factors behind the 1990s wave included the economic
and political instability of the disintegrating Soviet Union, the change
in exit policy, the relative unavailability of alternative destinations,
and growing nationalism and antisemitism (DellaPergola 1998). But
there was no persecution or expulsion of Jews in the FSU. On the
contrary, prior to the 1990s wave Jews experienced increasing par-
ticipation in the various spheres of the public life (Konstantinov
1995: 5). Thus FSU immigrants manifest no alienation toward the
society and culture of their country of origin, which continues to
play a major role in their life (Leshem and Lissak 2000).

This conclusion is reflected in a series of surveys conducted in
1990–1997 in ten republics of the FSU, including Russia, at the
request of the Russian Jewish Congress and the American Jewish
Committee. These surveys explored the potential of "aggressive anti-
semitism" and "anti-Judaism" and accordingly estimated the expected
Jewish emigration from the FSU (Goodkov 2000: 231).

The findings revealed that, on the whole, Russians manifest pos-
itive attitudes and tolerance toward Jews. The impact of the antise-

Figure 3.2
The 1990s Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Israel,
by Year of Arrival (1989–2001)

Number in Thousands

Year	Number
1989	12.721
1990	184.681
1991	147.673
1992	65.093
1993	66.145
1994	67.747
1995	64.723
1996	58.808
1997	54.335
1998	48.537
1999	70.586
2000	51.000
2001	33.46

Years
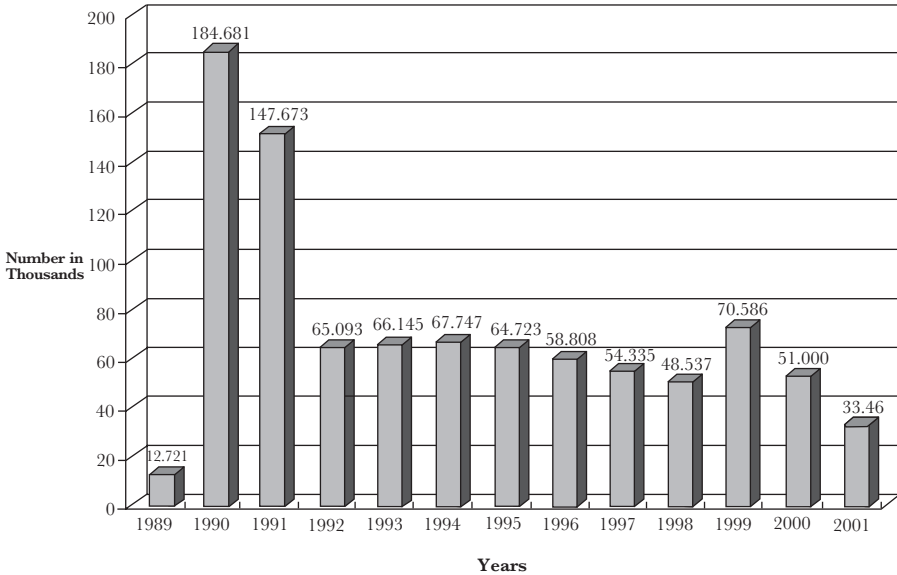
Source: Ministry of Immigrant Absorption (1998), p. 5; Gur-Gurevitz (1996), p. 281; SAI (2000), p. 5.5; Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistics Abstracts*, No. 17, August 2001.

mitic activities of some nationalist Russians at that time was very limited among the general public (ibid. 233). A review of the results of these surveys indicates that over time there was even a slight increase in the Russian public's positive image of Jews. For example, while 62% of the respondents in 1990 agreed that "Jews are people with education and culture," 75% agreed in 1997. Whereas in 1990, 68% agreed that "there are many intelligent people among Jews," 80% agreed in 1997 (Goodkov 2000: 237). In addition, the Russian public's positive attitudes toward Jews is reflected in its willingness to have close relationships with Jews: in the 1997 survey, 88% said they were favorable to having a Jewish family live in their neighborhood, 22% were favorable to the possibility of a Jew's being elected president of Russia, and 55% said they did not oppose intermarriage with Jews (ibid. 241–245). Only a small minority (6%–10%) presented extreme anti-Jewish attitudes (Goodkov 2000: 234).

Differences between the 1970s and the 1990s Waves

It has been argued that one of the main differences between the 1970s and the 1990s waves of immigration involves motivation—the earlier wave inspired chiefly by ideological and Jewish motifs, the latter by pragmatic cost-benefit considerations (see Shuval 1998; Leshem and Shuval 1998).

Despite the fact that most studies relate to the 1990s wave as normal immigrants, some studies insist that they should be considered to be *olim*—that is, ideologically motivated. For example, Mittelberg and Lev-Ari conclude that even though immigrant respondents reported motivations similar to those of normal immigrants, in the future they will undoubtedly resemble *olim* rather than "immigrants," because they are very willing to contribute to Israeli society, interested in creating social networks composed of Israelis, and perceive the Ashkenazi-secular and kibbutz dwellers as their reference groups, rather than other Russian immigrants (1992: 35).

In a similar vein, Rosenbaum-Tamari and Damian (1996), who studied the first five years of absorption of FSU immigrants, concluded that the findings cast doubt on the argument that these immigrants are "normal immigrants" who lack a Jewish identity and came to Israel because of the absence of alternatives. According to them, the immigrants indicate commitment to their Jewish identity as part of their motives for coming to Israel. However, this conclusion seems to be affected by their definition of the distinguishing features of *olim* and normal immigrants. They found that the strongest factors for immigration to Israel included the desire to secure the future of children, discrimination against Jews in the FSU, and the desire to live as Jews in a Jewish state (ibid. 1). As a matter of fact, the first two factors should be considered to be typical of normal immigrants, since they reflect "push factors" connected with the country of origin rather than "pull factors" connected with Israel.

To judge by a literature survey and the findings of our field study, we may argue that neither wave was homogenous in its motive for immigration. Pragmatic factors moved many of the 1970s immigrants, and ideological elements were not totally absent among those of two decades later.

Another difference between the two waves is that the first was led by activists and ordinary people who had fought to leave the Soviet Union. They formed a cultural and ideological elite that influenced

thousands more in the Soviet Jewish community. The 1990s wave had no leadership promoting emigration, because the lifting of restrictions on emigration eliminated the need for one (Lissak and Leshem 1995). The organizational role was played instead by formal or semi-formal Jewish and Israeli organizations, mainly the Jewish Agency and the Liaison Bureau (ibid.). Nudelman (2000: 68) concludes that the main contribution of the 1970s immigration was individual (through its leadership), while that of the 1990s wave is collective and cultural.

Some studies have found that the 1970s immigrants contributed to the development of sports, science, musical life, and the arts in Israel, but their rapid integration into Israeli society lowered their visibility as a group (Gitelman 1995: 21). Their political impact was minimal; they formed no political parties and no immigrant from that group entered the Knesset until 1988 (ibid.).

Nevertheless, as Kimmerling (1998) and Shumsky (2001) noted correctly, the two waves complemented one another. Prominent members of the elite of the 1970s wave laid the ideological and institutional basis for ethnic organizations among the 1990s immigrants (this will be discussed in detail in chapter 6, which focuses on political mobilization).

One of the main cultural characteristics of the 1990s wave is its strong Russian orientation. It was largely aloof from Jewish education in the home countries and was part of the Soviet middle class, which served as the agent of Russian culture in different parts of the empire (see Ben-Rafael 1995; Zilberg and Leshem 1999; Gitelman 1995).

In addition, a large proportion of the 1970s immigrants were traditional—mainly Georgian Jews, who accounted for about one-quarter of the 1970s immigrants to Israel (Gitelman 1981: 13). This group was less educated than Jews from the European republics of the Soviet Union, and had strong community and family orientations (ibid. 14).

The 1990s wave, too, included a sizable group (though relatively smaller than that among the 1970s wave) of immigrants from traditional backgrounds, who came from the Caucasus in 1991–1995. According to Absorption Ministry statistics, this group numbered 45,000 immigrants, joining some 10,000 who came with the 1970s wave from the FSU (Bram 1997: 158). These "mountain Jews" are considered among the most traditional Jewish communities. They have a unique Hebrew pronunciation and social structure, which is

Figure 3.3
Non-Jews among Immigrants to Israel, 1989–2001 (%)
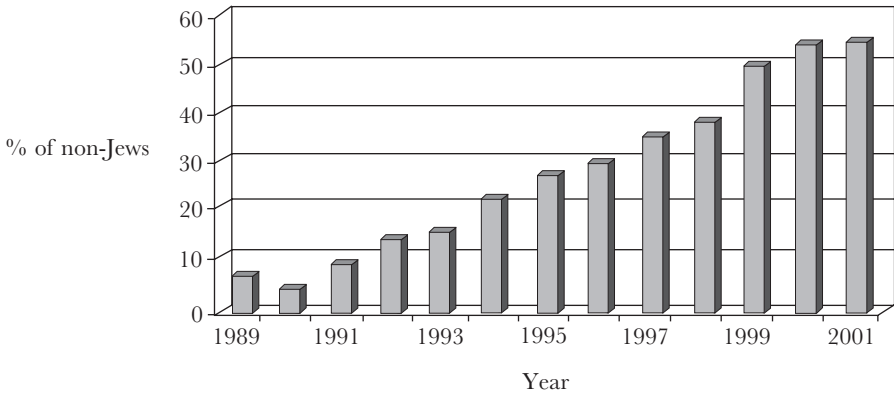
Source: Central Bureau of Statistics. 2000. *Immigration to Israel 1998*, Publication No.
1132 (June), p. 17. Statistics for the years 1999–2001 are based on the
Liaison Bureau, cited by Dymerskaya-Tsigelman, 2002: 98.

distinctive from the other immigrants who came from the FSU, in
particular the European part. Also, they are more Jewish-ideologically
oriented than other FSU immigrants (ibid.).

One of the main characteristics of the immigrants from the Caucasus
has to do with their demographic concentration in a few localities.
Thus they are visible, not because of their percentage among immi-
grants, but because they constitute a high percentage at the locality
and neighborhood levels in towns like Acre, Or Aqiva, Hadera, and
Upper Nazareth (ibid. 166). Unlike the official perception, this group
is also heterogeneous in terms of its educational level, professional
background, and social orientation (Bram 1997).

One of the major differences between the 1970s and the 1990s
waves is the existence among the latter of a large number of immi-
grants who are not Jewish according to *halakhah* (Jewish religious
law). According to official Israeli statistics, the percentage of non-
Jews among the immigrants rose from 6% in 1989 to 39% in 1998
and as much as 56.4% in 2001 (Figure 3.3). This reflects the fact
that over the years the pool of Jews among potential FSU immi-
grants has decreased and more non-Jews are immigrating to Israel
under the Law of Return and acquiring Israeli citizenship.

Orthodox leaders, who constitute the main opposition toward the
admission of non-Jewish immigrants, offered higher figures than the

authorities. Rabbi Ravitz, a Knesset member representing the Ultra-orthodox Degel Hatorah party, estimated that 30% of the FSU immigrants in 1994 were non-Jews according to *halakhah* (Avnies 1995: 249). Rabbi Joseph Mendelovitch, himself a Soviet immigrant, estimated the percentage of non-Jews at 40%, including 8% who arrived with forged documents attesting to their Jewish origin. Rabbi Shilo demanded that the certificates brought by FSU immigrants to Israel be treated with extreme caution (Shilo 1991: 90). Rabbi Mendelovitch went so far as to establish an organization "for the Jewish character of Israel," with the aim of fighting against the entry of non-Jews to Israel (Avnies 1995: 249).

Avnies (1995: 250) classifies the non-Jewish immigrants into four main categories: those who identified themselves as Jews in the FSU but were Jewish only on their father's side; family members of Jews, but who do not consider themselves to be Jewish; relatives of non-Jews whose family members are Jewish; and those who immigrated with forged papers.

Once in Israel, the non-Jews among the immigrants are subjected to discrimination, both overt and covert. The discrimination includes the refusal to bury non-Jews in Jewish cemeteries and the fact that those who are not halakhically Jewish cannot marry in Israel (Avnies 1995).

The Orthodox and Ultraorthodox opposition to the high percentage of non-Jews among the FSU immigrants is motivated by both religious and pragmatic reasons. Consider, for example, what the rabbi of Qiryat Ata (a Jewish town near Haifa) told a local newspaper (*Arei Hamifratz*, June 22, 2001):

> The Russians' capital is Ashdod. I heard Jojo Abutbul, who is from Ashdod, on Kol Yisrael [Israel Radio], saying that there are already eight churches in the Het neighborhood. I wrote a letter to warn the mayor of Qiryat Ata: If you don't get rid of the pigs, the pigs will get rid of you. . . . The day is not distant when the mayor of Qiryat Ata will be named Timoshenko-Makarenko-Korolenko-Ivanenko . . . The gentiles get drunk and go on murderous rampages. You can't live in a city of pogroms whose heroes have inherited the genes of centuries of antisemitism. . . . They say that Qiryat Ata is becoming an Ultraorthodox town. The truth is that the city is becoming porcine. At once the chorus started shouting and Yisrael ba'Aliya wants to have me fired.
>
> *What do you want the mayor to do?*
>
> I don't have to teach him what he should do. He should do everything so it won't be good for the Russians here.

He should screen people out at the gates of the city?
I won't say any more. He knows what to do. What I do say is that the reservoirs of secular people were empty, so in order to balance us and the Arabs, they are simply bringing white gentiles [Russians] and black gentiles [Ethiopians] to the Holy Land.

The prominence of non-Jews among the 1990s immigrants has also been questioned by some secular Israelis. For example, Lily Galili (a journalist for the Hebrew daily *Ha'aretz*), wrote of the "threat" that non-Jewish immigrants pose to the Zionist-Jewish character of Israel:

The presence of hundreds of thousands of non-Jews, who come [to Israel] under the Law of Return, will sharpen the question of Israel's identity as a "Jewish State" or as "a state of all its citizens." Even without a political alliance, the natural expectation is that immigrants will join the demand of the Arab population to turn Israel into a state of all its citizens. However, while it is still easy to block the demand of the Arab population by national or nationalistic arguments, those answers will not be valid for those who came by the Zionist consensus, according to the Law of Return. But upon their arrival they [immigrants] will find a hostile reception for their existence here. (*Ha'aretz*, Sept. 30, 1999)

Yfaat Weiss (2001) raised a similar argument about this phenomenon, made possible by the 1970 amendment to the Law of Return, which allowed the non-Jewish family of those eligible to immigrate (those with at least one Jewish grandparent) to accompany them to Israel and obtain Israeli citizenship. Weiss highlighted the discriminatory repercussions of this amendment against the indigenous Arabs, who are not covered by the Law of Return and totally excluded from the dominant (non-Arab) ethnos in Israel (ibid.: 66; see also Lustick 1999).

What is the impact of this background on the immigrants' orientation, ethnic formation, social, economic, and political adjustment, and relationships with Israeli society? Based on our field study, we will address these questions in the following chapters, beginning with patterns of identity and ethnic formation.

IDENTITY PATTERNS AND ETHNIC FORMATION

Since the 1990s influx from the FSU there has been a controversy regarding identity patterns among these immigrants. Most scholars emphasize the immigrants' confusion between integration into Israeli culture and segregation as a distinct cultural group (Lissak 1995; Ben-Rafael et al. 1998; Horowitz 1994; Damian and Rosenbaum-Tamari 1996; Shuval 1998; Lissak and Leshem 1995; Kimmerling 1998). By and large, though, the conclusion is that immigrants from the FSU will eventually be integrated/absorbed into Israeli society while preserving their "cultural uniqueness" by forming a "cultural enclave" (Lissak 1995), a "sub-culture" (Smooha 1994), or a "Russian bubble" (Kimmerling 1998).

Ben-Rafael et al. (1998) maintain that immigrants from the FSU seek neither segregation nor integration in Israeli society. What they want is legitimacy for their cultural uniqueness, coupled with integration as a secular group. Lissak (1995) termed this cultural uniqueness a "cultural enclave," one that includes "Russian" cultural organizations, Russian-language media, and community organizations. These have become the main channels of information and entertainment for immigrants from the FSU in Israel.

Horowitz concludes that the cultural absorption of immigrants from the FSU is problematic, because immigrants range between integration and cultural separation (1994: 90). A similar trend was reported by Damian and Rosenbaum-Tamari, who studied FSU immigrants' assessment of their absorption in Israel after five years (1996). They concluded that the immigrants live in "two worlds": their will to preserve their own original culture and their desire to be open, to some extent, to Israeli society.

Smooha (1994) thinks that the new immigrants from the FSU will eventually be integrated into the Ashkenazi middle class in Israel, despite the absorption difficulties during the transitional period. He adds that Russian immigrants may be expected to develop and sustain a unique subculture that will be accepted by Israeli society and increase the pluralistic character of the country (ibid.: 7).

Although foreseeing different scenarios in terms of the expected ethnic formation among immigrants, Kimmerling (1998) arrives at a conclusion similar to Smooha's. He holds that the immigrants from the former Soviet Union are very similar to the Ashkenazi middle class in terms of their human capital and other characteristics. Economically speaking, this immigration is being rapidly absorbed into this class, which is searching for partners for a coalition against the other competing groups within the Israeli society. Both "Russians" and the Ashkenazi middle class feel threatened by the same groups (the Arabs, the national-religious, and the Ultraorthodox) in the competition for position in the symbolic and stratification systems. There is no guarantee, however, that the "Russian bubble" will disappear in the next generation (Kimmerling 1998: 291).

Tracing identity patterns among the 1990s immigrants from the FSU, Shumsky differentiates between two main periods: the first stage (1993–1999), when the particular-ethnic component in the immigrants' identity was most prominent; and the second stage (since 1999), during which the Jewish-national component has been gaining the upper hand (2001: 26).

Al-Haj (1996) disagrees with the aforementioned argument that immigrants from the FSU are expected eventually to integrate within the existing ethnic structure. He believes that these immigrants are in the process of constituting a distinct ethnic group in Israel. According to this approach, ethnic formation among Russian immigrants is not only socially and culturally motivated. To a large extent it is an instrumental ethnicity that is used as part of their adjustment strategy and reflects their desire to integrate into Israeli society from a position of strength rather than to assimilate from a position of weakness (ibid.: 147).

This chapter deals with identity patterns and ethnic formation among immigrants from the FSU. It addresses this issue by examining objective factors as well as subjective identification. First we examine the extent of ethnic-cultural continuity by analyzing communal organizations and information sources among FSU immigrants in Israel. Then we examine immigrants' motives for immigration and their bond with the home country as an important factor in their ethnic orientation. The "self-defined" patterns of identity are analyzed against several individual and contextual variables. In addition, we explore the "external-other definition"—how veteran Israelis perceive the immigrants' identity.

Communal Ethnic Organizations

The 1990s immigrants from the FSU in Israel have developed a wide range of local and countrywide ethnic organizations (Leshem and Lissak 2000: 47). The very fact that in 1996–1997 alone FSU immigrants established some 300 formally recognized NGOs in the fields of education, culture, and welfare services indicates the rapid development of community organizations among these immigrants (ibid.: 48). The immigrants' cultural organizations are worth mentioning, especially in the fields of the performing arts, libraries, and cultural clubs. These organizations have played a major role in maintaining Russian culture among immigrants in Israel and strengthening cultural continuity with the home country (Zilberg, Leshem, and Lissak 1995).

The Jewish Agency for Israel has played an important role in establishing and financing immigrants' organizations, which were expected to facilitate the absorption of immigrants into Israeli society (see the report of Shye et al. 1991). In the early 1990s, the bulk of such funds were channeled to associations dealing with the encouragement and absorption of immigration from the FSU (ibid.).

One of the major FSU immigrant organizations in Israel is the Zionist Forum, founded in 1989, at the very beginning of the 1990s wave. The Forum is the successor of an earlier group established in 1981 (the Information Center) to lobby for Jewish immigration from the FSU to Israel (Jewish Agency for Israel 1992: 99). The Forum constitutes an umbrella organization for various Russian associations in Israel and proclaims the following aims:

> To encourage national consciousness among Jews who are still living in the Soviet Union; to contribute to an effective absorption of immigrants from the FSU in Israel; to establish an institutionalized community in Israel; and to encourage cultural and educational activity among FSU Jews (ibid.: 99–100).

In addition to organizations established by immigrants themselves, Horowitz and Leshem (1998) mention a number of "bridging organizations" established and operated by the Israeli authorities. These organizations design and run activities that are aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants in Israeli society and accelerating their socialization and acculturation. The most important of these are the *ulpan* for learning Hebrew, *mechina* pre-academic programs for

immigrant students, programs for the development of immigrant lead-
ership, and other activities run by immigrants' organizations with
government support (ibid.).

The government, through the various ministries that deal with
immigrants (notably Absorption and Education), employs a policy
that aims at implanting the dominant culture among immigrants
(Horowitz and Leshem 1998). One of the main instruments of social
and cultural socialization is the *ulpan* or Hebrew-language class, which,
in addition to providing immigrants with competence in Hebrew,
also works toward their "resocialization" and internalization of a new
set of norms and values.

The government has also endorsed and subsidized unique Russian-
language cultural services for the 1990s immigrants, including radio
broadcasts for immigrants (*Reqa*, the immigrant absorption network),
matriculation exams conducted in Russian, and the inclusion of
Russian in the curriculum of the formal education system (Leshem
and Lissak 2000).

Three main factors have facilitated the FSU immigrants' estab-
lishment of their own organizations and maintenance of their orig-
inal culture: the immigrants' characteristics and orientation, changes
in government absorption policy, and changes in the orientation of
veteran Israelis.

The retreat of the collectivist ethos and practice in Israel has been
accompanied by increasing legitimacy for cultural continuity among
immigrants, in the wake of the failure of the "melting pot" ideol-
ogy. In this sense, there is less pressure for assimilation and con-
vergence than the 1950s, when Mizrahi immigrants were forced to
desert their original Arab-Islamic culture in favor of the dominant
Ashkenazi-Western culture (see Chapter 2).

Whereas the 1970s immigrants from the Soviet Union were sub-
jected to tight control by the Israeli authorities in every stage of their
absorption, the 1990s immigrants have been given a great deal of
personal responsibility for their own fate (Hacohen 1994, cited by
Leshem and Lissak 2000). The very fact that most of them experi-
enced a process of "direct absorption" instead of being housed in
Jewish Agency–run absorption centers significantly reduced the intense
involvement that the authorities had in the educational and cultural
life of former waves (Leshem and Lissak 2000). Direct absorption
has given immigrants a sense of autonomy in the process of eco-

nomic adjustment and in decisions about where they live (Rosenbaum-Tamari and Damian 2001).

Nevertheless, an intensive effort is still being made by Israeli authorities and Jewish organizations alike to implant the Jewish-Zionist orientation among immigrants (Horowitz and Leshem 1998). Even before they move to Israel, immigrants are exposed to a wide range of social and cultural activities organized by the Jewish Agency and various Jewish organizations. These activities aim at raising potential immigrants' awareness of Israel and strengthening their bond with Jewish religion and tradition (Zemah and Weisel 1996, cited in Horowitz and Leshem 1998).

Sources of Information, Russian-Language Media

The FSU immigrants in Israel have attempted to maintain their cultural continuity and ethnic cohesion by creating their own media and sources of entertainment. The Russian-language press is the main expression of this. Ben-Ya'cov (1998a: 5) estimated that some 137 Russian-language newspapers, magazines, and periodicals were published in Israel between 1948 and 1998. Most of these, however, were short-lived (ibid.).

The first serious attempt to establish a Russian-language periodical press in Israel came from the 1970s wave of immigrants (Wartburg 1994). In the late 1970s there were ten such magazines, newspapers, and periodicals (Frankel 1977: 47)—including one daily (*Nasha strana* [Our homeland]) and two weeklies (ibid.: 48). This sector emerged in response to a number of factors that involved the immigrants' cultural needs during the initial stages of absorption, the attempt to influence their ideological and political orientation, and profit considerations of both immigrant and veteran Israeli investors (Frankel 1977).

But the Russian press in Israel soon encountered difficulties and barriers caused by Israeli society's pressure on the immigrant elite to assimilate and the limited market for its wares (Wartburg 1994: 161). In her survey of the Russian-language press in Israel in the 1970s, Frankel offers a number of examples of this pressure (1977: 64). In 1972, a group of young Russian immigrants received a subsidy from the Jewish Agency and established a journal called *Ami* (My people). But it soon shut down when no further subsidies were forthcoming,

on the grounds that it was "not Zionist" (ibid.). By the end of the
1980s, only the daily *Nasha strana* and three weeklies survived (see
Ben-Ya'cov 1998a: 3).

The critical mass of the 1990s wave set off the rapid development
of Russian-language media in Israel. According to Lissak and Leshem,
by 1995 Israel had 50 newspapers, magazines, and newspaper sup-
plements in Russian (Leshem and Lissak 2000: 47, based on Fein
1995). In addition to being their major source of information about
community activities in the social, cultural and political spheres, these
periodicals have major influence on the social boundaries of the
immigrant community, its symbols, and its relations with society at
large (Leshem and Lissak 2000; Rogovin-Frankel 1996).

Zilberg, Leshem, and Lissak distinguished three main approaches
conveyed by the Russian-language press and Russian cultural clubs
in Israel: assimilation, integration, and segregation. The first approach
is found in the periodicals established and financed by veteran Israeli
parties and political organization, notably *Nasha strana*, which served
to promote the Labour Party, and *Alef*, which performed a similar
service for the right wing (1995: 15). The integration-oriented peri-
odicals are chiefly those established with the profit motive foremost,
including by Russian entrepreneurs who have no political affiliation.
These publications are an arena for Soviet immigrant leaders from
the 1970s wave and the leadership of immigrant organizations who
have been integrated into the Israeli establishment (ibid.: 18). The
dominant stream consists of the segregation-oriented papers—local
and national newspapers, operated by immigrant entrepreneurs from
the FSU who are affiliated neither with the Israeli establishment nor
with the Russian-Israeli establishment (the Zionist Forum). These
journals, which are extremely critical of both establishments, give
voice to the immigrants' problems and despair and highlight the dis-
crimination against them in different fields (Zilberg, Leshem, and
Lissak 1995: 18, 24).

The contents of the Russian press also reflect the social orienta-
tion of the immigrants from the FSU. Therefore, the social distance
manifested among immigrants toward different groups in Israeli soci-
ety comes to expression in the Russian press. For example, the anti-
religious orientation among immigrants is reflected in the fact that
there is not a single religious newspaper in Russian. In addition,
these newspapers are a leading power in the fight against the reli-
gious parties and establishment (Ben-Ya'cov 1998a: 11). These news-

papers are also loaded with hostility against Arabs, Sephardim, Ethiopians and veterans as a whole (Ben-Ya'cov 1998b: 245). While the Russian press conveys a message of reservation toward the Israeli culture, it conveys a clear message of pride in the Russian culture (ibid.). It has even been argued that Russian-language newspapers in Israel have strengthened the positive self-image and the sense of cultural superiority among immigrants (Zilberg and Leshem 1996).

One of the major questions that arises is whether these Russian periodicals reflect a tendency to create a "cultural ghetto" in Israel. Although there is no clear-cut answer to this, scholars tend to see the phenomenon as typical of new immigrants everywhere, as they create a press in their own language in order to communicate with the host society and facilitate their own adjustment (Ben-Ya'cov 1998a).

Zilberg, Leshem, and Lissak (1995) support this idea but offer a complex picture of the roles played by these publications. They conclude that Russian-language periodicals play a central role in the immigrants' social cohesion and provide an outlet for their frustration (ibid.: 33–34). In a later study of the Russian press in Israel, Zilberg and Leshem conclude that both the integration-oriented and the segregation-oriented papers, which form the dominant stream, call for group solidarity, a stronger group identity, and the formation of a formal community of immigrants from the FSU in Israel (1999: 31).

Our findings show that sources of information among immigrants are mainly ethnic, produced within the group and derived from the home-Russian culture. According to the answers to a series of questions that explored the type of media to which they are exposed, immigrants reported that they have much greater exposure to Russian-language television channels broadcasting from the former Soviet Union (available by cable) than to Israeli television. Some 77.2% of the respondents watch cable channels from Russia "regularly"; 25% regularly watch Israeli Russian-language television programs; 24.6% regularly watch Israeli television in Hebrew; and none have any regular exposure to Israeli television in Arabic.

The same holds true for exposure to the print media and radio. According to our findings, 40.2% listen regularly to the Russian-language immigrant radio station *Reqa*, while only 20.9% listen regularly to Hebrew-language Israeli radio. Whereas 59.7% of respondents read the local Russian-language press regularly and 8.9% read

newspapers and magazines published in the FSU regularly, only 8.9%
read the local Hebrew press on a regular basis.

It should be noted that the immigrants' exposure to the different
media categories is strongly affected by their command of Hebrew
on the various levels: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. We
asked about each of these separately, with the answers on a scale of
poor, middle, good, and excellent. These variables formed our index
of "Hebrew knowledge, which is composed of three categories." We
first examined the reliability analysis scale in order to clarify the
internal relationships. The alpha for the four variables was 0.954,
which indicates a very high internal reliability for the index. According
to this Hebrew-command index, 43% of the respondents are at a
low level, 27% at a moderate level, and 30% at a high level.

The relationship between knowledge of Hebrew and exposure to
the mass media is summarized in table 4.1. Although all the cate-
gories of the independent variables indicating exposure to mass media
were included in the Chi-square test, the percentages presented in
the table relate only to the highest category.

Our findings show a strong relationship between knowledge of
Hebrew and the type of media to which immigrants are exposed. A
strong negative relationship was found between consumption of
Russian-language media and improved command of Hebrew (r =
−0.489). By the same token, there was a strong positive relationship
between improved command of Hebrew and the consumption of
Hebrew-language media (r = 0.223). It is worth noting that the main
difference is evident at the high level of Hebrew knowledge. Even
at this level, however, more immigrants consume Russian-language
media (except for radio) than Hebrew media. According to the
findings, 37.7% of those with a high level of Hebrew knowledge
read Russian-language Israeli newspapers regularly, while only 24.3%
read Hebrew newspapers on a regular basis. The trend is even more
evident when it comes to television: in the same category of knowl-
edge of Hebrew, 60.5% watch cable TV from Russia and only 49%
watch Hebrew channels. The situation is different for radio; among
those with the level of high Hebrew-knowledge, the percentage of
those who listen to the Russian-language network that broadcasts
from Israel is much lower than that of those who listen to Hebrew
stations. This may result from the fact that Reqa is an official radio
station aimed mainly at meeting the immediate absorption needs of

Table 4.1
Exposure to Mass Media by Knowledge of Hebrew

	Exposure to Mass Media (%)							
	*Newspapers***			Television**			Radio**	
Command of Hebrew	Israeli news-papers in Hebrew	Newspapers in Russian published in Israel	Newspapers and magazines produced in Russia	Israeli TV in Hebrew	Israeli TV in Russian	Cable TV from Russia	Hebrew radio	Reqa network for immigrants from FSU in Israel—Russian language
Low	1.3	72.0	11.2	7.6	33.1	88.8	5.6	63.2
Middle	6.9	63.0	7.9	26.0	24.0	77.1	23.4	31.9
High	24.3	37.7	6.9	49.0	14.1	60.5	41.0	13.7

** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

new immigrants. Its programs are less relevant for those who have acquired good Hebrew.

All in all, the findings show that Russian-language media, broadcasting from both Russia and Israel, form the major source of information and entertainment for the majority of immigrants from the FSU, even those with a good command of Hebrew.

Motivation for Migration and Connection with the Home Country

As mentioned in Chapter 2, mainstream Israeli sociologists have argued that Jewish immigration to Israel is a unique phenomenon that differs from all other world migratory movements. A basic distinction between regular immigration and aliya—an ideologically charged term that means "ascent"—has to do with motivation and identification with the country of origin. Coming from the uniqueness perspective, Eisenstadt (1969) identifies a number of characteristics that differentiate aliya from typical immigration. His point of departure is the postulate that aliya is motivated by an "ideological-national" consciousness, whereas other immigration is motivated by demographic pressure and socioeconomic factors. The differences between the two types are also connected with the newcomers' attitudes to and relations with their place of origin and the host society. Whereas "immigrants" maintain their relationships with their former society and to a large extent identify with its values, olim totally reject the social values and institutions of their country of origin (ibid.: 272). These unique characteristics could be expected to facilitate the integration of olim in the host society and increase their identification with it (Eisenstadt 1969).

Based on their characteristics and motivation, the 1990s newcomers from the FSU should be classified as "normal" immigrants rather than "olim" (see Shuval 1998; Leshem and Shuval 1998). In other words, this wave of immigration was motivated not by Jewish-Zionist ideology but by pragmatic cost-benefit considerations. Like other typical migration flows, the members of this group were motivated mainly by "push factors" in their home countries—notably political and economic instability, concern for their children's future, increasing trends of extremism, nationalism, and antisemitism, and their desire to look for better economic opportunities outside the FSU (Lissak

1995; Gitelman 1995; DellaPergola 1998; Shuval 1998; Leshem 1998).

Our findings support the conclusions of earlier studies in this regard. When asked to state the two most important factors that affected their decision to emigrate to Israel, 36.1% of respondents said that anxiety about their children's future was the paramount influence, followed by their lack of confidence about the future in the FSU (31.1%). The desire to live in a Jewish state ranked third (24%), slightly ahead of the economic factor (the low standard of living in the FSU, which 19% of the respondents ranked as their first or second most-important motive).

The fact that the 1990s immigrants from the FSU were motivated chiefly by push factors is also reflected in the answers to a series of questions about their decision to come to Israel. Some 49% said that had it been feasible they would have gone elsewhere, mainly to North America (21.1%) and Europe (10%). When asked about the advice they would give to friends and relatives back in the FSU, only 40.3% said they would advise them to come to Israel. And only 46.1% said that they would still decide to move to Israel if they had to do it all over again.

Another set of indicators that support our argument that the FSU immigrants should be considered to be regular immigrants has to do with their links to their home country. When asked what they miss most and least from the FSU, 60% of the respondents said they miss most their "homeland" and 48.8% Russian culture. This means that many immigrants still identify with the home country, mainly in terms of culture and social life. The implications of these factors on the immigrants' patterns of identity will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Self-Identification

A number of items in the survey explored the components of identity among respondents. One of the key questions was: "When you define your own identity, to what extent do you feel or do not feel: Israeli; Jewish; Zionist; an immigrant from the FSU; a Jew from the FSU." We asked separate question about each identity component. The most frequently cited identity component was "Jewish" (77.7% of the respondents said they feel Jewish to a great or very great

extent). Next came "an immigrant from the FSU" (68.7%) and "a Jew from the FSU" (66%). "Zionist" brought up the rear (20.5%), with "Israeli" ranked in the middle (43.6%).

We should note that immigrants relate to the Jewish component in their identity in a way that does not manifest a religious-orthodox meaning. It is rather a secular form of identity, largely detached from *halakhah* (Jewish religious law). This is manifested in other findings about immigrants' religiosity. The vast majority (74%) are secular, to judge by their self-identification, attitudes, and actual behavior; 24.6% are traditional and only 1.4% are religious.

Non-Jewish Immigrants

As indicated in Chapter 3, a sizeable part of the 1990s immigrants are non-Jews according to *halakhah*. According to the survey responses, 26.1% of the respondents are not Jews according to *halakhah* (or cannot prove that they are) or are married to a non-Jew. It should be noted that the percentage of non-Jews among the immigrants from the FSU has increased over time; whereas 20% among the 1990–1994 immigrants represented in the sample reported that they are non-Jews or intermarried, the percentage of non-Jews among the 1995–1999 immigrants in the sample was 41.3%.

Various studies have found that the "non-Jewish" sector among Russian immigrants is more alienated from Israeli society than are the Jewish immigrants, because of the restrictions imposed on them by state and religious authorities in Israel (including restrictions on family reunification and burial in a Jewish cemetery). As a result, this sector displays a greater propensity toward segregation (see Lissak 1995: 18). In addition, they place greater emphasis on their "Russian" ethnic identity, because this, and not Jewishness, is what they have in common with other immigrants.

The distinction between "Jews" and "non-Jews" can help enhance our understanding of the different types of identity among immigrants (Table 4.2). Although all the categories of the dependent variables indicating types of identity were included in the Chi-square test, the percentages presented in the table relate only to the highest category (to a great or very great extent).

As can be seen from Table 4.2, there are significant differences in the self-identity of Jews and non-Jews (including Jews married to

Table 4.2
Types of Identity among Jews and Non-Jews (%)

"The following identities describe me to a great or very great extent"	Jews	Non-Jews
Israeli*	45.9	38.0
Jewish**	78.4	57.0
Zionist**	22.8	15.1
Immigrant from the FSU*	67.4	74.4
Jew from the FSU**	72.9	49.4

 * Significant relationship at the $p < 0.05$ level.
** Significant relationship at the $p < 0.01$ level.

non-Jews). Among the former group, the Jewish component is central even in their ethnic identification, which extends to feeling more Israeli and more Zionist than the other group does. For non-Jews, the leading component is ethnic-Russian (mentioned by 74.4%) and it appears independently rather than in combination with the Israeli and Zionist components.

To further delineate the types of identity among immigrants we used cross-tab and correlation analysis among the different forms of identification. The picture revealed by this analysis is rather complex (Table 4.3). There was a strong positive correlation between identification as Jewish and all other components. At the same time, there was a strong positive relationship between identification as a Jew from the FSU and as an immigrant from the FSU. That is, there is a close complementary relationship between Jewish identity and ethnic-Russian identity. The latter is negatively correlated with the Israeli and Zionist identifications, which demonstrate a strong positive correlation with each other (Table 4.3).

The correlation matrix, together with a cross-tab analysis, indicates that there are three competing types of identities among the immigrants. In order of their importance and dominance (from high to low), these are the multi-faceted, the ethnically centered, and the ideologically centered.

The *multi-faceted* identity, which applies to a majority of the immigrants, comprises several co-existing identities. Its core is the Jewish component, combined with the ethnic component and to a lesser extent with the Israeli component. At its margins are groups that emphasize other identities, including the Zionist.

The *ethnically centered* identity, in which the connection with the country of origin is most salient, includes the "immigrant from the FSU" and "Jew from the FSU" identities. These two components are strongly correlated: 80% of those who feel that "Jew from the FSU" describes them to a great or very great extent feel the same way about "immigrant from the FSU."

Finally, the *ideologically centered* identity applies to those for whom the Israeli-Zionist identity is the most important. Naturally, this type is composed of the Israeli and Zionist identities. However, only 30% of those who feel strongly Israeli feel strongly Zionist. This means that a majority of the immigrants perceive the Israeli identity as having a civic rather than ideological meaning.

Table 4.3
Correlations between Types of Identity (Spearman *rs*)

	Israeli	Jewish	Zionist	Immigrant from FSU	Jew from FSU
Israeli	—				
Jewish	.162**	—			
Zionist	.316**	.285**	—		
Immigrant from FSU	−.232**	.108*	−.122*	—	
Jew from FSU	.009	.403**	.184**	.365**	—

* Relationships are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.
** Relationships are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

We used a factor analysis to create an ethnic scale and further understand the pattern of ethnic identity among immigrants. For this purpose we placed all variables reflecting the different patterns of identity into one matrix (Israeli, Jewish, Zionist, Immigrant from the FSU, and Jew from the FSU). This yielded two possible facets. One, composed of ethnic identity, included the following variables: Israeli identity (factor score −0.63), immigrant from the FSU (factor score 0.81), and Jew from the FSU (0.55). In order to remain consistent with our analysis the order of the categories indicating Israeli identity were reversed. Then we combined those three variables into a new variable called "ethnic," with a mean of 6.82, median of 7.06, standard deviation of 1.74, and range of 7.80. We divided the range in three to create three categories (weak, moderate and strong) indicating the strength of ethnic identity. After recoding the variable we

found the following distribution: weak 18.9%; moderate 52.6%; strong 28.5%.

The distribution of the ethnic identity variable is compatible with our previous conclusion that most immigrants have a moderate ethnic identity. In this sense, they manifest a multifaceted identity that includes an ethnic component side by side with other components (in particular a mainly secular Jewish component and an Israeli-citizenship component).

We also examined the different types of identity against individual and group variables. Age proved to be significant, with major differences between the two extreme groups, those aged 18–24 and those 55 and over. The former is mainly Jewish-Israeli oriented, but its members' Israeli identity centers on citizenship rather than ideology, as reflected by the fact that they had the weakest Zionist identity. Members of the oldest generation, by contrast, are the most ethnically Jewish and the least Israeli-oriented. It is worth noting that whereas ethnic identity is straightforward among the old generation, the younger generation displays more confusion between the Israeli and ethnic identities, although the Israeli component seems to be gaining the upper hand (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4
Identity Types by Age (%)

"The following identities describe me to a large or very large extent"	Age				
	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55+
Israeli*	56.5	43.0	45.3	44.6	37.9
Jewish**	69.2	68.4	75.4	84.2	87.3
Zionist	18.3	23.2	19.7	22.7	21.9
Immigrant from the FSU**	50.5	69.3	69.6	65.0	80.6
Jew from the FSU**	47.7	58.4	64.5	68.3	80.7

  * Significant relationship at the $p < 0.05$ level.
** Significant relationship at the $p < 0.01$ level.

No relationship was found between types of identity and gender. Nor was there any significant relationship between education and type of identity. Education does, however, differentiate between the Israeli and ethnic orientations. Those with less education are more Israeli oriented, whereas those with a post-secondary education are more Russian-ethnically oriented (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5
Identity Types by Education (%)

"These identities describe me to a great or very great extent."	Education		
	Elementary (partial/full)	Secondary (partial/full)	Post-secondary (partial/full)
Israeli	57.1	42.5	43.9
Jewish	82.8	72.5	81.3
Zionist	21.4	18.4	22.5
An Immigrant from the FSU	64.3	62.7	73.5
A Jew from the FSU	55.2	61.6	70.3

Relationships between identity types and education are insignificant: $p > 0.05$.

Religiosity is an important factor distinguishing among the different types of identity ($p < 0.01$). The ideologically oriented type of identification is most prominent among those who consider themselves to be religious or traditional, whereas the ethnically oriented is more prominent among the secular. However, whereas the differences between religious and secular groups are significant in terms of ideological orientation, they are insignificant as far as the ethnic identification is concerned. This is because a large majority among the religious also manifest an ethnic orientation.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, if we consider their motives for migration and ties to the country of origin, the 1990s immigrants should be classified as typical immigrants rather than as olim, a term that connotes ideological commitment and identification.

In this vein, Gitelman (1995) found that the non-Zionist ideology and motivation of the 1990s immigrants and their cultural continuity with their countries of origin, facilitated by the open political relations between Israel and those countries, are among the main factors for "Russian-cultural" continuity.

What are the implications of motives and nostalgia for immigrants' self-identification? To examine this question we selected the motives that the respondents cited as most important (anxiety about their children's future, lack of confidence in the future, the desire to live in a Jewish state, and the low standard of living) and the two themes that evoke the strongest nostalgia (homeland, culture). The findings are summarized in Table 4.6

Table 4.6 shows that nostalgia has a significant negative relationship with the Israeli component and a positive relationship with the

Table 4.6
Correlations between Patterns of Identity, Motives
for Immigration, and Nostalgia (Kendal's tau-b rs)

Self-Identification	Nostalgia			Motive for Immigration		
	Homeland	Russian culture	Children's future	Lack of confidence in future	To live in a Jewish state	Low standard of living
Israeli	−.128**	−.179**	−.107*	−.011	.114**	−.006
Jewish	−.101**	−.053	.062	.017	.294**	.061
Zionist	−.047	−.048	−.070	.010	.237**	−.011
Immigrant from FSU	.107**	.164**	.107*	.093*	−.016	.081*
Jew from FSU	.047	.118**	.050	.037	.198**	−.050

 * Correlations are significant at the p < 0.05 level.
 ** Correlations are significant at the p < 0.01 level.

ethnic component in the immigrants' identity. The relationship between motives for immigration and patterns of identity is more complex. As a whole, push factors (anxiety about children's future, low standard of living, and lack of confidence in the future) are positively correlated with ethnic components and negatively correlated with Israeli and Zionist components (though the relationship is weak). The most significant variable is the ideological motive (the desire to live in a Jewish state), which has a significant positive relationship with the components of identity that connote ideological commitment (Israeli, Jewish, and Zionist). This motive is also positively correlated with the identification as a "Jew from the FSU." At the same time there is a very weak negative (although insignificant) relationship between this motive and the ethnic component of immigrants' identity.

These findings mean that immigrants with a relatively strong link to their country of origin and Russian culture who immigrated for pragmatic motives are more likely to manifest their ethnic-Russian identity and less likely to identify themselves as Israeli. Those who say that their prime motive for immigration was an ideological one tend to manifest ideological components in their identity.

The survey also examined the ethnic identity of FSU immigrants in Israel through the lens of their attitudes toward cultural continuity at the institutional level. To explore this point we asked the following questions:

- How important is it that your children be familiar with Russian culture?
- How important is it that your children be familiar with the Russian language?
- How important is it that Israel have Russian-language schools?
- How important is it that Israel have Russian cultural institutions?
- How important is it that Israel have political parties based on FSU immigrants?

The answers indicate that immigrants strongly support the maintenance of autonomous educational, cultural, and political institutions. Among respondents, 88% said that it was important or very important for their children to be familiar with Russian culture; 90.6% said it was important or very important for their children to know the Russian language; 56.9% said the same regarding the existence of Russian-language schools, 79.8% regarding the continued existence of Russian cultural institutions in Israel, and 73.2% regarding political parties.

The most significant finding is probably the immigrants' strong desire to maintain schools in which Russian is the language of instruction. This is a clear indication that the immigrants do not trust existing educational institutions, which are controlled by veteran Israelis, to convey their culture to their children. They prefer a special Russian-language school system and evince a strong desire to maintain courses and activities for their children conducted in Russian.

Our findings go hand in hand with those reported by Rosenbaum-Tamari and Damian (2001) in their follow-up study of immigrants absorbed through the direct track. They interviewed four immigrant groups who represent households with different lengths of tenure in Israel (those who arrived in 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1995). They found that immigrants manifest a very strong commitment to Russian culture and language, regardless of how long they have lived in Israel.

The immigrants' desire to hold on to their original culture even rose between the first and second year in the country (ibid.: 35). What is more, there was a regression over time in the immigrants' use of Hebrew and an increasing tendency to use Russian as their primary language or in addition to Hebrew (ibid.: 4).

Note that the support for the existence of Russian-ethnic institutions is not the outcome of the immigrants' despair with and alienation from Israeli society. This is shown by the fact that there was no significant relationship between the perceived extent of adjust-

ment and the desire to maintain cultural continuity or ethnic organizations (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7
Support for Ethnic-Cultural Continuity by Extent of Adjustment (%)

It is important or very important that:	Satisfaction with absorption		Get along well with Israelis		Feel at home in Israel	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Children be familiar with Russian culture	87.3	89.9	87.5	91.5	87.1	90.5
Children know the Russian language	89.1	92.3	91.8	93.6	90.1	92.6
Israel continue to have Russian-language schools	55.7	62.3	54.1	61.1	52.9	61.7
Israel continue to support Russian cultural Institutions	79.7	80.2	78.9	81.4	80.0	80.2
Israel have political parties based on Russian immigrants	73.6	72.1	70.6	79.9	76.3	76.1

Relationships between all aspects of support of ethnic-cultural continuity and extent of adjustment are insignificant: p > 0.05.

The Other-Definition: How Veteran Israelis Perceive the Immigrants

It is widely reported that the extent of the host society's adjustment to and reception of immigrants strongly affects their adjustment and identification with the new setting and their identity patterns (Goldlust and Richmond 1974; Portes and Borocz 1989: 618). Gans (1996: 152) argues that ethnic behavior, orientation, and even identity are determined not only by the characteristics of the ethnics, but also by developments in the wider society, and in particular how society relates to ethnics. In this sense, the connection between "self-definition" and "other-definition" needs to be taken into consideration in order to understand ethnic formation among immigrants (Castels and Miller 1998).

This point finds support in various studies of identity patterns among FSU immigrants in Israel. It has been argued that the rejection

of the Russian-speaking intellectual elite by veteran-Israeli society has helped create a "self-contained cultural enclave" among the former (Wartburg 1994: 163, cited by Lissak and Leshem 1995: 20; see also Ben-Ya'cov 1998b). As for the general public, Markowitz (1995) found that FSU immigrants in Israel were initially disappointed that veteran Israelis thought of them as "Russians." Over the years, however, they accepted this term and began to capitalize on it. This trend was also mentioned in a newspaper report on immigrant students (*Ha'aretz*, July 22, 1994). The article highlighted the despair among these students, who originally wanted to identify themselves as Israelis. Four years after arrival, however, they did not mind being called "Russian" and were even happy with that epithet.

The bitterness at their rejection by veteran Israelis was reflected in the wake of the Palestinian bomb attack at the Dolphinarium in Tel Aviv on June 1, 2001, which killed twenty people, most of them immigrant teenagers waiting to enter a "Russian" discotheque. The aftermath brought to the surface their complex Russian-Israeli identity, their closed social networks, and their deep feelings of estrangement and alienation from Israeli society (see Capra in *Maariv*, October 12, 2001).

In a detailed report entitled, "Russians in our Life and Israelis in our Death" (*Maariv*, June 8, 2001), Chen Kutz-Bar interviewed a number of immigrant students at the Shevah Mofet high school, seven of whose students were killed in this tragic event. The vast majority of its 1400 students are immigrants from the FSU. Russian is almost the only language spoken outside of class. Students are allowed to study Russian language and literature and take their matriculation exams in Russian. These facts highlight the reality that immigrants live in two worlds: their own and that of the veteran Israelis.

In the words of one student:

> We speak Russian at home, study in a school where everybody speaks Russian, go out with Russians, tell jokes in Russian, listen to Russian music and dance in a Russian discotheque, and at last we are murdered because we are Israelis. We are "in the middle," not Russians–not Israelis, but we die as Israelis.

Another student added:

> If once they laughed at me when I walked in the street in the Hatikva quarter [populated mainly by Mizrahim] and told me I was a dirty

Russian, threw stones at me because I am Russian, and shouted at me, I know if I pass today they will say, "brother, we are with you." On the other hand, I also thought there might be somebody who watched television and said, "it's all right, it's not important—they're Russians." As if we aren't part of you.

Many of the students interviewed used this opportunity to express their feelings of isolation from veteran Israelis. Almost all students used the terms "they" for veteran Israelis and "we" for immigrants. One student stated:

In this school we don't have any relationship with Israeli society. We said, "they're not ready to accept us, Israeli society is different, strange, and does not like Russians, so we gave up." It's easier to give up when they reject you. When they say, "Russian, go home," then you go.

The manifestation of a "Russian identity" as a reaction to rejection by Israelis is reflected by students throughout Kutz-Bar's article. One student said:

My mother says that when we arrived in Israel I wasn't willing to speak Russian, only Hebrew. She yelled at me but it didn't help. I tried to feel belonging, but it was useless. The Israelis did not forget where I came from. When I studied in an Israeli school, they always called me "Russian." I came to this school and I hardly knew Russian at the beginning. Here my Russian has improved tremendously. Today I say, "they want to see us a separate group? They don't accept us? They accept us only when there is a terrorist attack. I don't care." I am not ashamed of my origins. I am a proud Russian. I am not even sure if I want to be an Israeli today.

Some of the students were outraged by the fact that two of the victims (non-Jews according to halakhah) were not allowed burial in a Jewish cemetery (ibid. 24). One student had this to say:

Our parents, the parents of those who were killed, left everything and came here to give us a better future. At the end, children are killed and they don't even let the parents bury them quietly. Those children are good enough to serve in the army, but not to be buried in a Jewish cemetery. It is painful. It will be always painful.

It should be mentioned, however, that ethnic identity among immigrants is by and large not a "reactive identity," which is the result of alienation and despair, although this identity is partly affected by the "other identification" and by the veterans' rejection of the immigrants. Therefore, the more immigrants become adjusted, the stronger

the Israeli component in their identity. At the same time, the Israeli component may go hand in hand with the ethnic-Russian component. We examined this issue on two main levels: first, the relationship between extent of adjustment and types of identity; second, a direct question about the way the immigrants believe veteran Israelis identify them and how they wish to be identified by Israelis.

Table 4.8
Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficients (r) for Identity
with Extent of Adjustment

Identity	Satisfaction with absorption	Get along with Israelis	Feel at home in Israel
Israeli	0.158**	0.245**	0.350**
Jewish	0.183**	0.067	0.201**
Immigrant from FSU	−0.116**	−0.192**	−0.180**
Zionist	0.139**	0.061	0.175**
Jew from FSU	0.003	0.092	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level

Table 4.8 shows a complex picture. Among immigrants there is a significant positive relationship between all factors of adjustment and Israeli identity. In other words, immigrants who are better adjusted evince a stronger identification as Israeli. The same direction of relationship was found between the Jewish and Zionist identities, on the one hand, and adjustment, on the other, although there was no straightforward relationship between these identity types and social adjustment (getting along with Israelis). The relationship between adjustment and ethnic identity types was less clear-cut. There was a significant negative relationship between identification as "immigrant from the FSU" and adjustment. Even among the adjusted group, however, many said that this type of identity describes them to a great or very great extent (66.7% of those satisfied with their absorption and some 60% of those who get along with Israelis and feel at home in Israel identify as immigrants from the FSU). No relationship was found between the identification as "Jew from the FSU" and adjustment.

As to the immigrants' perception of their identification by the host society, the vast majority thinks that veteran Israelis identify them mainly by the Russian component of their identity: as Russians,

Russian Israelis, or Russian Jews. But immigrants want to be identified by veteran Israelis as Israelis, Jews, or Israeli Jews. Only 17% of respondents want to be identified by the Russian-ethnic component, although 78% think this is how veterans actually identify them.

This analysis shows that any consideration of the identity of the FSU immigrants must distinguish three main forms: how immigrants define themselves, how they think veteran Israelis define them, and how they want veteran Israelis to define them. In other words, immigrants want veteran Israelis to see them in a different light than they see themselves (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9
How Immigrants Think They are Identified by Veteran Israelis and
How Immigrants Want to be Identified by Them (%)

	How do veteran Israelis relate to you?	How do you want veteran Israelis to relate to you?
A Jew	8.3	22.9
An Israeli	8.9	45.1
An Israeli Jew	3.0	12.7
A Russian	32.8	7.5
A Russian Jew	10.5	3.1
A Russian Israeli	14.3	4.7
An Israeli Russian	20.5	1.6
Other	1.7	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0

We examined the relationship between self-identification and other-identification. Each variable reflecting self-identification was recoded into two categories (1 = not at all or to some extent and 2 = to a great or very great extent). The variable regarding immigrants' perception of how they are identified by veterans was also recoded into two categories, one reflecting the identification by Israeli-Jewish component and the second by ethnic-Russian combined with other components. It should be noted that we first recoded other-identification into three categories: Israeli-Jewish component, exclusively Russian-ethnic component, and ethnic combined with other components. But this division did not make any difference when juxtaposed with self-identity. In other words, immigrants think they are perceived as different ethnics whether they are identified by the Russian component only or in combination with other components. Table 4.10

summarizes the relationship between "other-identification" and "self-identification."

Table 4.10
Self-Identification and Other-Identification (%)

Self-Identification		Other-Identification by Veterans	
		Israeli-Jewish Component	Ethnic Component
Israeli**	Not at all/to some extent	35.3	60.4
	Great/very great extent	64.7	39.6
Jewish*	Not at all/to some extent	13.8	23.5
	Great/very great extent	86.2	76.5
Zionist*	Not at all/to some extent	71.9	80.3
	Great/very great extent	28.1	19.7
Immigrant** from FSU	Not at all/to some extent	54.7	24.4
	Great/very great extent	45.3	75.6
Jews from FSU**	Not at all/to some extent	42.0	30.8
	Great/very great extent	58.0	69.2

   * Significant relationship at the $p < 0.05$ level.
** Significant relationship at the $p < 0.01$ level.

Table 4.10 shows a significant strong relationship between self-identification and other-identification in all categories, although it is hard to determine direction of causality between these variables. The strongest relationship, however, is that between self-identification as Israeli and as Immigrant from the FSU, on the one hand, and "other-identification" on the other. As to Israeli identification, 64.7% of those who believe they are identified by Israelis through the Israeli-Jewish component think that Israeli identity fits them to a great or very great extent. The opposite emerges when immigrants think they are identified by veterans through the ethnic component: then they tend to manifest a weak Israeli identification. At the same time, the percentage of immigrants who identify themselves by the ethnic component (immigrants from the FSU) is much higher among those who think veterans identify them by the same component, as compared to those who think veterans identify them by Israeli-Jewish component (75.6% and 45.3%, respectively).

What implications does the immigrants' maintenance of an ethnic identity have for their attitudes and orientation toward civil society

and freedom of expression? Are these attitudes the outcome of their former socialization, or are they affected by the ethno-national character of the political culture in Israel? Are there differences in the orientation of Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants in this regard? These questions will be addressed in the next chapter.

ATTITUDES TOWARD CIVIL SOCIETY
AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

We examined our respondents' attitudes toward civil society and freedom of expression by three series of questions: the first related to attitudes about the character of Israel; the second focused on attitudes toward peace; and the third on several issues associated with freedom of expression at the individual, group, institutional, and societal levels.

Character of Israel

We found that the 1990s immigrants from the FSU in Israel are overwhelmingly secular. This is reflected in a series of questions that explored their attitudes toward religion and religiosity. Responding to a general question regarding religiosity, 73.6% of immigrants defined themselves as "secular," 24.6% as "traditional," and only 1.3% as "religious." Their secular orientation is also manifested in their religious observance: only 33% said they always fast on Yom Kippur; 12.9% observe kashrut; 4.5% avoid traveling on Shabbat for religious reasons; only 2% attend synagogue regularly; and only 3.2% send their children to religious schools.

It should be noted, however, that there is considerable diversity among immigrants. Those from the Asian republics are much more religious than immigrants from European republics. Whereas 43.8% of the first group said they are religious or traditional, only 19.7% among the latter did so. The difference lies mainly in the percentage of those who call themselves "traditional"; in both groups less than 2% said they are religious.

Hence most FSU immigrants support the secularization of the state. A majority of them are opposed to the religious-Jewish character of Israel, believe that "religious laws" should be reduced or eliminated, and manifest their preference for a secular lifestyle in their support for allowing businesses to be open on Shabbat, sale of pork, and especially civil marriage and divorce in Israel (Table 5.1).

We compared the immigrants' attitudes toward the religious character of Israel with those of veteran students. Although the students do not necessarily represent the veteran Israeli population, the comparison gives some indication of the location of immigrants vis-à-vis the secular sector in Israel, since 75% of the student-survey respondents identified themselves as secular.

As can be seen (Table 5.1) the immigrants largely resemble the secular sector of the veteran population in their attitudes toward state and religion.

Table 5.1
Attitudes of Immigrants toward Religious Character of Israel (%)*

Attitudes	Immigrants	Veteran-Jewish Students
Disagree/absolutely disagree that Israel should have a Jewish-religious character	74.8	60.3
Religious legislation in Israel should be reduced or eliminated	76.2	70.9
Civil marriage and divorce should be allowed in Israel	93.7	86.1
Israel should allow business to operate on Shabbat	80.2	83.2
Unrestricted sale of pork should be allowed	67.5	71.2
Israel is the state of the Jewish people	51.0	52.8
Israel is a state of all its citizens	49.0	47.2

* As noted in the introduction, findings on immigrants are based on the immigrants' nationwide survey, which was conducted in 1999 and included 707 subjects. The findings on veteran Jewish students are based on the survey which was conducted at the University of Haifa in 2001 and include 254 respondents.

However, the immigrants' and students' support for the secularization of Israel is not based on an all-encompassing civil perception and is restricted mainly to the internal Jewish-Jewish discourse. This is manifested in their responses to the following question: "Which of the following descriptions suits the State of Israel, in your opinion: A state of the Jewish people or a state of all its citizens, regardless of religion and national origin?"

Immigrant respondents were almost equally divided over this question, with a slight majority supporting the Jewish character of Israel (51% as compared to 49%). Among the veteran Jewish students, too, a majority wants Israel to have a Jewish character rather than being the state of all its citizens (53% and 47% respectively) (Table 5.1).

How do the immigrants themselves explain this contradiction between their support for the secularization of Israel and at the same time maintaining its Jewish character? No less important, how do immigrants reconcile their preference for a "Jewish" state with the fact that many of them are non-Jewish?

We raised these questions with the immigrant focus groups. Here are excerpts from the participants' answers:

> Participant A: Israel should be the state of the Jewish people but not according to the common Israeli definition of "Jewishness," because this [latter] definition in my opinion is ridiculous and idiotic. Israel should also be nonreligious.
> Facilitator: How do you reconcile being a "Jewish state" and a "non-religious state" at the same time?
> Participant A: Yes, it is possible, if we consider Jewishness as a nationality and not a religion.
> Facilitator: What would be the status of Arab citizens in such a state?
> Participant A: To consider them [Arabs] as an ethnic minority.
> Participant B: But why not have a state where all groups are equal?
> Participant C: Because a Jewish state is a Jewish state and other people are other people!

These quotations exemplify the overall orientation among immigrants. The majority supports a Jewish but nonreligious state, one that has an ethno-national character.

The immigrants' concept of the relationship between ethnicity and citizenship may derive from the model that prevailed in the Soviet Union (see Chapter 3). Thus, as Shumsky points out, immigrants seek to integrate their post-Soviet ethno-national tradition into the Zionist ethos through the dehumanization of the Palestinian national minority and see the Arab minority as a natural target for discrimination (Shumsky 2001: 35).

We should also note that this concept fits the immigrants' particularistic and pragmatic approach. In this sense, it was obvious from the participants' attitudes that they are not interested in the comprehensive democratic character of the state. What is important is a state that suits their pragmatic interests and orientation. Hence

they were more inclined to speak about the possibility of the integration of non-Jewish immigrants into a state with a Jewish character than the civil culture of Israel.

One immigrant, an electrical engineer from Uzbekistan (we shall call him "participant D"), had this to say:

> Participant D: In the present circumstances in the Middle East this should be a Jewish state. In the present situation, the major problem of Israel is not the non-Jews according to halakhah but the large size of the Arab population in Israel. Should Israel become a democratic state it would cease to exist. On the other hand, the half-Jews from Russia, even though they have nothing to do with Judaism, contribute to Israel more than the Arabs do. Immigrant children study in Jewish schools whether they are Jews or non-Jews. They receive a Jewish education and automatically become Jewish. Somebody once wrote in the newspaper, and I agree with this completely, that if you came to Israel and you agree with Judaism, then you should have a conversion.
> Facilitator: Does it mean that you are in favor of religious-Jewish laws in Israel?
> Participant D: I am in favor of the Reform [movement]—that is very clear.
> Participant B: But Ultraorthodox groups will not agree with that.
> Participant C: And if you are not in favor of religious law, why do you need people to convert?
> Participant A: In order to have more Jews in Israel
> Participant C: It is better to be a Jew in your spirit than just on paper!
> Participant D: But if formally they [non-Jewish immigrants] become Jews and they recognize that they are part of world Jewry, this will help Israel maintain its Jewish character, and in an Arab environment that is important.

In any event, these findings show that immigrants adhere to the basic consensus among the Jewish majority in Israel regarding the ethno-centric political culture of the state, which leaves Arabs outside its legitimate borders and favor a culture based on an exclusive, Jewish/non-Jewish dichotomy (see Chapter 2). In brief, for most immigrants the unifying factor is not the Jewish character of the state, which is concomitant with the Orthodox perception of Judaism, but rather a Jewish state with a secular ethno-national meaning of Judaism. At the same time, such a character is clearly "non-Arab" in the sense that it places Arabs outside of its legitimate borders, while other groups, even the non-Jews among immigrants, are included within these borders (see also Lustick 1999; Shumsky 2001).

It should be noted, however, that non-Jews among the immigrants

are especially supportive of a "civil" Israel. Among this groups, more than 60% want Israel to be the state of all its citizens and ignore national and religious affiliation.

Attitudes toward Peace

Our data support the findings of other studies that FSU immigrants in Israel tend to be hardliners in their attitudes toward territorial compromise as a means to achieve peace with Arab countries and with the Palestinians (see also Fein 1995; Pinis 1996). According to our findings, only 37% of the respondents think Israel should return most or all of the West Bank and Gaza District in exchange for full peace with the Palestinians (including 11% who would return all the territories or a significant part thereof). Immigrants take an even harder line regarding the Golan Heights, where only 25% think Israel should make territorial concessions in exchange for full peace with Syria (including 8.1% who would return all of the Heights or a significant part thereof).

What factors lie behind the immigrants' hawkish stance? We examined this question through both the survey responses and the focus group discussions. There was a significant difference according to education—mainly between those with postgraduate degrees and everyone else. The educated elite is relatively more open toward peace. Men are more open than women. The longer respondents have been in the country, the more open they become toward territorial compromise as a means of achieving peace (Table 5.2).

Contrary to our initial expectations, respondents' attitudes toward territorial compromise are not significantly correlated with age. However, a separate examination of each age category shows that the youngest (18–24) and the oldest (55+) are most open toward territorial compromise. We hypothesize that this may stem from the fact that those among immigrants who are directly affected by military service (whether as soldiers, as in the first category, or as parents of soldiers, as in the latter category) are more open toward peace because of their exposure to the "price of war."

We used the focus groups to gain an in-depth understanding of the immigrants' attitudes toward peace. In particular, we sought to find out why new arrivals are less open to the idea of territorial compromise than are the earlier waves. To this end we investigated

Table 5.2
Attitudes toward Territorial Compromise with the Palestinians, by Demographic Variables (%)

Background variables	Education**			Sex**		Religion		Year of immigration*	
Attitudes	Partial or full high school	Bachelor's degree	Master's or doctorate	Male	Female	Jewish	Non-Jewish	1990–1994	1995–1999
Return all or most	8.1	6.1	15.7	5.3	5.1	5.9	3.7	5.7	4.1
Return some	19.3	28.7	30.8	18.7	4.5	9.9	11.1	13.2	5.8
Return nothing	62.9	58.9	44.8	76.0	90.4	84.2	85.2	81.1	90.1
No answer, have no idea	9.7	6.3	8.7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

 * Significant relationship at the p < 0.05 level.
** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

the impact of the immigrants' socialization in the home country, since it has been suggested that the FSU immigrants' political attitudes are influenced by the Soviet political culture (Horowitz 1998). This is because they came from a system going through a process of radical change. These changes in the political structure have been accompanied by changes in the political culture, which in turn affected the immigrants' political orientation.

The focus group discussions suggest that, indeed, immigrants' attitudes toward the peace process are also influenced by the so-called *Homo sovieticus* socialization in the USSR/FSU (see also the interview by Neri Livneh with journalist and physician Anna Isakova, *Ha'aretz*, May 14, 1999). Here are typical quotations from the students' focus groups:

> Participant A: No normal state in history ever returned part of its lands. In the course of all history, weak countries gave and strong countries took [territory].
> Participant B: They [Israelis] have taught us [immigrants] that we are a strong country and that we have an army which is stronger than those of all Arab countries, and that the US is backing us. So why should the weak determine what I do?
> Participant A: If we show weakness once, it will just continue this way forever.
> Participant D: Japan for fifty years now is demanding that Russia return islands that belong to her, but Russia has not agreed since she does not want to be humiliated in the eyes of the other peoples in the world. On the land of Israel there is an ongoing war. Only the strong will prevail. If you think we are the weak, it might be worthwhile to pack up and move to a different destination.

But in addition to their former socialization, immigrants are also affected by disputes in Israeli society between the right-wing and left-wing camps over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In these disputes immigrants tend to side with the right wing. This was manifested in the participants' use of well-known arguments of right-wing politicians (of course the minority of immigrants who support territorial compromise advance the left's arguments). These quotations from the discussion of the Israel-Arab conflict may clarify our point:

> Participant A: It is possible to return territories, but only once we are 100% sure that we have partners on the other side. Otherwise, after we return territories they [Arabs] will say "now we will throw you into the sea." So what is the logic of returning territories if in any case the end is the sea?

Participant B: They [Arabs] violate all agreements.
Participant C: What was the end of the war in Europe?
Participant D: Peace!
Participant C: So I am convinced that if a peaceful agreement is not achieved we will just have more bloodshed. If we achieve an agreement it will be the end of the war. Our country [Israel] is strong enough to allow the Palestinians to have a state of their own. Only the weak are afraid to appear weak.
Participant E: Do you know what Arafat's ultimate goal is? As I heard, Arafat's goal is to destroy the State of Israel. Everybody is saying that. Maybe he does not declare it explicitly. But he himself knows that that is his real goal.
Participant C: There is a large difference between "what I want" and "what I can do." Maybe Arafat wants a lot but he can have only an independent state.
Participant F: But their [the Arabs'] ultimate goal is that the State of Israel disappear.
Participant C: But we will not allow that.
Participant F: So we have to decide whether we are here or they are here!
Participant D: If a war breaks out there will be no winner, only losers. We have no alternative.

It should be noted that the immigrants' hard-line attitudes are not reflected in a "militaristic orientation". Although the army occupies a central place in Israeli society at both the symbolic and practical levels (see Ben-Eliezer 2003), the FSU immigrants are ambivalent about army service. Here too their attitude is pragmatic, placing the individual and not the national interest at the center. In addition, whereas the older generation expresses reluctance about military service, they would like to take advantage of it as an avenue for occupational mobility (Carmeli and Fadlon 1996: 403).

Indeed, our findings show that, unlike veteran Israelis, success in military service is not an important goal for FSU immigrants. When asked about the important things in life, only 22.1% of the immigrants said it was "important to succeed in military service," as compared to 66.2% among the Jewish veteran students.

Freedom of Expression

Communication Environments

We asked a series of questions to explore the immigrants' attitudes about freedom of expression at various levels and examine how free

Figure 5.1
Sense of Freedom of Expression between Immigrants and
Veterans in Different Settings (%)
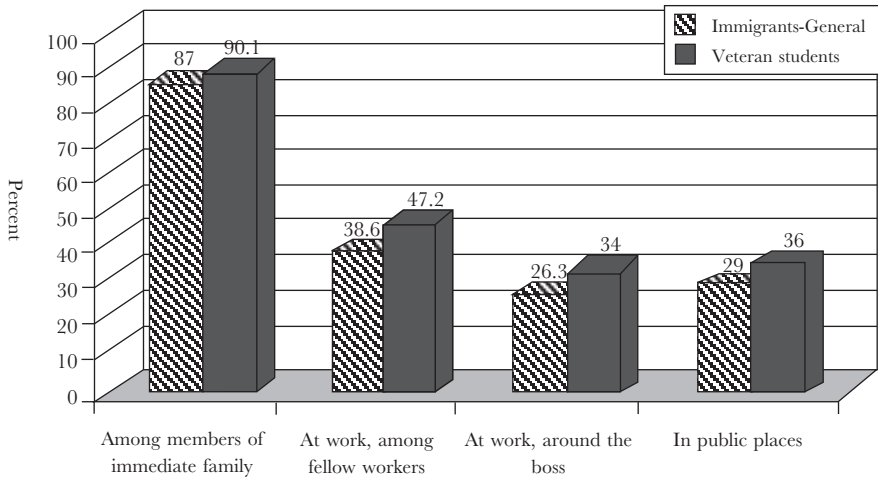
they feel in different contexts. It should be noted that most of the
questions on freedom of expression are derived from a countrywide
survey conducted in 1993 of a representative sample of Israeli adults
(see Katz, Levinson, and Al-Haj 1993). To investigate the respon-
dents' feeling of freedom to express themselves in different commu-
nication environments, we asked the following question:

> *How free do you feel to speak your mind in each of the following situations?*
> • At home among members of your immediate family
> • At work among your fellow workers
> • At work, around the boss
> • At meetings of organizations

The findings are summarized in figure 5.1.

The only place where immigrants feel very free to speak their
minds is at home, among their immediate family. The less private
the setting is, the less free they feel to speak their minds. It should
be noted that the same trend also exists among the veteran Israeli
population. This becomes clear when we compare our findings with
those of the above-mentioned adult population survey (ibid.), or with
the students survey we conducted in 2001 (see figure 5.1). However,
in both surveys the percentage of veterans feeling free to speak their
minds is higher than that of immigrants in all settings.

Table 5.3
Sense of Freedom of Expression, by Background Variables and Satisfaction with Absorption (% who feel completely free)

Feel Completely Free	Satisfaction with absorption in Israel		Command of Hebrew			Sex		Education			Feel at home in Israel		Year of immigration		Age			
	Very satisfied/satisfied	Not at all satisfied/ Not satisfied	Low	Middle	High	Male	Female	Partial/full high school	Bachelor's degree	Master's or doctorate	Yes	No	1990–1994	1995–1999	18–24	35–45	46–60	65+
At work, among fellow workers	45.5	38.3	31.8	35.5	47.5**	40.1	37.5	45.0	43.5	34.5*	43.6	31.0**	42.5	32.2*	49.5	35.0	36.0	30.0**
At work, around the boss	40.3	24.5**	22.1	27.5	37.4**	28.7	24.5	30.0	28.0	24.3*	30.3	24.1**	29.5	21.0*	41.8	25.0	25.1	18.8**
In public gatherings	43.1	23.5**	24.1	32.3	38.8**	30.7	27.8	33.1	32.1	25.1*	34.3	20.7**	30.5	25.1	42.4	25.1	26.0	27.0

* Significant relationship at the p < 0.05 level.
** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

To understand these findings in greater depth we examined the feeling of freedom of expression by background variables. Table 5.3 summarizes the findings.

Table 5.3 shows that there is a significant difference between age categories in the sense of freedom of expression. The main difference, however, is between the extreme categories (18–24) and (65+), with the younger generation feeling more freedom of expression in all the various communication environments. No relationship was found between sex and the sense of freedom of expression, but education was a significant variable. What is astonishing, though, is that the most-educated elite feels the least freedom of expression in the various settings. No significant difference was found between those from the European and those from the Asian republics of the FSU (although the former feel slightly more free than the latter) or between Jews and non-Jews.

Altogether, it seems that here too there remains a cumulative effect of the former socialization in the FSU on all categories of immigrants. The older generation and the educated elite (who feel the least freedom of expression) are those two strata that experienced, more than others, restrictions on their freedom of expression in the USSR. This conclusion is supported by the fact that command of Hebrew and duration in Israel are positively correlated with the sense of freedom of expression. The first waves of the early 1990s report feeling more freedom of expression than do more recent immigrants. However, the fact that the educated elite feels the least freedom of expression may also be affected by the gap between their expectations (which are usually higher than other strata) and the real situation as perceived by them.

We found a significant relationship between the sense of freedom of expression and immigrants' extent of adjustment, as measured by whether they feel at home in Israel (p < 0.01). It is hard to determine the direction of this causality, however. What is clear though, is that the sense of freedom of expression is an integral part of the immigrants' adjustment to Israeli society.

Permissiveness

We asked a series of questions about situations in which the law should protect people. The findings show that respondents are con-

servative and not permissive in most cases, except for disagreeing with the prime minister or a cabinet minister. In this case, 49% said that the law should always protect such speech. Respondents were also relatively permissive on the following issues: advocating homosexual behavior and the right of assembly in the workplace (32% and 19%, respectively, said the law should always protect such conduct).

Respondents were especially strict on issues associated with state security, children's morals, and hurting members of other ethnic groups. The percentage of those who thought the law should offer no protection to those who disclose classified information to a foreign country was 84.2%; to those who use expressions that may harm state security, 82.5%; to those who burn the national flag in public, 78.8%; to children who curse their parents in public, 79.3%; and to those who employ speech that may injure a member of another ethnic group, 75.8%. When the "other" group was replaced specifically by Arabs and religious Jews, though, respondents were slightly more tolerant (only 64.5% and 64.4%, respectively, thought speech against those groups should be outlawed).

While respondents were extremely strict about acts that might harm national security, they were relatively more permissive about refusal to do military service, although a majority (59%) believed that this, too, should not enjoy legal protection (Table 5.4).

There was a positive (although not significant) relationship between education and permissiveness. Men were more permissive than women; immigrants of European origin were more permissive than those of Asian origin (in both cases, again, the relationships are not significant). It should be noted that the differences between European and Asian immigrants are the outcome of differences in religiosity (the latter are more religious). When this variable is held constant, the differences become negligible.

As with the sense of freedom of expression, with permissiveness, too, age proves a significant variable. Permissiveness tends to decrease with age. The younger generation is more permissive than the older on most issues (Table 5.5).

Table 5.4
Immigrants' Attitudes toward the Legal Protection of
Different Types of Behavior (%)

The law should always protect:	Scope of legal protection				
	Never protect	Sometimes protect	Always protect	No response	Total
Disagreeing with the Prime Minister or a cabinet minister	19.7	30.6	48.5	1.2	100.0
Children who curse their parents in public	79.3	12.7	7.1	0.9	100.0
Using expressions that might offend an ethnic group in Israel	75.8	12.2	10.9	1.1	100.0
Burning the national flag in public	78.8	6.8	13.4	1.0	100.0
Advocating homosexual behavior	36.1	30.0	31.7	2.2	100.0
Advertising pornographic material	56.2	25.7	16.4	1.7	100.0
Using expressions that might offend the Arab citizens of Israel	64.6	20.7	13.6	1.1	100.0
Giving classified information to a foreign government	84.2	5.5	8.9	1.4	100.0
Using expressions that might offend religious people	64.5	21.2	13.0	1.3	100.0
Advocating refusal to serve in the army	59.8	20.7	18.0	1.5	100.0
Holding political assemblies in the workplace	41.0	31.7	25.5	1.8	100.0
Using expressions that may harm national security	82.5	8.2	7.8	1.5	100.0

Table 5.5
Permissiveness by Age (%)

Permissiveness (the law should always protect)	Age Group				
	18–25	26–35	36–45	46–54	55+
Disagreeing with the Prime Minister or government member	24.5	21.0	18.7	15.8	16.5
Using expressions that can harm national security**	14.0	6.2	9.4	7.9	5.3
Giving classified information to foreign governments	12.0	13.7	17.3	19.8	7.0
Supporting refusal of army service**	27.4	20.4	22.3	16.8	11.9
Burning the state flag**	22.2	17.5	14.4	9.9	8.8
Publicly advocating homosexual behavior**	46.7	39.8	38.8	30.3	20.1
Advertising pornographic material**	25.2	21.2	20.9	13.0	9.3
Children who curse their parents publicly**	11.1	6.1	9.4	7.8	4.4
Using expressions that can offend the Arab citizens in Israel	21.3	13.2	14.4	12.0	11.0
Using expressions that can offend an ethnic (Jewish) group	17.6	11.5	8.6	11.9	9.2
Using expressions that can offend religious people*	14.8	13.3	17.3	19.8	7.0

 * Significant relationship at the p < 0.05 level.
** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

The Ranking of Rights

The ranking of rights is another dimension we used to examine freedom of expression among immigrants. For this purpose we asked the following question:

> The laws of the state guarantee certain rights to individuals, but not everyone considers them equally important. Please rate the importance of the following on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 indicates a right to which you attach very great importance, and 1 represents a right of little importance: The right to assemble, demonstrate, protest, or submit a petition to the government in support of something that is important

to you; the right to say whatever you think or whatever you want to say; the right to a timely hearing before a judge if you are charged with a felony; the right to a free press, not controlled by the government; the right to belong to any religious community you wish; and the right to civil marriage.

Table 5.6 summarizes the findings.

Table 5.6 shows that respondents ranked individual rights associated with individual choice (civil marriage) and legal protection as most important; freedom of the press ranked at the bottom of the ladder. Collective and individual political rights fall in between. Respondents ranked the right to civil marriage as very important to them (67.6% said it is of greatest importance). This is followed by the right to belong to the religious community of your choice (59.4% said it was of greatest importance). The right to a timely hearing before a judge for a person charged with a felony was ranked third in terms of importance (58.6% said it was of greatest importance), while rights directly associated with freedom of expression (the right to assemble, demonstrate, protest, or petition the government; the right to say whatever you think or whatever you want to say) ranked fourth (47.6 % and 47.2%, respectively, said they were of greatest importance). As indicated earlier, a free press ranked last (42.7% said it was of greatest importance to them).

We examined the ranking of rights in terms of demographic and background variables. The findings are summarized in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 reveals an interesting picture, in which the various rights are systematically ranked higher by the following groups: the highly educated elite (as compared to those with less education); the older generation (as compared with the younger); and the non-Jews (as compared to Jews according to halakhah). Duration in Israel has no significant relationship with the ranking of rights. Of the several variables, education is the most significant and is the only one that matters for the importance of a free press. Once again, however, the group most committed to freedom of expression at all levels is the highly educated elite (those with a post-graduate education).

Immigrants' priorities are affected by their pragmatic secular orientation, on the one hand, and by the distress of the non-Jewish group, which comprises a large portion among them, on the other. As indicated in our earlier analysis, those defined as non-Jews according to halakhah are subject to various restrictions as a result of the lack of separation between state and religion in Israel. Hence this

Table 5.6
The Ranking of Rights (%)

Rights	Greatest Importance									Least Importance	
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total
The right to assemble, demonstrate, protest or submit a petition to the government in support of something which is important for you	46.8	8.5	15.7	9.3	8.3	7.2	1.1	1.0	–	2.1	100.0
The right to say whatever you think or whatever you want to say	47.2	11.3	13.7	11.6	6.1	6.1	2	1.0	1.0	–	100.0
The right to a timely hearing before a judge if you are charged with a felony	58.6	9.8	11.2	8.1	5.7	3.0	1.6	1.0	1.0	–	100.0
The right to a free press, not controlled by the government	42.7	11.0	11.0	10.5	10.0	7.8	3.7	1.3	1.0	1.0	100.0
The right to belong to any religious community you wish	59.4	8.1	9.5	7.6	4.0	5.9	1.4	1.0	1.1	2.0	100.0
The right to civil marriage	67.6	8.6	7.6	4.2	3.0	3.4	1.4	1.1	1.1	2.0	100.0

Table 5.7
The Ranking of Rights by Background Variables (%)

The ranking of rights (those said of greatest importance)	Education			Religion		Age				Year of immigration	
	Partial/ full high school	Bachelor's degree	Master's or doctorate	Jews	Non-Jews	18–24	25–44	45–55	65+	1990–1994	1995–1999
The right to assemble, demonstrate, protest or submit a petition to the government	35.2	45.0	55.3**	45.0	54.7	30.0	45.0	45.7	45.9*	48.3	46.5
The right to say anything you want to say	37.4	46.4	50.3*	44.1	56.4**	38.9	52.1	48.0	54.1	47.6	47.6
The right to a timely hearing before a judge if you are charged with a felony	44.0	61.0	63.1*	59.1	62.7	50.6	55.1	60.1	63.0	63.1	53.8*
The right to belong to any religious community you wish	46.1	56.9	63.1**	57.1	67.6*	48.6	60.1	57.1	66.9*	49.2	50.1
The right to civil marriage	57.0	65.7	71.6**	64.5	77.7**	58.4	69.0	66.4	74.1	67.3	70.2
The right to a free press, not controlled by the government	29.8	38.4	45.6**	41.1	47.0	28.9	42.1	46.3	45.0	44.3	41.1

 * Significant relationship at the p < 0.05 level.
** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

group leans strongly toward secularization of Israel and increasing individuals' choice in terms of religion. Although both Jews and non-Jews rank the right to civil marriage as most important, it is ranked higher by the latter (77.7% of the latter said it is of greatest importance, as compared to 64.5% of the former).

In this chapter we have dealt with the immigrants' orientation and attitudes toward civil society and freedom of expression. We have seen that their attitudes are the outcome of complex factors stemming from their former socialization, their background variables, and the impact of the Israeli political culture. What is the impact of this orientation on the political behavior of immigrants? Are voting patterns among immigrants still affected by their former socialization or are they determined by the political culture in Israel? Are there differences in political organization among immigrants between the national-Knesset level and the local-municipal level? Does political organization among immigrants reflect individual or ethnic-collective patterns of mobilization? We will deal with these questions in the next chapter, which focuses on patterns of political organization.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The immigrants who arrived in the 1990s have strongly affected the political system in Israel at both the national and local levels. As early as the 1992 Knesset elections it was clear that immigrants could sway the outcome and determine the identity of the prime minister (Fein 1995).

This influence is the result of several factors: the characteristics of the FSU immigrants, the structure of Israeli society, and its political culture. The large number of Russian immigrants, coupled with their high voter turnout (similar to that among veteran Jewish Israelis) plays a major role. In the 1999 elections, Russian immigrants constituted about 11% of the total electorate (*Statistical Abstract of Israel* 1999: Table 20.5; Katz 1999: 12).

One of the factors that have maximized the impact of Russian immigrants is the structure of the Israeli political system. Since the late 1980s there has been near parity between the left-wing (led by Labour) and right-wing (led by the Likud) blocs, producing a political stalemate in which a small shift in voting behavior could determine the practical outcome of an election (Fein 1995). In addition, the system of separate ballots for the Knesset and the prime minister, in effect between 1996 and 2001, enabled immigrants, like other sectors, to manifest their sectarian identity by voting for parties composed of members of their own group, without forfeiting a direct say in the identity of the prime minister. (For the impact of that electoral system see Arian and Shamir 1998; Doron and Kok 1999.)

Another factor involves the ethno-national criteria for granting Israeli citizenship. Israeli immigration law (specifically, the Law of Return) allows Jewish immigrants to acquire full citizenship, including suffrage and the right to run for office, from the day they arrive in Israel (Horowitz 1998a). This has facilitated the FSU immigrants' speedy access to the political system.

Furthermore, changes that have occurred in Israeli society over the years provide an impetus for ethnic mobilization by Russian immigrants. Unlike ethnic organization by Mizrahim, which was

resisted by the establishment parties until the late 1970s (see Chapter 2), the Russian parties of the 1990s were able to penetrate the national power system almost from their inception. This is because Israeli society today is less collectivist and more individualistic and pragmatic than in the past (Horowitz 1996: 513–14). The political center is more open towards pluralism among the Jewish population than before (Ben-Rafael et al. 1998: 354). In the wake of the failure of the "melting pot" ideology, cultural continuity among new immigrants enjoys increasing legitimacy (Gitelman 1995). Furthermore, the weakness of all-encompassing civic culture in Israel increases the returns of sectarian politics. This situation catalyzes the "ethnicization" of Israeli society and turns ethnic affiliation into social capital.

Under these conditions, Russian immigrants have quickly grasped their potential political impact. Already in the 1992 elections the majority they gave to the Labour party and Meretz played a major role in making it possible for the left-wing bloc, led by Yitzhak Rabin, to form the government coalition (Pinis 1996).

It should be noted that voting patterns among FSU immigrants are dynamic, changing according to their perceived interest. They tend to vote against the party in power, probably because it is judged to be responsible for whatever difficulties they encountered in the absorption process. The hope that a change of government would improve their status and conditions also plays a considerable role (Neri Livneh's interview with Anna Isakova, *Ha'aretz Weekend Magazine*, May 14, 1999). Thus in 1996 FSU immigrants shifted their support from Labour to the Likud and its candidate for prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who was supported by 53% of them (Pines 1996). In the 1999 elections, FSU immigrants once again favored the opposition candidate, Ehud Barak, who was elected prime minister (Katz 1999). In the 2001 elections for prime minister, immigrants shifted allegiance yet again and the vast majority voted for Sharon (the Likud candidate), deserting Barak, whom they had supported less than two years earlier. It has been estimated that Sharon received 63% of the immigrants' votes and Barak only 37% (see *Ha'aretz*, February 7, 2001).

The ethno-national character of the political culture in Israel is a central factor in any explanation of the Russian immigrants' disproportional political impact. This factor has been overlooked by students of the FSU immigration, who have by and large related to immigration and ethnicity in Israel as internal Jewish-Jewish issues

(see introduction). This study suggests that an in-depth understanding of these issues requires a holistic perspective that takes the entire mosaic of Israeli society, including the Palestinian Arab minority, into consideration.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are three large sectors that display strong group cohesiveness in Israel: the Arabs, the *haredim* or Ultraorthodox Jews, and the immigrants from the FSU. The group cohesiveness of these communities is reflected in part in an ethnic political mobilization based mainly on group boundaries and which generates a tendency to vote for ethnic parties and provide massive support to the prime ministerial candidate backed by the group's recognized leadership. However, whereas the two Jewish groups are considered to be a legitimate part of the political culture in Israel, the Arabs are relegated outside its boundaries and denied any possibility of sharing power.

The Arabs' exclusion has given the Ultraorthodox and immigrant voting blocs a surplus value beyond their proportional size. As a result, both the right-wing and left-wing Zionist camps have become highly dependent on them, which has allowed them to up the ante in political bargaining and to easily shift allegiance from one camp to the other, according to their perceived interest of the moment.

The Russian immigrants' efforts to increase their impact on the Israeli political system began shortly after the arrival of the first wave. A Russian party contested the 1992 general elections, but received only 12,000 votes, far short of the threshold for winning a seat in the Knesset (Pinis 1996). In 1996, former Prisoner of Zion Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky spearheaded the formation of Yisrael Ba'aliya, which won seven Knesset seats (at a time when the total Russian vote corresponded to 11 seats) (ibid.).

Several contextual factors facilitated Sharansky's efforts to establish an immigrant party that year. The most important of these factors has to do with the large number of immigrants from the FSU (see Chapter 3); the fact that the major parties did not place an immigrant candidate in a realistic slot on their lists (only after the intervention of Peres, the head of the Labour party, was Sofa Landver moved up to a realistic slot); and the immigrants' resentment that no party was taking their needs and absorption distress seriously (Katz 2000).

The success of Yisrael Ba'aliya in 1996 seems to have encouraged the formation of new Russian parties before the 1999 elections. Four

Russian parties contended for the immigrants' votes that year. Yisrael Ba'aliya won six seats; Yisrael Beitenu, founded by Avigdor Liberman, who was director general of the Prime Minister's Office under Netanyahu, won four seats. The other two lists—Nadezhda/Tikva (headed by Alex Tantzar) and Lev (composed of immigrants from Bokhara and the Caucasus) failed to clear the threshold (see also Katz 2000: 152).

The Russian immigrants' attempt to affect the political system also extends to the local level. As will be shown in Chapter 7, the strong demographic concentration of immigrants in several urban centers has created social and cultural networks at the locality and neighborhood levels. Within a short period, immigrants have become an important electoral bloc in various cities and development towns in Israel. This has served as a catalyst for political organization in municipal elections, whether through specifically immigrant lists or mixed immigrant-veteran lists, as will be discussed later on in this chapter.

This background raises some major questions: Do the voting patterns of FSU immigrants reflect ethnic mobilization? Is there an overlap between voting patterns in national and local elections? Are these patterns the outcome of protest, affected by the extent of the immigrants' satisfaction or disappointment with their absorption? Or are they a pragmatic strategy aimed at promoting their competitive ability in the Israeli stratification system?

Below we shall attempt to answer these questions through an analysis of our data on the voting behavior of immigrants in the 1999 Knesset elections and the 1998 local elections. The sociopolitical implications of the findings will be also delineated. For our analysis, we adopt the classification of the party system presented by Horowitz (1985), which defines an ethnically based party as one that derives its power from an identifiable ethnic group and serves the interests of that group (ibid.: 291)—in other words, when the party boundaries are identical with the group boundaries, regardless of whether a group is represented by more than one party (ibid.: 298).

Voting Behavior at the National Elections

Our findings show that the turnout among FSU immigrant voters in the 1999 elections was high by any standard (84.7%). This exceeded

the nationwide participation rate of 78.7% (*Statistical Abstract of Israel*
1999, Table 20.5) but is similar to that among the veteran Jewish
population and higher than that among the Arab population (75%;
see Ghanem and Ozacky 1999).

According to the findings, 60.7% of the respondents voted for
Ehud Barak for prime minister and 39.3% for Benjamin Netanyahu.
In the Knesset race, where the voting for parties was more com-
plex, there was nevertheless a clear tendency among Russian immi-
grants to vote for Russian-dominated parties. Altogether, 57% of the
respondents voted for the two main Russian parties—41% for Yisrael
Ba'aliya and 16% for Yisrael Beitenu (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1
How Respondents Voted in the 1999 Elections
for the Fifteenth Knesset (%)

Party	%	Prime Minister	%
One Israel	10.5	Ehud Barak	60.7
Likud	14.0	Benjamin Netanyahu	39.3
Yisrael Ba'aliya	40.7		
Yisrael Beitenu	15.6		
Shinui	7.6		
Meretz	7.6		
Religious parties	1.5		
Others	2.5		
Total	100.0		100.0
Turnout rate	84.7		

Certainly one of the main reasons for the immigrants' strong sup-
port for Yisrael Ba'aliya was its leadership, especially its chairman,
Natan Sharansky. As different studies have shown, elites and charis-
matic leaders play a major role in creating ethnic symbols, defining
group goals, and establishing a sense of group cohesiveness (Reitz
1980; Adam 1989). Sharansky has indeed played a major role in
shaping the agenda of Soviet immigrants in Israel, especially at the
beginning of the 1990s wave, because of the respect he commands
among them as an activist before and after his immigration to Israel
and for his efforts to advance the interests of new immigrants long
before he became a Knesset member. This may explain why the
party's election propaganda focused mainly on Sharansky's credibil-
ity and strong personality (Grinshpen 1999).

The fact that Yisrael Ba'aliya was the first successful Russian party in Israeli history gave it a solid base among the immigrants. Its pragmatic orientation responded to their needs. In addition, Yisrael Ba'aliya is well organized and backed by a large number of local and nongovernmental immigrant organizations (Katz 1999; Horowitz 1999). Its participation in the Likud government of 1996–1999 enabled it to penetrate the Russian community and expand its base by providing jobs and other benefits for its activists and supporters.

Unlike Yisrael Ba'aliya, Yisrael Beitenu has placed national issues at the top of its priorities and less emphasis on uniquely immigrant interests. As a matter of fact, at the press conference in which Liberman announced the establishment of his party (January 5, 1999), he hardly mentioned immigrant issues and focused exclusively on the need for a radical change of the political and judicial system in Israel, in particular the need to limit the power of the police (Katz 2000: 150). Liberman declared that when elected he would fight against the "judicial tyranny" of the State Attorney's office (Peretz and Doron 2000: 270).

Whereas Yisrael Beitenu took a hard-line position on the peace process, Yisrael Ba'aliya focused on bread-and-butter issues connected with enhancing the immigrants' status and improving their conditions. Its central message was its goal of wresting control of the Interior Ministry from Shas, promoted in a catchy slogan in Russian: "MVD pod Shas kontrol? Nyet, MVD pod nash kontrol"—i.e., "the Interior Ministry under Shas' control? No, the Interior Ministry under *our* control." This slogan was very appealing to Russian immigrants, the vast majority of whom are non-observant and naturally opposed to the perceived attempt by Shas to impose religious laws and lifestyles (Grinshpen 1999). In addition, the Ministry of Interior has been controlled by Shas during most of the period since the start of the wave of immigration (since the late 1980s). This party has called for restrictions on the entry of immigrants who are not Jewish according to *halakhah* (Lustick 1999). Indeed, throughout the negotiations that led to the formation of the Barak government Yisrael Ba'aliya insisted on receiving the Interior Ministry, which did in fact go to Sharansky.

Among the veteran parties, the right-wing Likud was more popular among immigrants than One Israel (based on the Labour party and led by Barak). The voting percentages for the two parties among immigrants were 14% and 10.5%, respectively. (In the ballot for prime minister, Barak ran ahead of his party among immigrants in

the 1999 elections.) Our findings also indicate that the Russian vote
was clearly anti-religious. Only about 2% voted for religious parties
(most of them for Shas). Nearly 15% of the respondents reported
voting for one of the two parties that were the most vociferous in
their opposition to religious coercion—Shinui, headed by Tomy Lapid,
and Meretz, headed by Yossi Sarid (the vote for these two parties
was almost equal).

Collective vs. Individual Factors Behind the Voting Patterns

According to the aforementioned classification of political organiza-
tion (see Horowitz 1985), both Yisrael Ba'aliya and Yisrael Beitenu
may be classified as ethnically based parties. Therefore, we initially
divided the immigrant vote into two large categories: "immigrant
parties" and "veteran Israeli parties." An in-depth analysis of the
data, however, suggests a need to further distinguish between Yisrael
Ba'aliya and Yisrael Beitenu. Although both are "immigrant parties"
and similar in many ways, there is a considerable difference in the
profile of their voters. On the whole, analysis indicates that Yisrael
Ba'aliya voters are more ethnic-oriented, while Yisrael Beitenu sup-
porters are more nationalistic and Israel-oriented.

Students of immigration usually cite duration of the stay in the
host country as an important factor that facilitates the economic,
social, and political integration of immigrants (Reitz 1980; Rose
1989). Newer immigrants are usually more inclined to emphasize
their group attachment than are those who have been in the coun-
try longer and are accordingly more likely to support group-based
organizations. Our findings support this conclusion. Ethnic voting by
Russian immigrants tended to decrease with the duration of resi-
dence in Israel. This was true for supporters of both immigrant par-
ties. They received the votes of 51.4% of immigrants who came to
Israel in 1990–1992, but 55.9% among those who came in 1993–1995
and 69.6% among 1996–1999 arrivals.

Our findings show that immigrants who have been in Israel longer
are more involved with veteran Israeli society, know Hebrew better,
and are more exposed to the Israeli Hebrew media, and are there-
fore more likely to be affected by the veteran social and political
patterns than are recent immigrants. But there is a certain thresh-
old effect, since even among the immigrants of the first crest, at the
start of the decade, over 50% voted ethnically.

As shown in Chapter 4, strong ethnic orientation among Russian immigrants also finds expression in their attitudes toward the existence of Russian cultural, educational, and political organizations in Israel. An examination of the relationship between ethnic voting and support for separate ethnic-based organizations reveals a strong consistency between attitudes and actual behavior. As can be seen from Table 6.2, there was a significant difference in the voting behavior of supporters and opponents of segregated ethnic organizations. The former were much more likely to vote ethnically.

Table 6.2
Voting for Parties by Attitudes towards Maintaining
Ethnic Russian Institutions in Israel (%)

Voted for	Cultural Institutions**		Russian-Language Schools*	
	Important or Very important	Not Important or Not at all important	Important or Very important	Not important or Not at all important
Yisrael Ba'aliya	45.5	20.2	48.1	30.5
Yisrael Beitenu	16.4	11.5	15.8	15.5
"Veteran" parties	38.1	68.3	36.1	54.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Significant relationship at the p < 0.05 level. ** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

We also examined the relationship between voting in the Knesset elections and the ethnic-identity scale. The findings are summarized in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3
Voting in Knesset Elections by Scale of Ethnic Identity (%)

Voting in Knesset elections	Ethnic Identity		
	Low	Moderate	High
Veteran Party**	62.9	43.2	32.6
Yisrael Ba'aliya**	31.4	39.6	48.9
Yisrael Beitenu**	5.7	17.1	18.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

Table 6.3 shows a strong significant relationship between the strength of ethnic identity and voting preferences. Whereas two-thirds of those with a low ethnic identity voted for veteran parties, two-thirds of those with a strong ethnic identity voted for immigrant lists. Those of moderate ethnic identity rank in between.

One additional and connected point needs to be addressed: Are ethnic patterns of political behavior an outcome of immigrants' dissatisfaction with and alienation from their absorption and their relationships with veteran Israelis? Or are they an integral component of their mobilization strategy, regardless of their perceived adjustment?

As mentioned earlier, the findings show that immigrants from FSU are highly satisfied with their absorption, get along well with veteran Israelis, and feel at home in Israel. However, no relationship was found between respondents' voting preferences and their satisfaction with their absorption and social relationships with veteran Israelis. This finding strengthens the conclusion that ethnic voting by Russian immigrants is more of a strategic decision than reactive behavior. Table 6.4 summarizes the relationship between these variables and immigrants' voting behavior.

Table 6.4
Voting for Parties by Extent of Adjustment (%)

Voted for	Satisfaction with absorption		Feel at home in Israel		Get along well with veteran Israelis	
	Satisfied or Very satisfied	Not satisfied or Not at all satisfied	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yisrael Ba'aliya	40.2	41.1	40.2	43.3	35.5	49.0
Yisrael Beitenu	15.5	16.8	17.3	10.4	17.6	8.2
Israel-veteran parties	44.3	42.1	42.5	46.3	46.9	42.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Relationships between voting in Knesset elections and all measures of adjustment are insignificant: p > 0.05.

We examined the relationship between voting patterns and three different types of media: Israeli Hebrew media, Russian-language media produced in Israel, and Russian-language media produced in

the FSU. As shown earlier, immigrants are strongly exposed to both categories of Russian-language media, but not to Israeli Hebrew media (see Chapter 4). The exposure to Russian television programming is especially remarkable. FSU stations carried by cable television clearly constitute the immigrants' main source of entertainment.

The findings show a strong relationship between voting patterns and exposure to ethnic-Russian media. Nevertheless, the press appears to be the most powerful medium affecting respondents' voting behavior. There is a significant relationship between the type of print media to which respondents are exposed and their voting ($p < 0.01$). Ethnic voting for Russian parties is especially high among those who read Russian-language newspapers (62.5%) and decreases to 31% among those who report that they read Hebrew newspapers on a regular basis.

Age was the most important demographic factor associated with immigrants' voting behavior. Our findings show a significant relationship between age and voting ($p < 0.05$). The median age of voters for the two ethnic parties was higher than of those for the veteran Israeli parties: Yisrael Ba'aliya, 54 years; Yisrael Beitenu, 49 years; and veteran parties, 43 years. Among the last group, the youngest voters were those who supported the anti-religious parties, Meretz and Shinui (median age 34 years). A significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) was found between education and party preference. The two Russian parties received 35% among those with elementary education, 53.3% among those with secondary education, and 58.4% among those with post-secondary education. No difference was found between the voting preferences of men and women. In other words, ethnic voting is the dominant pattern among the educated elite and the older generation of FSU immigrants.

There was a considerable difference between Yisrael Ba'aliya and Yisrael Beitenu in this respect, however: the former was especially popular among those with post-secondary education, whereas Yisrael Beitenu voters were more widespread among those with secondary education only.

Is there a relationship between ethnic voting and the immigrants' stand on the Israel-Arab conflict, as reflected in their attitudes toward territorial compromise? An examination of this question shows a complex picture: Voting for ethnic Russian parties had almost nothing to do with the immigrants' political and ideological attitudes. In any case, supporters of Yisrael Beitenu are more hawkish than those of Yisrael Ba'aliya.

Table 6.5
Voting for Parties and Prime Minister,
by Attitude toward Territorial Compromise (%)

	Golan Heights			West Bank and Gaza District		
	Should return			Should return		
Voted for	All/large part	Some	None	All/large part	Some	None
Yisrael Ba'aliya	42.8	42.2	39.6	35.4	43.0	40.1
Yisrael Beitenu	14.2	12.0	18.2	14.5	17.3	16.7
Veteran parties	43.0	45.8	42.2	50.1	39.7	43.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Relationship between voting for parties and attitudes toward territorial compromise is insignificant: p > 0.05.

Barak	74.2	70.2	51.4	80.0	61.2	51.5
Netanyahu	25.8	29.8	48.6	20.0	38.8	48.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

	** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.			** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.		

Unlike the case of "ethnic" voters, support for veteran Israeli parties is affected by ideological attitudes. Over 60% of the "dovish" immigrants voted for Meretz and One Israel, whereas the Likud, religious, and right-wing parties drew their support from hardliners. In the race for prime minister, the vast majority of those who favor territorial compromise supported Barak, while hardliners were almost equally divided between the two candidates (with a slight majority in favor of Barak).

Factors Behind the Voting for Prime Minister

Our analysis shows that the factors that induce immigrants to vote for ethnic parties differ from those that explain their vote for prime minister. While the first is primarily a strategic decision, the latter is motivated by a combination of several elements: a protest or reactive element, an ideological element, and an ethnic strategic decision. Unlike ethnic voting for parties, where the extent of satisfaction with absorption did not play a significant role, absorption grievances seem to be taken out on the incumbent prime minister. This sup-

ports our earlier explanation of the shift in the Russian vote from one election to another. Here disappointment in specific spheres associated with absorption (housing, employment, income, etc.) has a considerable effect on how immigrants vote. For example, whereas support for Barak was 58% among those who own their own dwelling, it was 63% among those who live in rented housing and 71% among those living in an absorption center or other temporary accommodations. Furthermore, support for Barak was 57% among those with a full-time job, but 69% among the unemployed. Unlike the case of party voting, no relationship was found between duration of residence in Israel and voting for a prime ministerial candidate.

Besides the reactive-individual element, the vote for prime minister also had an ethnic collective dimension. As in the case of party voting, there was a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between respondents' ethnic orientation and their vote for prime minister; those in favor of separate Russian cultural and political organizations tended to support Barak rather than Netanyahu. This might be because the immigrants consider the Labour party to be more tolerant of cultural pluralism, at least at the declarative level (Horowitz 1999).

In addition, there was an ideological component at work in the balloting for prime minister. This might explain why support for Netanyahu was especially strong among the traditional segments of FSU immigrants, mainly those originating in Central Asia. The same trend applies to those who are more supportive of the Jewish character of Israel. The lowest support for Netanyahu was among non-Jewish immigrants (Table 6.6).

Demographic factors played a minor role in determining voting for prime minister. No significant difference was found in the voting behavior of men and women, although the latter were slightly more likely than men to vote for Barak. Similarly, education had no significant effect on the voting for prime minister, although those with more education were slightly more likely to support Barak. As to age, Netanyahu voters were younger than Barak voters (median ages of 44 and 49, respectively); but here too there was no significant difference.

The Elections of 2003

Although this monograph was completed before the 2003 elections, we have added this epilogue to examine whether they indicated a radical change or continuity in the voting patterns of immigrants.

Table 6.6
Voting for Prime Minister by Religious Orientation and Religion (%)

Candidate	Religiosity**			Character of Israel		Religion (as declared by respondent)**	
	Religious	Traditional	Non-religious	Jewish state	For all citizens	Jewish	Non-Jewish
Barak	37.5	45.5	66.2	57.9	64.2	58.5	72.4
Netanyahu	62.5	54.5	33.8	42.1	35.8	41.5	27.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	** Significant relationship at the $p < 0.01$ level.			Relationship is insignificant: $p > 0.05$.		** Significant relationship at the $p < 0.01$ level.	

Before presenting the results we should emphasize two major contextual factors that seem to have effected these elections: the political structure and the political atmosphere.

The 2003 elections were the first campaign after the abolition of the separate ballots for Knesset and the prime minister and the return to the former system of a single ballot for party slates. This change was basically aimed at decreasing the maneuvering power of sectarian-ethnic parties and strengthening the large parties, since, as indicated earlier, sectarian parties benefited most from the separate-ballot system.

In addition, these elections were conducted with two main issues on the agenda of Israeli society: a national issue—the external Israel-Palestinian conflict under the shadow of the al-Aqsa Intifada; and a social issue—internal fissures within Israeli society, mainly between the secular and religious sectors of the Jewish majority and between Jews and Arabs.

Four parties with a strong ethnic-Russian element ran in these elections: two "fly-by-night" lists that together won fewer than 2400 votes and Yisrael Ba'aliya (chaired by Sharansky). In addition, the National Union—a bloc of three parties of the extreme right, led by Avigdor Liberman of Yisrael Beitenu—may be considered to be at least partly ethnic-based.

Except for the Arabs and *haredim* (who tend to live in separate localities or neighborhoods), it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics on voting by other sectors in Israel. Hence we will use estimates based on polls conducted among immigrants and published on a Russian-language website (shlomo-groman.narod.ru/sport/votes2003.html). According to these polls, the 1990s immigrants from the FSU voted as follows: 30%, Likud; 26%, National Union; 20%, Shinui; 12%, Yisrael Ba'aliya; 6%, left-wing parties (mainly Meretz and Labour); and 6%, religious and other parties.

These results reflect the immigrants' basic orientation, indicated earlier: right-wing, secular, and ethnic. They reflect more continuity than change in their orientation and voting patterns. The rightist orientation is expressed by the fact that only 6% voted for left-wing parties. As shown earlier, this orientation has been reinforced since the outbreak of the second Palestinian Intifada in October 2000 (see Chapter 5).

The secular orientation is reflected in the strong support for Shinui. It is estimated that the immigrants' votes gave this party four of its

15 seats (see Groman 2003). This party, chaired by Tomy Lapid, ran almost exclusively on an anti-religious platform, with the focus on combating *haredi* (mainly Shas) influence. Interestingly enough, it adopted slogans similar to those used by Yisrael Ba'aliya in the 1999 elections: a government without *haredim* and many promises aimed at the needs of the secular sector in Israel, including the introduction of civil marriage, which is at the top of the immigrants' priorities (see Chapter 5).

The immigrants' ethnic orientation was reflected in their support for Yisrael Ba'aliya and the National Union, which received 38% of their vote. Another poll, conducted among Russian voters by Dr. Alex Fildman and based on a sample of voters in six cities, gave Yisrael Ba'aliya and the National Union 46% (29% and 17%, respectively) (*Ha'aretz*, January 29, 2003). This result does indicate a decline in direct ethnic voting by immigrants from 1999. Nevertheless, it reflects their clear ethnic orientation. The decline may be explained by the contextual factors noted above. First, the decrease in the power of ethnic parties as a whole, in the wake of the return to the single-ballot system (Shas, too, dropped from 17 seats in 1999 to 11 seats in 2003). Second, national issues overshadowed ethnic-sectarian issues, as a result of the Intifada and the sense of being a "society under siege" shared by the Jewish population as a whole. This mainly benefited Liberman, who ran on a joint slate with parties of the extreme right and focused on nationalistic slogans. It is estimated that four of the seven seats won by the National Union came from immigrant voters (Groman 2003). The third reason has to do with Sharansky, who failed to "deliver the goods" to his electorate. In addition, his stand on national issues was not clear and strong enough to satisfy the immigrants' hawkish orientation. This disappointment with a Sharansky was voiced in the Russian-language press already before the elections (see, for example Brailovsky, 2002).

Local Elections

Immigrants also participated in the 1998 municipal elections through their own parties in a large number of localities (Katz 2000). In these elections, Liberman (who served as director general of the Prime Minister's office in 1996–1998, until forced to resign because of alleged abuse of power [Peretz and Doron 2000: 70]) organized

rival lists to those supported by Yisrael Ba'aliya. Alto-gether, immi-grants' lists were able for the first time to penetrate many localities; until these elections, the 1990s immigrants were not represented in any Israeli locality (ibid.: 149). The participation of immigrants in local government is of major importance for the promotion of their interests, because the municipal system has a direct impact on the immigrants' absorption in terms of budgets, which are channeled through departments of absorption in local authorities (Katz 2000: 149).

We examined the political behavior of FSU immigrants in local elections, based on the respondents' report as to how they voted in the 1998 local elections. Like veteran Jewish Israelis, immigrants turned out at a much lower rate for local elections than for Knesset elections (69.4% and 84.7%, respectively). Among those who did go to the polls, the breakdown was as follows:

- Voted for a Russian immigrant list
  (hereafter "immigrant list")   45%
- Voted for a list including immigrants and veteran Israelis
  (hereafter "mixed list")   44%
- Voted for a list that did not include immigrants
  (hereafter "veteran-Israeli list")   11%

In local elections, as in Knesset elections, the voting pattern of the FSU immigrants reflects an ethnic-collective behavior. The vast major-ity supported immigrant or mixed lists. In this case, however, voting for a mixed list represents a middle ground between ethnic and inte-grated behavior. It demonstrates the coalitions that immigrants have begun to build with veterans in both national and local politics.

Our findings indicate that despite the difference, there is a high consistency between the voting patterns in local and national elec-tions (see Table 6.7).

From Table 6.7 we see that those who had voted for ethnic-Russian lists in the local elections were also more likely to vote for ethnic-Russian parties in the Knesset elections than were those who had voted for mixed or veteran lists. Just as at the national level, in local politics, too, Yisrael Beitenu voters manifest more Israeli-inte-gration patterns than do Yisrael Ba'aliya voters. The tendency to abstain was consistent at both levels: roughly 86% of those who had abstained in the local elections also failed to vote in the Knesset elections.

Table 6.7
Voting in Knesset and Local Elections (%)

| Local elections | Knesset elections** | | | |
	Veteran Israeli parties	Yisrael Ba'aliya	Yisrael Beitenu	Did not vote
Immigrant list	22.5	50.0	44.7	3.8
Mixed list	40.7	31.5	29.4	7.5
Veteran Israeli list	12.7	2.3	8.3	2.8
Did not vote	24.1	16.2	17.6	85.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

We examined voting in local elections by the ethnicity scale presented in Chapter 4. The findings are summarized in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8
Voting in Local Elections by Ethnic Identity

| | | Ethnic Identity** | | |
		Low	Moderate	High
Local	Russian List	24.7	30.8	33.2
Voting	Mixed List	32.3	33.8	24.6
	Veteran List	15.1	6.9	4.7
	Did not vote	28.0	28.4	37.5
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

Table 6.8 shows a significant relationship between voting in local elections and ethnic identity. The higher the manifestation of ethnic identity, the greater the tendency to vote for ethnic-immigrant lists rather than mixed and veteran lists. Those with high ethnic identi-fication manifest the highest abstention rate. These findings support the aforementioned argument that the voting of immigrants in local elections (as well as in Knesset elections) reflects collective-ethnic political behavior.

The question is whether ethic mobilization by immigrants in local elections is a strategic decision or a reactive behavior, the outcome of a lack of adjustment? Table 6.9 shows that at neither level was

Table 6.9
Voting in Local Elections, by Perceived Extent of Adjustment (%)

	Extent of Adjustment					
	Very satisfied/ Satisfied	Totally dissatisfied/ Dissatisfied	Get along with Israelis		Feel at home in Israel	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
Immigrant List	42.8	53.5	41.4	50.0	40.9	50.0
Mixed list	45.5	40.7	46.4	38.1	48.3	45.8
Veteran	11.7	5.8	12.2	11.9	10.8	4.2
Total:	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Relationships between voting in local elections and all measures of adjustment are insignificant: $p > 0.05$. The findings relate to those who voted.

there a significant relationship between how immigrants voted and their perceived adjustment, although the better-adjusted were more likely to vote for mixed lists or veteran lists.

On the whole, the extent of adjustment is not a crucial element in determining an ethnic or integrative voting preference. As in national elections, ethnic voting is a strategic decision more than a reactive behavior. But unlike national elections, there is a systematic (although statistically insignificant) tendency among those who are dissatisfied, do not feel at home in Israel, and do not get along with Israelis to vote for ethnic lists or to stay home on election day. The widest discrepancy in abstention percentage is between those who feel at home in Israel (abstention rate of 26%) and those who do not feel at home in Israel (abstention rate of 40%). This suggests that not voting represents a form of protest among immigrants.

No relationship was found between voting in local elections, on the one hand, and political attitudes regarding territorial compromise, on the other. This is another indication that immigrants' voting patterns in both municipal and national elections are motivated chiefly by pragmatic interests rather than ideological-national considerations. It is worth mentioning, however, that pragmatic considerations among immigrants seem to be even stronger in local elections than in national elections. This may be also affected by the nature of local elections in Israel, which are fought mainly over local-community issues.

As for demographic variables, there was no considerable difference between men and women or between those with different levels of education. Nevertheless, those with a post-secondary education were more likely to have voted for a Russian-ethnic list than were respondents with only an elementary or secondary education (although the relationship is insignificant). Unlike in Knesset elections, no significant relationship was found between length of residence in Israel and voting for ethnic lists or veteran lists. The main difference lies in the participation rate, which was higher among immigrants who arrived in 1990–1992 than among those who arrived in 1996–1999 (75.5% and 59%, respectively). It should be noted that (as in national elections) non-Jews tended to abstain more than Jews (33% and 27%, respectively). Age was a significant variable in local elections, just as in Knesset elections (see Table 6.10).

Table 6.10
Voting in Local Elections, by Age (%)

| List* | Age Cohort | | | | |
	18–25	26–35	36–45	46–54	55+
Immigrant list	28.6	43.5	45.3	34.7	53.5
Mixed list	52.4	43.5	44.2	53.3	39.5
Veteran-Israeli list	19.0	13.0	10.5	12.0	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Significant relationship at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 6.10 shows that the largest difference is between the two extreme age groups (18–25 and 55+). The older generation was more likely to vote for ethnic and mixed lists. The main difference, however, lies in the participation rate: the abstention percentage among the youngest group was three times that for the oldest group (60% and 20%, respectively).

We examined the voting patterns in local elections by the concentration of immigrants in their neighborhood. As indicated earlier, most Russian immigrants live in neighborhoods in which they constitute a significant share of the residents (over 80% of them live in neighborhoods where they constitute one-third or more of the population). We found no relationship between different levels of concentration (one-third, one-half, or a majority). The main difference

was found between all these concentrations and the lowest level of concentration (where immigrants are a small minority or isolated families). The voting rate for Russian-immigrant lists was 49% among the former group, but only 31% among the latter. This means that the formation of Russian-ethnic lists and support for them were a general phenomenon in all localities where there was a considerable number of immigrants, whatever their concentration.

As in the Knesset elections, in local elections the media, and especially the print media, played an important role. There was a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between the type of newspaper to which respondents are exposed and how they voted. Among those who said that Russian-language newspapers published in Israel are their regular reading fare, 48% voted for ethnic lists and only 7.5% for veteran lists. Among those who read Hebrew newspapers regularly, the corresponding percentages were 38% and 17%.

This chapter has dealt with political behavior among immigrants. It has shown that ethnic voting patterns and political mobilization among immigrants are mainly the outcome of pragmatic considerations and the desire of immigrants to utilize the existing system to integrate into Israeli society as a group, not just as individuals. What are the implications of this behavior for social networks among immigrants? What are the dynamics of the social interaction between the immigrants and veteran Israelis? To what extent have immigrants adjusted to the new setting in the economic, residential, and social arenas? What are the characteristics of social distance between immigrants and veterans as perceived by both groups? These questions and others will be addressed in the next two chapters.

IMMIGRANTS VERSUS ISRAELI SOCIETY

We examined several facets of the immigrants' relationships with and orientation toward Israeli society, including their adjustment patterns, perception of the mutual influence between them and Israeli society, social ties with veterans, and social distance from each of the major groups in Israeli society.

On the whole, we found that the 1990s immigrants from the FSU form a distinct group, with strong social and cultural borders, with regard to their residential patterns, social networks, and social relations with the host society. Immigrants are satisfied about their absorption in Israel, although their social adjustment lags behind their material adaptation. However, immigrants perceive themselves as having a more positive influence on Israeli society than it has on them and have already crystallized their social location vis-à-vis other groups in Israel. This chapter analyzes these findings in detail.

Adjustment Patterns

We asked a number of questions intended to learn about the immigrants' general evaluation of their adjustment and relationships with veteran Israelis. These included: Do you get along well with Israelis? Do you feel at home in Israel? How satisfied are you with your overall absorption in Israel?

Most immigrants (56.6%) get along well with Israelis; 53.2% feel at home in Israel and 79.5% are satisfied with their overall absorption. Only a small minority answered all three questions in the negative (8.9%, 12.3%, and 19.5%, respectively) and may be considered to be deeply alienated from Israeli society.

When they were asked about the different components of absorption separately, however, a more complex picture emerged. Immigrants are most satisfied with their housing and leisure-time activities and least satisfied with their social relationships with veterans. Cultural activities, economic adjustment, command of Hebrew, and the educational system fall between these extremes (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1
Satisfaction among Immigrants with Absorption
in Different Fields (%)
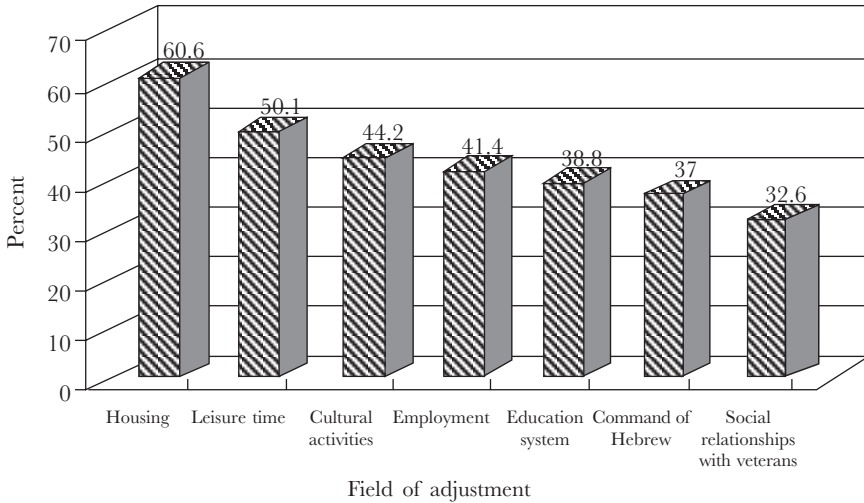
Among the different categories of adjustment we shall focus here on residential adjustment and economic adjustment. (The other categories are discussed elsewhere in this monograph.)

Residential Adjustment

The settlement of the 1990s immigrants was the result of a complex set of factors, including voluntary selection, economic constraints, and government policy. Unlike the case of previous waves of immigration, Israeli authorities allowed the 1990s immigrants more flexibility in deciding where they would live. This was reflected in the "direct absorption" policy, which was drawn up on the basis of lessons from the past and the market economy (Hasson 1998).

This does not mean, however, that there was no government intervention in the immigrants' decision. The Ministry of Interior did prepare a plan, compatible with the national population-dispersal policy, based on demographic, economic, and ideological needs. The immigrants were supposed to be concentrated in the center of the country at first and, in the second stage, to be dispersed to the periphery—the Negev, Galilee, and West Bank (ibid.). This plan has affected the allocation of resources for housing, as the relatively lower prices in the periphery attracted immigrants and channeled their

demographic movement (Hasson 1998: 287). Among other things it was thought that a considerable part of this immigration would be directed to settlements in the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza. Based on this assumption, the Master Plan for the settlements in the territories was based on the projection that, in the year 2010, 1.3 million Jews would live in these territories (Troen 1994).

Despite the absorption authorities' attempts to steer the 1990s immigrants on the basis of "national needs," these immigrants have chosen to follow their own path. Very few immigrants knuckled under to the pressure to settle in the Palestinian territories (only 1.7% live in the Jewish settlements in the West Bank). This resistance was also clear in the immigrants' attitudes. Only 2.4% of respondents said they had ever considered living in a settlement in the West Bank or Gaza; less than one percent said it was very likely or likely they would ever settle there.

Most of the immigrants settled in urban centers, creating a high demographic concentration of their group at both the locality and neighborhood levels. As a result, in 1998 there were 25 towns in Israel where FSU immigrants made up 20% or more of the population (or over 30,000 immigrants) (Ministry of Immigrant Absorption 1998: 9). In many localities, these immigrants became the largest group by country of origin. Among them are Upper Nazareth (42.5%), Karmiel (35.6%), and Ma'alot-Tarshiha (38.7%) in the north. In Haifa, the largest city in northern Israel, they are 18.9% of the population. Immigrants are also highly concentrated in some cities in the central region, including Or Aqiva (42.5%) and Netanya (22.1%). Almost all the urban settlements in the Negev have a high concentration of immigrants: Sederot (39.8%), Arad (32.6%), Ofaqim (29.6%); in Beersheva, the largest city in the south, they constitute 26.2% of the population (ibid.).

This demographic concentration is strongly reflected in our findings. The vast majority of respondents (84%) said that they live in neighborhoods where FSU immigrants account for at least one-third of the residents; 55.1%, in neighborhoods where immigrants constitute half or more of the population. Only 14% said there were few immigrant families or that theirs was the only immigrant family in the neighborhood.

This phenomenon is evident in every part of Israel. There are, however, some major differences in volume and visibility. The demographic concentration is most evident in the Northern and Southern

(Negev) districts: 50% of respondents in the former, and 54% in the latter, said that immigrants constitute a majority in their neighborhood. The percentage of high-concentration neighborhoods elsewhere was 36% in the Haifa district, 30% in the Central district, 16% in the Jerusalem district, and only 7% in the Tel Aviv district.

The large size of the 1990s wave and its demographic concentration have created a sense of power and self-confidence among immigrants and has turned the continuity of immigrants' tradition and culture into profitable economic enterprise (see the article on Russian nightclubs in Tel Aviv, *Maariv*, June 8, 2001). Thus immigrants have already created distinctive neighborhoods in several Israeli cities, which veterans refer to as "little Russia" (ibid.).

This phenomenon is well documented in an article headlined "Little Russia":

> Thus it happens that where there are large concentrations of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, such as Bat Yam, Netanya, Qiryat Gat, Ashdod, and Rishon Leziyyon, there has developed a full gamut of shops, realtors, home repairmen, neighborhood groceries, delicatessens, and garages—in short, all the services that fall into the category of "small business" (there is still not enough free capital to start up larger enterprises). So a family that wants to renovate its apartment generally hires a Russian home repairman; a young couple that wants to get married signs a contract with a Russian restaurant rather than with an Israeli wedding hall; Russian delicatessens import foodstuffs from Ukraine and Moscow; bookstores import almost every new book published in Moscow; and travel agencies that specialize in the former Soviet Union do a land-order business. (Carmel Zilber, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, June 1, 1997)

As we have seen, the immigrants' residential patterns are group-centered, at both the neighborhood and locality levels. What factors explain these patterns? Is the immigrants' demographic concentration a barrier to integration into the host society or a catalyst for socioeconomic adjustment?

Our analysis shows that the immigrants' tendency to reside in neighborhoods where they form a majority or a sizeable minority is not a passing phenomenon. There is a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between demographic concentration and home ownership. Some 40% of those who own the house where they live reside in neighborhoods in which immigrants form a majority, as compared to 27% among those who live in rental housing. Furthermore, the residential concentration of immigrants tends to increase with the length of time

they have been in the country. Among respondents who came in 1990 and 1991, 37% said they live in a neighborhood where immigrants form a majority, as against 26% of those who arrived in 1999. Even recent arrivals tend to live in immigrant neighborhoods, however, because the well-organized social networks among immigrants help them find a place to live there.

The tendency to live in immigrant neighborhoods is typical of the 1990s wave, regardless of the republic of origin. The difference between those from European republics and Asian republics is not significant. If each individual republic is examined separately, however, some major differences emerge. Immigrants from Azerbaijan seem to have the highest demographic concentration: 50% live in predominantly immigrant neighborhoods and 46% in neighborhoods where one-third of the residents are immigrants. Among those from European republics, those from Russia and Ukraine (the two largest groups of immigrants—nearly 61% of immigrants came from these republics [Central Bureau of Statistics 2000, p. 85]) have the highest demographic concentration at the neighborhood level: 83% live in neighborhoods where more than one-third of the population are immigrants.

The immigrants' relatively high satisfaction with their housing stems from the fact that most of them (55.1%) already live in permanent accommodations owned by themselves or by their family. We found a strong positive relationship (r = 0.308) between home ownership and satisfaction with housing.

Residential adjustment increases with duration in Israel. The percentage of those who own the apartment in which they live is 72% among those who arrived in 1990 and 1991, 55% among those who arrived in 1992–1994, 30% among those who arrived in 1995–1997, and only 10% among those who arrived in 1998–1999. Among those who do not own an apartment, 21% live in public rental housing owned by Amidar or Amigour and 72% in private rental housing. Only 6.7%—most of them recent arrivals—live in hostels, absorption centers, or student dormitories.

The immigrants' residential concentration does not mean they live in cultural and social ghettos. This is reflected in the fact that concentration in immigrant neighborhoods has little to do with socioeconomic level. We found no significant relationship between income (as reported by respondents) and demographic concentration. Higher-income immigrants, however, are more likely to live as individual

families in a sea of veteran Israelis. Some 23% of high-income families reported living in neighborhoods where there are few immigrant families or their family is virtually the only "Russian" family; among low-income families the figure was 14%. The same holds true regarding education, which on the whole does not predict demographic concentration. Nevertheless, there are some differences between the extreme categories of education. Those with graduate degrees are more likely to live in "veteran" neighborhoods. Even among this category, however, 69% reported that they live in neighborhoods that are at least one-third immigrants.

Our findings indicate that the immigrants' residential concentration facilitates their adjustment to the host society and does not form a barrier to their integration. In this sense, no relationship was found between demographic concentration and general parameters of adjustment as reported by respondents (get along with Israelis, feel at home in Israel, overall satisfaction with their absorption in Israel). At the same time, there was a significant positive relationship between demographic concentration and satisfaction with employment ($r = 0.182$) and housing ($r = 0.219$). However, there was a significant negative relationship between immigrants' residential concentration, on the one hand, and their actual knowledge of Hebrew ($r = -0.183$) and satisfaction with their command of Hebrew ($r = -.0163$), on the other hand.

In other words, living in an "immigrant" neighborhood is a voluntary act stemming from the immigrants' free choice, which is facilitated by the very fact that immigrants form a sizable group in most urban communities in Israel. The positive relationship between demographic concentration and job satisfaction may be explained by the fact that living in a predominantly immigrant neighborhood puts one in contact with immigrant networks that facilitate finding an appropriate job. This issue was raised in our immigrant focus groups. When asked about the process of finding their first job in Israel, immigrants repeatedly said that immigrant networks (neighbors and friends) played an important role in their entry to the labor market, mainly in the initial stage after arrival. The negative relationship between immigrants' demographic concentration and knowledge of Hebrew may be explained by the fact that in such settings immigrants have little need for the language and less chance to use it in day-to-day communication.

Our findings also indicate that although residential concentration

enhances the formation of relatively cohesive social networks, the immigrants have not turned these networks into segregated ghettos and are integrated into the wider societal systems, including education and employment. An examination of the relationship between immigrants' demographic concentration and their social networks supports this conclusion (Table 7.1). Although all the categories of the dependent variables indicating contact with veterans were included in the Chi-square test, the percentages presented in the table relate only to the highest category (meet frequently or very frequently).

Table 7.1
Immigrants' Frequent Encounters with Veterans and other 1990s
Immigrants, by Immigrants' Demographic Concentration in the
Neighborhood (%)

Contact	Demographic Concentration		
Meet frequently or very frequently	High (immigrant majority)	Moderate (one-third to one-half immigrants)	Low (a few immigrant families)
At work			
With veterans	77.4	82.0	78.8
With immigrants	70.6	71.8	79.5
In the neighborhood			
With veterans**	34.0	64.6	68.9
With immigrants**	90.5	88.9	73.3
Friends			
With veterans	18.9	15.3	18.0
With immigrants	81.4	81.5	86.0
Family			
With veterans	12.5	10.4	8.4
With immigrants	81.3	81.8	84.2
Studies			
With veterans	43.1	34.3	37.2
With immigrants	41.4	50.0	45.6

** Significant relationship at the $p < 0.01$ level.

Table 7.1 shows that the immigrants' relatively closed social networks are not the result of residential concentration. Except for encounters with neighbors, there is no significant relationship between demographic concentration at the neighborhood level and social net-

works. In other words, demographic concentration does not form a barrier for frequent social encounters with veterans or create a ghetto that is the setting for all of the immigrants' social contacts. The immigrants' social relationships, whether with other group members or with veterans, extend beyond neighborhood boundaries.

Economic Adjustment

The human capital among the FSU immigrants in Israel has facilitated their economic adjustment. The 1990s wave is highly urban, even as compared to earlier waves from the Soviet Union. The proportion of those from large cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, and others) is especially high (Zilberg and Leshem 1999). The immigrants are highly educated, even in comparison with the veteran Jewish population. According to official statistics, the FSU immigrants who arrived in Israel in the period 1990–1999 included 90,718 engineers and architects; 19,737 physicians, dental surgeons, and dentists; and 21,643 nurses and paramedical workers (SAI 2000: 5–11). Some 30.4% of the immigrants were scientific and academic workers in the home country, as compared to 13.3% among the veteran Jewish population in Israel (ibid.: 5–11, 12–30).

Despite this human capital and the immigrants' strong motivation, most of them have experienced a decline in their occupational status and prestige in Israel. They also have a strong feeling of discrimination in comparison with veterans (Bar-Tzur and Handels 1993). In a study of the occupational adjustment of FSU physicians who immigrated to Israel in the 1990s wave, Bernstein and Shuval concluded that only 25% of those who arrived in 1989–1993 found employment in the health-care system. They also found a strong relationship between occupational-status persistence, on the one hand, and job satisfaction and identification with the host society, on the other (Bernstein and Shuval 1995).

In any event, most studies agree that despite the job mismatch experienced by many FSU immigrants in Israel, their economic integration can be considered a success story (see, for example, Beenstock and Menahem 1997; Raijman and Semyonov 1998). Beenstock and Menahem (1997: 206) conclude that wage flexibility in Israel turned the expansion of the labor force produced by the mass immigration into economic growth and job creation instead of unemployment.

Indeed, only 7.1% of our respondents said they were unemployed.

At the same time, the decline in their status is manifested by the fact that they are channeled mainly to the middle class in Israel, even though many report that before immigration they belonged to the upper classes. Among the respondents, 33.1% said they had been part of the upper or upper-middle class in their home country, but only 3.7% thought they belong to those classes in Israel. Most respondents (70.4%) said they fell into the middle or lower-middle class in Israel; 66% thought that veteran Israelis would rank them in these classes.

Social Adjustment

The social adjustment of FSU immigrants lags behind their residential and economic adjustment. Various studies have reported that most of the social relationships of the 1990s FSU immigrants are with other members of their group (Fein 1992). This trend is typical for youngsters as well as for adults (Horowitz 1998b; Rosenbaum-Tamari and Damian 2001).

We asked a number of questions in order to investigate social relationships between immigrants and veterans. These questions related to social interaction at different levels of intimacy—ranging from distant (neighbors) to close (friends and children's spouses). Most immigrants (between 46% and 69%, depending on the specific question) said that it was not important whether their social networks were composed of veteran Israelis or other FSU immigrants. Among those who did express a preference, however, the majority preferred other immigrants, especially for close relationships. Among the respondents, 48.1% said they prefer immigrants as friends and 33.2% as in-laws (compared to 4.1% and 6.5%, respectively, who prefer veteran Israelis).

Our findings reveal a wide gap between attitudes and actual behavior, however. On the behavioral level, the social networks of FSU immigrants are ethnically centered and composed mainly of other 1990s immigrants. The immigrants' social integration is evaluated by assessing the homogeneity or heterogeneity of their informal social networks and the areas where they come into contact with the veteran population. The findings indicate a high degree of in-group homogeneity in these networks; immigrants' interaction with the surrounding population is mainly with coworkers and neighbors. Some 66.3% of respondents report that their five best friends in Israel are recent immigrants from the FSU; 70.6% say that none of their best

friends here is a veteran Israeli. Some 60.4% of the immigrants encounter veteran Israelis at work frequently or very frequently (very frequently, 43.3%). Frequent contact with veteran Israeli neighbors is reported by 55.5% (very frequent, 19.7%). Nevertheless, only 18.8% have frequent or very frequent contact with Israelis in educational settings; frequent or very frequent social encounter is noted by 17.6%; and only 10.6% of the immigrants have frequent or very frequent encounters with veteran Israelis in a family setting.

Given the absence of close social relationships with veterans, the immigrants' social networks are mainly within their own group. Among the respondents, 81.9% said they had frequent or very frequent encounters with other 1990s immigrants in the neighborhood; 81.7% with friends; and 81.5% in family meetings. Meetings with fellow immigrants in public place are relatively less frequent. Thus, only 20.2% of respondents said they meet other immigrants frequently or very frequently in the framework of their studies and 55.7% in the workplace.

One of the main factors contributing to the formation of closed social networks among FSU immigrants is their rejection by the veteran Israeli society (Leshem and Lissak 2000). Concomitantly, receptivity on the part of the host society increases these immigrants' openness toward the Israeli milieu (Mittelberg and Lev-Ari 1995).

Our findings support the aforementioned conclusions. There is a strong positive relationship between feeling at home in Israel, on the one hand, and satisfaction with social relationships with veterans at all levels. Particularly significant are the immigrants' evaluation that they "get along well with veterans" and have veteran-Israeli friends. These findings are summarized in Table 7.2.

Satisfaction with social relationships with veteran Israelis is significantly correlated ($p < 0.01$) with individual variables. This relationship is especially strong with respondents' age and command of Hebrew. The younger the respondents, the greater is their satisfaction with their relationships with veteran Israelis ($r = 0.28$). Satisfaction with these relationships also increases with improved fluency in spoken Hebrew ($r = 0.42$), oral comprehension ($r = 0.38$), and facility in writing ($r = 0.39$) (causality between command of Hebrew and satisfaction with social adjustment may work in both directions).

In any event, when respondents were directly asked to evaluate the receptivity of veterans toward the 1990s immigrants from the FSU, they showed a large amount of alienation and estrangement.

Table 7.2
Correlations between Social Relationships and Extent of Adjustment (Kendall's-Tau-b-rs)

	Feel at home in Israel	Get along with veterans	Satisfaction with social relations	General satisfaction with absorption	Have veteran friends	Meet with veteran friends	Meet with veteran families
Feel at home in Israel	---	0.389**	0.201**	0.360**	0.105**	0.135**	0.104*
Get along with veterans	---	---	0.243**	0.155**	0.156**	0.214**	0.091
Satisfaction with social relations	---	---	---	0.230**	0.238**	0.212**	0.121**
General satisfaction with absorption	---	---	---	---	0.091	0.105*	0.088
Have veteran friends	---	---	---	---	---	0.269**	0.174**
Meet with veteran friends	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.431**
Meet with veteran families	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 * Relationships are significant at the p < 0.05 level.
** Relationships are significant at the p < 0.01 level.

The question, "how would you describe veteran Israelis' receptivity toward immigrants?" yielded the following picture: exploitation, 61%; "veterans are willing to assist in immigrants' absorption," 34%. In addition, 48% of respondents described veterans as indifferent, 36% as suspicious, and 26% as hostile toward immigrants.

One of the major sources of the immigrants' social estrangement from veteran Israelis is the latter's refusal to accept them as they wish to be and the pressure exerted on immigrants to abandon behaviors considered as deviating from mainstream Israeli values. This was reflected in our focus-group discussions. One student, from the Russian Federation, had this to say:

> True, we feel that we [FSU immigrants] are relatively well-adjusted economically. But we are still far from being accepted by Israeli society in terms of social relationships. We were used in Russia to a completely different life than here [in Israel]. Because of our lifestyle and interpersonal relationships, it is difficult to get along with Israelis.

A student from Ukraine added: "Israelis [veterans] don't like to hear Russian. I myself experienced situations, in buses or elevators, where even Israelis who did not know me personally asked me to shift to Hebrew when we spoke with our friends in Russian."

The immigrants' alienation, caused by their rejection by Israeli society, has come to the surface in the wake of a number of tragedies that befell the immigrants in Israel. One of these events was undoubtedly the crash of the Siberian Airlines plan over the Black Sea (after it was hit by a Ukrainian missile on October 4, 2001); among the dead were 40 Israeli citizens, all of them immigrants from the FSU. It took the Israeli government a week to declare a national day of mourning, which it did only after voices among the immigrant community declared their resentment that Israeli government related to this event as if it had happened elsewhere, not to Israeli citizens (see Capra 2001: 16).

This issue was well described by Avraham Tirosh in an article entitled "Ukrainians Killed Russians":

> It is hard to say that this was better late than never. This later is bad, and even worse are the excuses made to explain it. They cannot cover over the shameful fact that the instinctive reaction and immediate attitude toward the plane disaster, both by official circles and by Israeli society, was as if it had happened somewhere else and to some other country. Ukrainians killed Russians. (*Maariv*, October 12, 2001)

This also happened with other waves of aliya, he added.

> "Israelis love aliya, but they hate olim" has become a commonplace.
> But the "Russian aliya," as a common name, is the largest of all,
> numerically, and its contribution to the country, even if only demograph-
> ically, is unparalleled. All in all it has also been integrated very well
> from the material standpoint, but intellectually, culturally, and socially
> we are still dealing with two societies, if not indeed two nations. (ibid.)

Mutual Influence

One of the main lenses through which we examined the immigrants'
orientation toward Israeli society has to do with their perception of
their influence on Israeli society, as compared to the other way
around. For this purpose we asked respondents to evaluate the mutual
influence in the following fields: economic growth, security, cultural
life, science and technology, political life, and crime.

We found that immigrants evaluate their own influence on Israeli
society as far more positive than that of Israeli society on themselves.
They gave the highest scores to their influence in the following fields:
cultural life (87.6% perceive the immigrants' influence on Israeli soci-
ety as positive or very positive), science and technology (85.5%), eco-
nomic growth (85.7%), and politics (75.2%). The only field in which
immigrants think they have more of a negative than a positive
influence on Israeli society is crime.

The replies reflect the immigrants' deep cultural pride and even
sense of cultural superiority vis-à-vis Israeli society. This becomes
very clear in their replies about the influence of Israeli society on
the immigrants, and vice-versa (Table 7.3).

Most respondents think that Israeli society has no influence, or a
negative influence, on FSU immigrants in the various fields. In the
areas of cultural life and family life, only 28.7% and 21.3%, respec-
tively, believe that Israeli society has a positive influence on immi-
grants. Respondents are divided in their evaluation of the influence
of Israeli society on their education and employment. With regard
to social life, most respondents say Israeli society has no influence,
but their evaluation is more positive than negative.

The immigrants' cultural pride and sense of superiority was very
evident among participants in the focus groups, especially among the
older generation and those who occupy senior positions. This may
be exemplified by the enthusiastic response of one participant, a

Table 7.3
Evaluation of Mutual Influence of Israeli Society and FSU Immigrants (%)

Field	Influence of FSU Immigrants on Israeli Society			Influence of Israeli Society on FSU Immigrants		
	Positive/ Very Positive	No Influence	Negative/ Very Negative	Positive/ Very Positive	No Influence	Negative/ Very Negative
Economic growth	85.7	8.5	5.8			
Security	63.8	27.0	9.2			
Cultural life	87.8	8.2	4.0	28.7	48.8	22.5
Science and technology	92.1	5.4	2.5			
Political life	75.2	15.8	9.0			
Crime	17.9	33.5	48.6	13.0	55.8	31.4
Family life				21.3	53.0	25.7
Social life				31.5	52.3	16.2
Employment				38.2	30.3	31.5
Education				34.8	39.6	25.6

physician in an Israeli hospital, when asked why it was important for immigrants to maintain cultural continuity in Israel:

> First of all, it [Russian culture] is a magnificent culture. Israel is almost fifty years old. This is a very short period, during which it is impossible to create a unique culture. Culture in Israel is a mixture of cultures from Europe, North Africa, and the East. The Russian culture was crystallized during hundreds of years. How could one forget such a culture? Here the whole culture is American-oriented, and America is also a country of immigrants. The Russian culture is a culture with roots and it would be a big mistake to forget it.

The immigrants' manifestations of "cultural pride" are motivated by two factors that combine pride in their culture and a reaction to the perceived arrogance of the veteran Israelis. This issue is reflected in an interview conducted by Michal Cafri with two prominent FSU immigrant intellectuals (*Maariv*, October 12, 2001). Let us consider an excerpt from this interview, which reflects these intellectuals' basic argument that "Russians have not created a ghetto in Israel. The Israeli elites are the ghetto!"

> *Question*: When the great wave of aliya from the FSU arrived, there was a feeling that Israeli culture would gain power, variety, levels. Where is this new strength?

Maya Kaganskaya, an author and essayist, answered:

> Why new strength? You are the bosses here. I have only been in the country for 25 years. I know brilliant Israeli intellectuals. That isn't the question. I am talking about the spirit of the society. There is no cultural canon here, just a provincial collective spirit that totally fails to grasp the fantastic changes that are taking place in the world. Israeli society also suffers from xenophobia. I dreamed of switching to Hebrew. The idea of "the melting pot" was close to my heart. Only what? It turned out that Israeli culture is weak. It cannot give and cannot receive. And what does "a different culture" mean, anyway? That, too, is a lie. We belong to the same civilization that has science and theater and literature and cinema, so when you make the comparison, it never favors the Israelis. Most of the Russian community is indifferent to Israeli literature, to put it delicately. The Israeli cinema here is weak, the literature is outdated and inappropriate, everything is weak. So it's only natural for this alienation to develop. (ibid.)

An analysis of the discussions of our focus groups lends support to the aforementioned conclusion about the reactive element in the immigrants' manifestations of "cultural pride." This issue was pre-

sented in different ways. The common denominator was the partic-
ipants' perceived need to display pride in their culture, especially
because they feel that Israelis undervalue Russian culture.

A student who came to Israel in 2000, after six years in Britain
(her family's first destination after leaving Ukraine in 1993), had this
to say:

> When I first arrived in the Ben-Gurion airport I was met by an English-
> speaking official, who treated me well. But when the official saw my
> document she said, "so you are Russian!" and she sent me to a Russian-
> speaking official. From then on their treatment changed completely
> and became harsh. Therefore, when I arrived at the Absorption Center
> I understood that it was better to speak English in order to receive
> reasonable treatment from officials. Today I don't hesitate to use
> Russian. It is my language and I am proud of it.

Immigrants' Social Distance from other Groups in Israel

How do the immigrants place themselves in the Israeli social fabric,
a decade after the start of the 1990s wave? Have they already crys-
tallized their orientation toward the complex national, ethnic, and
religious divisions in Israeli society? To examine these points we
asked a series of questions about their willingness to have social rela-
tionships with major sectors of Israeli society: secular Jews, religious
Jews, Ashkenazim (Jews of European or American origin), Sephardim
(Jews of Asian and North African origin), Arabs, and immigrants
from Ethiopia. We specifically asked respondents whether they would
be willing to accept members of these groups as neighbors, their
children's friends, their children's spouses, and their superiors at work.
Table 7.4 summarizes our findings.

Table 7.4 shows that the ranking of the different groups, accord-
ing to the social distance that immigrants feel from them (from low
to high), is secular Jews, Ashkenazim, Sephardim, religious Jews,
Ethiopian immigrants, and Arabs. This means that immigrants feel
socially closest to secular Jews and Ashkenazim and most remote
from Arabs. The other groups fall in the middle, with Ethiopian
immigrants not very different from Arabs. Except for secular Jews
and Ashkenazim, to whom the immigrants feel close in all social
spheres, social distance tends to widen as relationships are perceived
to be more intimate. In this sense, immigrants are most selective
regarding intermarriage and least selective in terms of hierarchical

Table 7.4
Immigrants' Willingness to Have Social Relationships with Various
Sectors of Israeli Society (%)

Group	"I am willing/absolutely willing to have persons from this sector as . . ."			
	Neighbors	My children's friends	My children's spouses	My boss at work
Secular Jews	97.6	97.0	96.0	95.4
Religious Jews	49.6	55.0	32.8	68.6
Ashkenazim	95.6	95.2	92.7	94.0
Sephardim	85.2	64.5	41.7	66.9
Arabs	18.2	23.2	7.7	28.7
Immigrants from Ethiopia	26.6	36.4	11.7	35.6

relationships at work. Even in this last sphere, however, Arabs and Ethiopians are strongly rejected by FSU immigrants.

The immigrants' social orientation toward all the aforementioned groups is not a reactive attitude, although some reactive elements are present. All in all, however, the immigrants' social orientation toward the different groups is affected by the crystallization of their social milieu and the position to which they aspire in the social and cultural fabric of Israeli society. This conclusion is based on the absence of a correlation between immigrants' attitudes toward social relationships, on the one hand, and their satisfaction with their absorption and their sense of being at home in Israel, on the other.

It should be noted that the immigrants' placement of themselves within the fabric of Israeli society has scarcely changed since their arrival in the early 1990s. This becomes evident when we compare the findings of the 1999 survey with one we conducted in 1992.

The 1992 survey was based on 320 immigrants from the FSU. The interviewees were selected from four Israeli cities: Nahariyya, Kiryat Yam, Haifa and Netanya. These cities are located in northern and central Israel, where, as indicated earlier, a large part of the Soviet immigrants are concentrated. We selected a "snowball sample," where one interviewee helped to locate the following one,

usually living in the same neighborhood or locality, and sometimes in a different locality. The interviews were conducted face to face by Russian-speaking interviewers, using an open-ended questionnaire in the Russian language (see Al-Haj 1993b).

In the 1992 survey, FSU immigrants felt closest to Ashkenazim and most alienated from indigenous Israeli Arabs and Ethiopian immigrants. Sephardim and Orthodox Jews were ranked in between. The only difference over time is a decline in the social distance from Sephardim and an increase in the social distance from Orthodox Jews. In the 1992 survey, the latter group ranked ahead of Sephardim as acceptable neighbors, while Sephardim were ranked higher when it came to close relationships, mainly marriage. As indicated above, the 1999 survey presents a more clear-cut social scale in which Sephardim come before the Ultraorthodox in all social realms.

An important question that has hardly been dealt with by students of FSU immigrants has to do with the basis for the large social distance that FSU immigrants feel from Arabs (but see Kimmerling 1998; Shumsky 2001). This issue will be dealt with in the following section.

Social Distance from Arabs

We examined the immigrants' social distance from Arabs—measured in terms of social-commitment variables such as neighbors, children's friends, and children's spouses—against a number of background variables. We found no relationship between a willingness to have social relationships with Arabs and respondents' age, sex, education, and republic of origin. On the other hand, we found significant relationships with the immigrants' year of immigration, religion, region of settlement in Israel, and socioeconomic class. The findings are summarized in Table 7.5. Although all the categories of the dependent variables indicating willingness to have social relationships with Arabs were included in the Chi-square test, the percentages presented in the table relate only to the highest category (willing or absolutely willing).

Table 7.5 shows significant relationship between length of time in Israel and social distance. Those who have been in Israel longer are less willing to have social relationships with Arabs in all spheres.

Table 7.5
Immigrants' Willingness to have Social Relationships with Arabs, by Background Variables
(willing or absolutely willing) (%)

Type of relationship	Year of immigration		Religion		Region in Israel				Class in the FSU (self-assignment)		
	1990–1994	1995–1999	Jews	Non-Jews	Jerusalem	North	Center	South	Upper, upper-middle	Middle	Lower-middle, lower
Neighbors	15.9	22.1*	15.3	25.3**	5.3	20.8	15.9	22.1**	16.8	17.3	35.0**
Children's friends	21.2	27.3**	21.1	29.1*	18.4	32.9	16.6	25.0**	22.4	23.4	35.0*
Children's spouses	6.6	9.4	8.0	7.1	2.6	12.2	2.5	8.8	5.2	7.6	22.5**

 * Significant relationship at the p < 0.05 level.
** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

Particularly significant are the differences between those who immigrated in the early 1990s and more recent arrivals. A year-by-year analysis shows that among immigrants who reached Israel in 1999 (the year this survey was conducted), 36.9% were willing to have Arabs as neighbors, 31.6% to have Arabs as their children's friends, and 10.5% to have Arabs as their children's spouses. The percentages among those who arrived in 1990 were 12.7%, 19.9%, and 6.5%, respectively.

Respondents' religion proved significant for understanding their attitudes toward Arabs. Non-Jews are more willing to have social relationships with Arabs than are Jewish immigrants. No difference was found, however, for marriage relationships, which entail the strongest commitment. A related variable is religiosity: secular immigrants are relatively more open than those who identify themselves as traditional or religious (though the difference is not significant).

Interestingly enough, there were significant differences between regions of settlement. Immigrants are most receptive to social relationships with Arabs in the northern and southern (Negev) regions and least open in the Jerusalem and the central regions. It seems safe to conjecture that the differences are associated with the odds of an encounter between immigrants and Arabs. These are higher in the first two regions, where there are more Arabs.

Respondents' self-assessed class affiliation proved to be significant. As shown in Table 7.5, the higher their social class, the less willing were respondents to have social relationships with Arabs. Those who align themselves with the lower-middle and lower classes evince the strongest willingness to have social relationships with Arabs. This analysis refers to respondents' self-assessment of their class in the FSU, however. The same relationship existed with respondents' class in Israel, but was not statistically significant. This finding may be connected with the immigrants' strong feelings of cultural superiority vis-à-vis oriental culture, which is manifested more among the upper classes—who also show the greatest commitment to maintaining Russian culture in Israel (see Chapter 4).

One important explanation for the great social distance immigrants feel from Arabs lies in the stereotypes the immigrants had back in the home country. The atmosphere in Israel, with Jewish-Arab relations under the shadow of conflict, merely reinforces and further legitimizes these stereotypes. In the new setting, many immigrants have adopted the Jewish majority's dominant image of the

Arab minority as "inferior," "hostile," "part of the enemy," and a "security risk" (for a discussion of stereotypes among the Jewish majority concerning Arabs, see: Smooha 1984; Cohen 1985; Hofman 1988; Bar-Tal 1996).

These points came to the fore in the focus groups. When our findings were presented to participants they were not surprised. One participant (in the parents' focus group) reacted spontaneously: "It's natural. The closest groups to us are the Ashkenazim and the secular Jews and the farthest are Arabs. The more different the less close they are. . . ." Another participant, an engineer, added: "Of course we feel closer to Ashkenazim, because they have a similar mentality to ours, unlike Arabs."

Participants offered rather complex explanations for our findings. One participant looked at the other members of the focus group and said: "Who of the people present here ever knew, back in the Soviet Union, that there are so many Arabs living in Israel? That they exist here at all? We knew that the Arab world is hostile toward Israel, but nobody knew there are Arabs in Israel."

A participant in the student focus group said:

> I want to say that most people [immigrants] who came here with any idea whatsoever about Arabs, it was mostly a negative idea. Why? Because of the Soviet Union, which was the protector of the Arab world, which is hostile to Israel. Jews living in the USSR (FSU) felt hostile to both the Arab world and the Soviet regime. When immigrants arrived here [Israel] they didn't know anything about the Arabs living in Israel, and they didn't want to know. So the former attitudes toward Arabs continued and even became stronger. It is a stigma in some sense.

Given this ignorance, the Israeli mass media, in both Hebrew and Russian, become a key source of information. One focus-group participant, who had just arrived in Israel as part of the Selah program (a Jewish Agency program for university students who come to Israel on their own, with the aim of attracting their parents to "make aliya"), had this to say: "According to TV programs, all the Arabs in Israel live in a closed community. They interact only among themselves and are strangers to others." Another student from the same group added: "We have to throw all the Arabs out of Israel and put them behind barbed-wire-fences. This is also what Israelis say, in order to prevent the risk of civil war."

It might be safe to assume that the socialization of the immigrants by the Israeli-Zionist absorption authorities, before and after immigration, contributes to their negative image of Arabs. Conversations with focus-group participants from the Selah program reveal that a major part of their pre-academic studies involves Jewish history and the history of Eretz Israel. The narrative conveyed here is mainly one-sided and Zionist, presenting the Arabs as a monolithic group, with all the stereotypes involved.

Just as the immigrants' ignorance about Arabs strengthens the negative stereotypes and increases the social distance between the two groups, close contact may work in the opposite direction. It may draw the immigrants' attention not only to the differences but also to the similarities they have with Arabs. In some cases it could even lead to a "solidarity of minorities." This was reflected in the attitude of a student enrolled in the pre-academic preparatory program (*mekhinah*) at the University of Haifa:

> I studied in a pre-academic program together with other immigrants, Ethiopians, and Arabs. I did not feel any hostility toward Arabs or Ethiopians. On the contrary, I was much more connected to Arab girls than to Israeli-Jewish girls. This might be a solidarity of minorities.

Another participant, who had visited an Arab family, said:

> Have you ever visited an Arab family? Arabs are good hosts. Those who reject Arabs as neighbors or friends act on the basis of stigmas. This is because they do not know Arabs. A person who knows them can say that they can be better than Ashkenazim and all the others.

We found that respondents' religious affiliation is an important variable: non-Jewish immigrants are more open to social relationships with Arabs. One of the main reasons for this may be that non-Jews are less committed to the Israeli-ideological cause, even after settling in Israel. Hence they are less committed to the Jewish consensus regarding Arabs than their Jewish counterparts are. In addition, a considerable part of non-Jewish immigrants are Christians. Therefore, as we learnt from the discussions of focus groups, they have already established relationships with the Arab Christian community in Israel.

For immigrants from the Asian republics, the attitudes toward Arabs may be affected by their experience in the home country. We can illustrate this point with the response of a focus-group participant—a physician who immigrated from Turkmenistan:

> I had never been interested in Israel and never felt affiliated with the Jewish people, because I am Jewish on my mother's side, Russian on my father's side, and married to an Armenian [Christian]. I did not care about the national affiliation of the people surrounding me [in the home country] and this is what I feel here [in Israel]. We came from a Muslim republic [Turkmenistan] and my relationships with Arabs are quite good. We live in a neighborhood [in Haifa] where most of our neighbors are Arabs, but I have no contact with them, not because of their nationality, but because this is how things evolved. I don't care what their nationality is, or religious group. Although I think they are Christians, since they have a tree on Christmas.

The findings mentioned above are also supported by detailed interviews with two immigrant women who were married to Muslims from an Arab community in a mixed Jewish-Arab town in the North, where immigrants are 40% of the Jews. Interestingly enough, these two women became strictly religious Muslims after marriage. Today they wear a head-covering and identify themselves as "believing Muslims." One woman came from halakhically non-Jewish family from Russia, with a Jewish father and Christian mother, and the second from Ukraine, with a Jewish mother and a Muslim father. Their case is by no means widespread. It does, however, offer a different model of contact between immigrants and Arabs. An analysis sheds light on the impact of close encounters between groups that are deeply alienated and ostensibly separated by a wide social distance (as indicated by our immigrants' survey)—a complex relationship that is usually overlooked unless the quantitative method is accompanied by an in-depth examination of the subject. Here we shall briefly describe the development of the relationships that led to marriage, as reported by the subjects.

The first (we will call her "A"), with a Jewish father and Christian mother, reported as follows:

> I met my husband in the local market. I was 17 years old and he was 24. He asked me to go out with him but my parents objected. He insisted, though, and nothing deterred him even when my parents threatened to call the police. His insistence just made me feel close to him and I think it was mutual. He told my parents that he was serious and wanted to marry me. . . . Before we were married I did not know much about Arabs; in Russia we almost knew nothing about Jewish-Arab relations here [in Israel]. Before we were married I also knew nothing about Islam. My husband told me about the Islamic religion, although he was not religious. I converted to Islam and started praying even before him [my husband]. My husband's parents and

the surrounding Arab community have accepted me very well. My mother did not like the idea of marriage at the beginning and was even reluctant to come and visit me in my new home, but eventually things improved and I have normal relationships with her. She even got used to see me with a head-covering.

The second ("B"), with a Jewish mother and Muslim father, told the following story:

I met him [my husband] in ------- where he worked as a gardener. We liked one another from the first time we met. His family is a religious Muslim family and he told me a lot about the Muslim religion. I started to feel that my future was connected with him. We started talking about marriage, but his parents strongly opposed this possibility. All the people around him in ---- thought that I was not good for him. . . . His boss from the same town (who is also an Arab and knew me well) told him that I was a very good woman. The boss even spoke with his father and convinced him. This, however, did not end the problems, since my parents objected. But when they got to know him closely and became convinced that he was serious they agreed. I became Muslim and I am strictly religious. My husband is, too, but he is not fanatic. . . . Now we live very well. . . . We have two children with whom we speak Arabic and Russian. Our families have eventually accepted the situation. Also I feel part of the community. They [the people in the community] went crazy when my husband opened a grocery store for me and you see I am sitting here [in the grocery] and managing my own business.

Since the start of the al-Aqsa Intifada there has been an increasing radicalization in the attitudes of FSU immigrants toward Arabs (Shumsky 2001: 33). Community institutions among immigrants, led by the Russian-language press, are increasingly employed in the reconstruction of a unique collective mythology in which Russian immigrants are the vanguard of the Jewish majority for blocking the Palestinian protest. Shumsky adds that the rhetorical technique of this process lies in presenting the "Russian" community as the main victims of Palestinian "terror" (ibid.).

While our main survey of immigrants' attitudes was conducted in 1999, we could trace these attitudes through discussions of the focus groups, which were conducted after the start of the Intifada. Comparison of the findings over time lends support to the aforementioned conclusion. However, it is hard to determine whether the immigrants' radicalization vis-à-vis Arabs is a process taking place uniquely among them or part of one taking place among the Jewish majority in Israel, as presented in Chapter 2.

Social Distance from other Jewish Groups

Before we analyze the factors behind the social distance immigrants feel from the main groups among the Jewish population, we should explore whether immigrants classify these groups on the basis of some common elements. In order to answer this question, we examined internal correlations between variables reflecting the readiness of immigrants for intermarriage with the different groups. This variable was chosen because, as indicated above, it reflects the closest and most meaningful commitment. The findings are summarized in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6
Internal Correlations between Variables Reflecting the Willingness of
Immigrants for Intermarriage with Veteran Groups (Kendall's-Tau-b-rs)

	Secular	Religious	Ashkenazim	Sephardim	Ethiopians
Secular	-----	−0.185*	0.585**	0.084	−0.39
Religious	-----	-------	0.020	0.388**	0.348**
Ashkenazim	-----	-------	-------	0.157*	0.017
Sephardim	-----	-------	-------	-------	0.373**
Ethiopians	-----	-------	-------	-------	-------

  * Relationships are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.
** Relationships are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

Table 7.6 shows that immigrants differentiate between two main facets with regard to the divisions among the Jewish population: Ashkenazi-Secular and Sephardi-Ethiopian-Religious. This classification is mainly based on religious orientation and cultural background. Immigrants perceive Ashkenazim as secular and Western-oriented. At the same time, Sephardim and Ethiopians are perceived as religious and oriental. Although immigrants see some overlap between themselves on the one hand, and Ashkenazim and Sephardim, on the other, they see none with Ethiopians, whom they totally reject for close social relationships.

We examined the relationship between immigrants' willingness to have social relationships with veterans and a number of background variables. We found that factors associated with class location are less significant than are cultural factors, though not completely absent.

No significant relationship was found between class and attitudes toward veteran Israeli groups. The most significant variable was respondents' religiosity. The more religious respondents are, the more open they are to social relationships with these Jewish groups, in all spheres. This might explain why immigrants from the Asian republics of the FSU (who are more religious than those from the European republics) are more open to social relationships with the aforementioned Jewish groups. Also, unlike in the case with Arabs, non-Jewish immigrants feel more distance toward veteran Jewish groups than do Jewish immigrants.

We found that length of time in the country has no bearing on immigrants' willingness to have social relationships with Ethiopians and religious Jews. The same holds for age, sex, and education. Nevertheless, women are more open than men. When it comes to Mizrahim (Orientals), though—unlike the case with Arabs, Ethiopians, and religious Jews—immigrants do become more open to social relationships with them over time. This goes hand in hand with our earlier conclusion, based on a comparison of the findings of our 1999 and 1992 surveys, regarding the gradual decrease in the social distance immigrants feel from Sephardim.

Focus-group participants were not enthusiastic about talking openly about their attitudes toward Ethiopians and used only short sentences to express them. The phrases used time after time to explain the wide social distance between immigrants and Ethiopians were: "they're different from us"; "they have a completely different mentality"; "they have an inferior culture."

Nevertheless, the survey finding that immigrants from Asian republics are much more open toward Ethiopians than are those from European republics was repeated in the focus groups. One of the participants (from Turkmenistan) was outraged by the participants' description of Ethiopians. "That comes from the typical racism of the Soviet Union!" she yelled, which opened the floor to other anti-Ethiopian stereotypes. Another student reacted:

> There was no racism in the FSU. . . . Ethiopians are different. Among them there are normal people and there are simply "OUT" [he used the English word]. Their intelligence is very low. With it they can achieve nothing, they live like animals. There are people who say: "I live with Ethiopians in the same floor and I cannot stand it any longer. They live like dogs, throw garbage from the door."

We may safely argue that when immigrants relate to social rela-
tionships with religious Jews, they mostly think of the Ultraorthodox
(*haredim*). This point was clear from the focus groups. Consequently,
immigrants perceive religious Jews as "a closed community" "with
strange behavior" who "wish to impose their values and lifestyles on
the entire society." The main conflict, as shown by the survey findings
and focus groups, involves values and lifestyles that religious groups
try to impose on the immigrants, most of whom are secular. To
exemplify these points, consider these quotations from the student
focus groups:

> Participant A: It is impossible to have any positive attitude toward
> them [Orthodox Jews], because they are a closed community through
> which we cannot look. That is to say, we can visit Bene Beraq [a pre-
> dominantly *haredi* town], but we cannot understand their life. Our rela-
> tionship with them is negative and depends on their attitude to us and
> to the secular community as a whole.
> Participant B: If they lived among their group, followed their lifestyle
> without imposing it on us, our attitudes toward them would not be so
> negative.
> Participant A: Our attitude [toward *haredim*] is negative because they
> do not work. Instead they live at the expense of the state, at the
> expense of the taxes we pay.
> Participant C: What determines my attitude toward them [the *haredim*]
> is that they decide how the state should be.
> Participant D: I want to say that all of them are hypocrites. They do
> nothing and want others to do what they want.
> Participant E: They simply think we are *goyim* [non-Jews] and should
> disappear from here.

Despite the participants' overwhelming anti-religious attitudes, some
advanced other views, ranging from sympathy to indifference. One
point mentioned by participants as facilitating their relationships with
religious groups is the fact that the immigrants and the religious are
both "non-Arabs." One participant expressed this forcefully:

> I was nearly nine when I discovered that I am a Jew. My classmates
> went to a Baptist church and I went with them, because I didn't know
> that I shouldn't. When I came here [to Israel] I was taught many
> things and I understood there was a gap in my education. We bought
> a house from religious people and they demanded that my mother
> prove she was Jewish. My mom brought the documents and they [the
> religious owners] looked at them very thoroughly. I asked if they knew
> Russian and they answered in the negative. So how did they know it
> was true we are Jewish? In my opinion they thought, "Russians are
> okay, as long as they're not Arabs."

ATTITUDES OF VETERAN GROUPS
TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

In this chapter we will survey the attitudes of the veteran popula-
tion in Israel toward the 1990s immigrants. First we shall present
the attitudes of Jews and Arabs—both the leadership and the gen-
eral public—at the start of the 1990s wave. Then we examine the
trends over time by analyzing our recent findings.

Our data for the early 1990s derive chiefly from a study con-
ducted in July 1990 (immediately after the arrival of the first waves
of immigrants) as part of the Guttman Institute's continuing survey.
It queried a representative sample of Israelis aged 20 and over—
1,167 Jewish and 256 Arab respondents. Since large parts of the
survey have been published elsewhere (see Al-Haj 1992, 1993b, 1996),
here we shall only summarize the main findings. The data for the
late 1990s are based on two surveys: one of the general public, con-
ducted in 1999, and a students' survey conducted in 2001 (see the
methodology section in the introduction). The discussions of the focus
groups will be also integrated into our analysis.

Attitudes in the Early 1990s

Jewish Leadership

As we saw in Chapter 3, the Israeli establishment waited a long time
for mass immigration from the Soviet Union. The tense circum-
stances that prevailed in Israel at the end of the 1980s (when the
influx finally began), a result of the first Palestinian Intifada, merely
highlighted, for both the Jewish leadership and the public at large,
the importance of large-scale Jewish immigration. Hence when the
1990s wave began Jewish leaders spoke enthusiastically of the pros-
pects of using Soviet immigration to counter the long-feared "demo-
graphic peril." As Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir put it to a Likud
gathering in Tel Aviv on January 14, 1990:

> Just when many among us were saying that time is working against
> us, time has brought us this aliya and has solved everything. In five
> years we won't be able to recognize the country. Everything will
> change—the people, the way they live—everything will be bigger,
> stronger. The Arabs around us are in a state of disarray and panic.
> A feeling of defeat shrouds them, because they see the *Intifada* does
> not help. They can not stop the natural streaming of the Jewish peo-
> ple to their homeland. (*The Guardian*, January 16, 1990, cited by Jones
> 1996: 57)

With similar enthusiasm, then–Housing Minister Ariel Sharon declared
that: "We must use this mass aliya to solve a number of national
problems. We have the chance to change the demographic situation
in Israel, not only numerically, but also in terms of presence in the
field" (*Hadashot*, Dec. 4, 1990).

The national consensus about aliya that exists among the Jews in
Israel was reflected in their reaction to the 1990s influx from the
FSU. There was no dispute about the need for this immigration or
the fact that Israel should attract Soviet Jews (Gordon 1990). Leaders
and the public alike perceived this immigration as a unifying factor
and as a historical event that raises the morale of the Israeli popu-
lace (Prital 1990).

This consensus may be presented through speeches by then–Prime
Minister Shamir and the then-leader of the opposition, Shimon Peres,
who are not known for agreeing about many issues. Shamir had this
to say:

> In my opinion, the most important issue over which we should unify
> the people of Israel, including all sectors, ethnic groups, and political
> parties, is aliya and its absorption. We have an outstanding opportu-
> nity to renew the powers of the Jewish people. (ibid.: 31)

Peres stated: "I am convinced that the mass Soviet immigration is
one of the greatest things occurring to our people" (ibid.: 32).

Amidst the virtual Jewish unanimity about the Russian immigra-
tion, a different voice could sometimes be heard. Some Mizrahi Jews
spoke openly against the immigrant influx in the prevailing condi-
tions of a stagnant economy and increasing unemployment. Yamin
Suissa, a Mizrahi activist, even called on Soviet President Gorbachev
to halt Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union altogether (*Ha'aretz*,
March 21, 1990).

Figure 8.1
Involved in Helping Absorb Soviet Immigrants, by Ethnicity (%)*
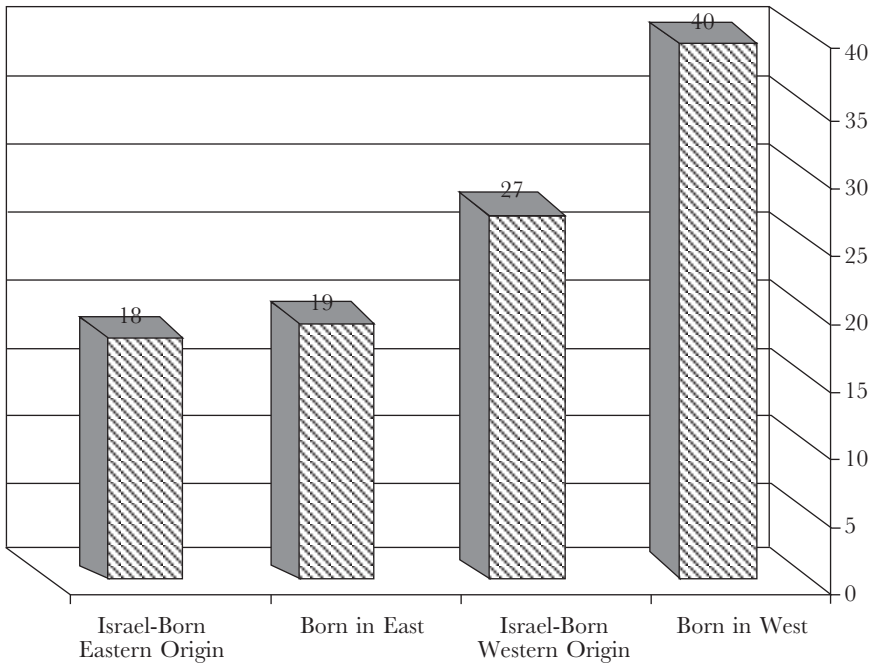
* Based on the 1990 survey.

Jewish Public

There is a consensus among Israeli Jews that Jewish immigration is
vital to the country and that every effort should be made to attract
Diaspora Jews to move to Israel. When it comes to paying the cost
of immigrant absorption, however, the response of different groups
is affected by their location in the stratification system and the actual
or potential effects of immigration on their status and opportunities
for mobility (Al-Haj 1993b; Israelowitz and Abu-Saad 1994; Leshem
1998).

  According to the findings of the 1990 survey, Ashkenazi Jews are
most supportive of the immigrants, Arabs the least receptive, and
Mizrahi Jews somewhere in the middle (Al-Haj 1993b: 296). Genera-
tional differences were also significant; the younger generation among
veteran Israeli Jews is less supportive of immigration than their elders
(ibid.).

In the 1990 survey we also examined the actual behavior of veteran Jewish groups toward immigrants, as reflected in their involvement in the absorption of these immigrants. The same ranking emerges here (Figure 8.1). Once again, Jews born in Europe and the Americas were most involved in supporting the absorption of Soviet immigrants (40 percent), followed by Israeli-born Jews with Ashkenazi fathers (26 percent), Mizrahi immigrants (19 percent), and Israeli-born Jews with Mizrahi fathers (18 percent).

The Mizrahi Jews' lack of enthusiasm is motivated not by ideology but by ethnicity and class. Mizrahim tend to think that their disadvantaged situation in terms of housing, employment, and socioeconomic mobility will deteriorate even further as a result of the Russian immigration, because government resources and programs will be devoted to its absorption instead of to bridging the gap between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews in Israel (*Ha'aretz*, March 21, 1990).

Thus, as the number of Russian immigrants increased, more and more voices were heard among the Mizrahi rank and file protesting the privileges extended to immigrants (*Al-Ittihad*, March 27, 1991). It was obvious that the resources allocated to absorb the mass immigration would come at the expense of the disadvantaged slums in the large cities and the development towns, populated mainly by Mizrahim (ibid.).

Our findings go hand in hand with the findings of other studies conducted during the same period. Leshem (1998) summarized the attitudes of veteran Israelis toward the 1990s immigrants as revealed in five surveys conducted between 1986 and 1992. He concluded that there was a central level of hostility toward immigrants among veteran Israelis, regardless of their ethnicity. The consensus and enthusiasm that characterized the attitudes of the veteran Israelis at the beginning of this influx were only declarative. The euphoria, too, quickly evaporated. As with earlier waves of immigration, which evoked initially raised morale, here too there was a considerable retreat (see, for example, Alghazi's interview with Shuki Handels, *Ha'aretz*, June 12, 1992).

The public ranks the new immigrants at or near the bottom of the list of priorities for state assistance. The negative attitudes toward immigrants are especially obvious among low-income groups and the young (Leshem 1998: 323). On the other hand, favorable attitudes toward new immigrants and a willingness to help with their absorp-

tion are evinced by the older, those with higher education and income, and persons of European or American origin (ibid.: 324). Veteran Israelis tend to display complex attitudes when asked about the impact of immigration on various fields. They are apt to evaluate this impact as negative in terms of economy and standards of living and positive in terms of cultural life and national security (Damian and Rosenbaum 1992).

The veteran population's complex attitudes toward immigrants are also obvious in the educational system. Although veteran students show a large amount of identification with immigrants, at the behavioral level they evince scant willingness to help immigrant students and establish social relationships with them (see Ben-Yehoshua et al. 1997). In addition, veteran students perceive the immigrants' language and culture as strange and deviant from Jewish values (ibid.).

The Israeli Hebrew press has, in one way or another, reinforced negative stereotypes of immigrants. For years it highlighted the fact that many criminals and unsavory characters were newcomers from the FSU. In addition, the activities of the Russian Mafia in Israel received wide coverage (Meyers 1996; Solodkina 1993). This has undoubtedly created a negative image of this wave for the general public and reinforced the stigma that these immigrants have raised the crime rate in Israel. However, although to a lesser extent, the Israeli press also conveyed positive stereotypes (mainly among English-speaking immigrants), describing immigrants as educated, intelligent, and qualified professionals with a high potential for developing the Israeli economy (Solodkina 1993: 169).

In addition, the FSU immigrants' "cultural pride" and adherence to Russian culture (see Chapter 7) have evoked strong criticism among the veteran Israeli public. This issue is featured in the Israeli press, as exemplified by the following example. In an article entitled "A Russian Cultural Ghetto," Orly Turan wrote:

> Israel has become the second-largest cultural center after the FSU. . . . Among the Russian immigrants there is a "cultural chauvinism," that is to say, "we belong to the most beautiful culture." Their ideal is to be a branch of Russia. They are not interested in Zionist ideals and the Hebrew language. (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, Oct. 18, 1991)

Thus, the FSU immigrants' insistence on maintaining their culture and speaking Russian in public is frequently perceived as provocative by veteran Israelis and has to some extent retarded the immigrants'

integration in the labor market. One large Israeli company even circulated an internal policy document that the increasing number of Russian immigrants is harmful to its image and their number should therefore be limited (Gilat 1996).

Arab Leadership

Most of the Arab leadership in Israel, from the entire political spectrum, has expressed reservations about the large-scale immigration from the FSU, but not opposition and certainly not active opposition. These leaders are aware of the limited effect that Arabs have on Israeli immigration policy. They nevertheless feel the need to express their fears about the repercussions of the Russian immigration on the situation of the Arab citizens of Israel as well as on the situation of their Palestinian brethren in the West Bank and Gaza District. The same thoughts and fears are reiterated in interviews with Arab leaders (see Shabi 1990). These concerns can be placed under three main headings: group status, individual risk, and the potential threat to the national cause (Al-Haj 1993b).

Since the establishment of Israel, however, the Arab citizens have displayed no active reaction against Jewish immigration. In the 1960s, as in the early 1990s, however, a tiny nationalist group took a one-time step to draw the attention of the world community to the implications of Jewish immigration for the Arab minority in Israel. On June 23, 1964, a group of Arab intellectuals sent a letter to the secretary general of the United Nations, the foreign ambassadors posted in Israel, and the foreign press, protesting Israeli policy toward the Arab minority and the influx of Jewish immigrants from Western countries (Regev 1990). This line of opposition to Jewish immigration was continued in the 1980s by Abnaa' el-Balad (Sons of the Land, a small secular-nationalist group), which was the only Palestinian organization in Israel to move from passive reservations to active opposition to the Russian immigration (*Ha'aretz*, March 4, 1990; Shabi 1990). Raja Ighbaria, the secretary general of Abnaa' el-Balad, explained the reasoning behind the group's stand:

> Going back in history, Jewish immigration to Palestine has always been at the expense of the Palestinian people. It resulted in the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland. Adding one million Jews to Israel [the Soviet immigration] forms an actual danger to the very fact of our existence. Transfer of the remaining Palestinians comes closer to realization than it had been before.

On August 3, 1990, Abnaa' el-Balad released a second pamphlet, entitled, "What Are We Waiting For? Immigrants are Penetrating our Doors and Threatening our Lands." In this broadsheet, the organization highlighted its basic stand against the Russian immigration and called for joint action with the "oppressed Jews" (that is, Mizrahim) to halt this immigration. It also called on Arabs to participate in a demonstration to be held in Jerusalem and the Negev on August 5, 1990.

Abnaa' al-Balad also circulated a petition against Russian immigration in various Arab localities in Israel. The organizers reported that about 4,000 Arabs had signed (*Jerusalem Post*, March 4, 1990). The plan was to forward this petition to the Soviet Union to persuade its government to suspend Jewish emigration from the country (*Yedioth Ahronoth*, March 4, 1990; *Al Hamishmar*, March 4, 1990).

But this opposition by Abnaa' el-Balad never crossed the line to active resistance. It has gone no further than a limited attempt to mobilize the Arab public in Israel to speak openly against immigration from the FSU.

The statements by some Arab leaders against the Russian immigration and especially the distribution of Abnaa' al-Balad's petition met with severe criticism from the entire Jewish political spectrum. The Jewish leaders' declarations reflect the basic attitude of the Jewish population that aliya is an internal Jewish issue in which Arabs have no right to interfere. Any opposition to aliya is tantamount to rejecting the very fact of Israel's existence (see *Ha'aretz*, March 3, 1990; *Davar*, March 4, 1990; *Jerusalem Post*, March 3, 1990).

Simha Dinitz, who at the time was the chairman of the Jewish Agency, stated that the Arabs' opposition to Soviet Jewish immigration proved that they had not yet recognized Israel's existence (*Al Hamishmar*, May 7, 1990). Labour MK Ra'anan Cohen called on local Arab leaders to sharply denounce the petition and asked Arab residents not to sign it, saying that "any effort on their part to block Soviet aliya would hurt relations between Jews and Arabs" (*Jerusalem Post*, March 4, 1990). Further left, Ratz MK Mordechai Wirshubsky described the petition as inhuman and Shinui MK Avraham Poraz severely criticized the petition and those who signed it (Zaid and Bar 1990).

Voices on the right were even harsher. The then – minister of religious affairs, Zevulun Hammer, said, "every citizen who acts against aliya denies his right to be a citizen of Israel" (ibid.). Prime Minister

Shamir stated that the declaration of Arab leaders against immi-
gration to Israel "hurts the interests of the Arab citizens themselves"
(*Al Hamishmar*, March 3, 1990). A similar reaction was heard from
the minister of the interior, Aryeh Deri (Regev 1990).

The active opposition to Russian immigration generated a counter-
reaction among some segments of the Israeli Arab population. Arab
Knesset members affiliated with Zionist parties spoke out in favor
of this immigration. Hussein Faris, a Mapam MK, criticized the
oppositionists for not distinguishing between the right of Jews to
come to Israel and their settlement on the other side of the Green
Line (the West Bank and Gaza). He said that: "Just as we recog-
nize the right of Palestinians to return to the Palestinian state to be
established alongside the State of Israel, we should recognize the
right of Jews to immigrate to Israel" (*Al Hamishmar*, March 2, 1990).

Arab Public

The aforementioned survey, conducted at the very start of the 1990s
wave, showed that the Arab public in Israel has a complex attitude
toward immigration from the FSU. Overall, Arabs have a negative
evaluation of its impact on Israeli society. Only a tiny minority (6%)
think that it is vital to Israel. When asked about its effect on different
fields, however, they display a diversity of attitudes. For example,
they rank the immigrants' contribution to the Israeli economy less
positively (18%) than their contribution to Israeli culture (43%).

This demonstrates that the Arabs see Jewish immigration as more
threatening economically than culturally. On the ideological level,
the attitudes of Arabs and Jews in Israel reflect their mutual estrange-
ment and opposing national expectations. The Arabs perceive large-
scale Jewish immigration as a threat to the Palestinian cause with
the prospect of further displacement and loss of land.

In addition, from the very beginning Arabs voiced their fears that
settling the immigrants would inevitably result in the confiscation of
Arab lands. This fear is not baseless, since in different periods, both
before and after the establishment of Israel, Jewish immigration was
accompanied by the expropriation of Palestinian lands, in order to
build or expand Jewish settlements (see Abu-Kishk 1981: 31). On
the other hand, the Arabs had a relatively positive evaluation of the
Russian immigrants' expected cultural contribution. This may be the
result of the positive image that the Soviet Union historically enjoyed

in Arab and Palestinian eyes on account of its support for the Arab
side in the Middle East conflict. The Arabs' sympathy for Russian
immigrants may also be affected by the fact that a considerable num-
ber of Arabs attended university in the Soviet Union (through the
good offices of the Israeli Communist Party) and some are married
to Russian women. Another factor is the Arabs' expectation that
Russian immigrants, as a secular group, might increase Israel's civil
culture at the expense of its Jewish-Zionist character.

To sum up, the Arabs' attitudes toward immigrants from the FSU
toward the beginning of this influx (early 1990s) were affected by
both ideological and pragmatic cost-benefit considerations. Unlike its
leadership, however, the Arab public displayed a simultaneously pos-
itive and negative evaluation of the impact of this immigration. The
ideological side is affected by the national orientation of Arabs in
Israel, while the pragmatic side is influenced by their location at the
very bottom of the Israeli stratification system.

Trends over Time: A Decade Later

In the 1999 survey we asked a series of questions about the per-
ceived influence of the immigration from the FSU. We found that,
on the whole, Jews perceive this immigration as having had more
of a positive than a negative effect, whereas Arabs see it the other
way around. When we compare the perceived influence in various
fields, however, a more complex picture appears (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 shows that Jews and Arabs have a similar evaluation
of the immigrants' influence on Israeli society in two fields: a highly
positive evaluation in the field of science and technology and a
strongly negative evaluation in terms of crime. In the other fields,
the Jews' and Arabs' evaluations are very different from each other.
Most Jews believe that the immigrants have a positive influence in
terms of cultural life and economic growth and assess their as more
positive than negative in the areas of security and political life. Most
Arabs think that immigrants have a more negative than positive
influence in all these fields, except for the political life, where Arabs
think immigrants have a slightly more positive than negative influence.

A comparison of the findings of the early and late 1990s reveals
an interesting picture. There has been a considerable decrease in
the veteran Jewish population's positive image of immigrants: in the

Table 8.1
Evaluation of Jews and Arabs to the Influence of Immigrants from the FSU (%)*

Fields	Jews					Arabs				
	Positive/ Very positive	No influence	Negative/ Very negative	No answer	Total	Positive/ Very positive	No influence	Negative/ Very negative	No answer	Total
Economic growth	54.1	16.9	18.9	10.1	100.0	25.0	20.0	44.0	11.0	100.0
Security	40.2	34.6	14.6	10.6	100.0	28.0	24.0	34.0	14.0	100.0
Cultural life	56.2	18.7	18.5	6.6	100.0	30.0	24.0	40.0	6.0	100.0
Science and technology	72.9	10.2	4.1	12.8	100.0	56.0	12.0	20.0	12.0	100.0
Political life	42.9	18.5	25.2	13.4	100.0	37.0	20.0	35.0	8.0	100.0
Crime	9.6	14.0	64.0	12.4	100.0	8.0	8.0	71.0	13.0	100.0

* Based on the 1999 survey of the general (veteran) population.

1990 survey, 66% had a positive evaluation in the economic field and 84% in the cultural, but only 54% and 56% (respectively) in the 1999 survey.

The decline in the veteran Jewish Israelis' positive evaluation of the FSU immigrants' contribution is the outcome of several factors. As noted earlier, the first survey was conducted at the very beginning of the 1990s wave, when Israelis were still in a state of euphoria about it (Al-Haj 1993b). At that time, immigrants from the FSU were less visible as a group, and they had not yet established political parties and cultural organizations. To some extent, the veteran population expected the immigrants to follow the rules of the game determined by the veterans. During the intervening decade, however, Russian immigrants have become the largest group in Israel by country of origin. They have penetrated the political system as a group, in their own parties, insist on maintaining cultural continuity, and exhibit a feeling of cultural superiority toward the Israeli society (see Chapter 7). As a result, there has been a sharp drop in the veteran population's sympathy and enthusiasm vis-à-vis the immigrants.

As for the Arab population, the majority still perceives the economic influence of immigrants as more negative than positive, although there was a slight decrease in negative evaluation in this category (82% in 1990 and 75% in 1999 perceived the immigrants' economic influence as negative). Also, there was a considerable decrease in the favorable evaluation of the immigrants' cultural contribution (from 44% in 1990 to 30% in 1999). This may be because the Arabs' evaluation in the early 1990s was based mainly on their abstract image of Russian immigrants. At that time, Arabs thought that the main threat posed by this immigration is the economic one.

In the interim, the Arabs in Israel have had a chance to be exposed to the Russian immigrants and can now base their assessments more on the actual than on the perceived impact of immigrants. As one of the Arab participants in our focus groups stated:

> At the start of this huge wave of immigration, we were confused. We had no idea in what direction things were developing, what is the nature of these immigrants, when this wave would stop, and what influence this immigration would have on our day-to-day life and our position in Israeli society. But it was clear for me that, as usual, we are the victims of any change in Israel, especially in terms of losing our jobs and lands to immigrants. But now things look differently. Our

economic situation is still difficult and unemployment in the Arab sector is very high. I can see it in my village, where many people are unemployed, walking in the streets all day and waiting for a miracle to solve their problem. In my opinion, however, we should blame the government for this situation, not Russian immigrants. . . . The fears of land confiscation are still there, but I have to admit that it is not as bad as we thought at the beginning of this wave of immigration. I was active in a local organization to protect the lands against any official attempt at confiscation. But maybe we now realize that there is nothing left to confiscate.

Although the Arabs' fears of the potential economic and political threat posed by the FSU immigration have been moderated somewhat, their sympathy for the immigrants' cultural and social contribution seems to be waning. Two main factors may have contributed to this situation: the immigrants' negative stand on the peace process and their accumulated image as hostile and conservative on issues associated with the Arab citizens of Israel.

This conclusion is based on the findings of the students' survey. We asked respondents the following question: "How do you characterize the attitudes of Arabs toward immigrants?" We also asked: "How do you characterize the immigrants' attitudes toward Arabs?" For both questions we offered the following answers: suspicion, exploitation, indifference, and hostility. Each category was presented to respondents separately.

The findings indicate that respondents think the immigrants' attitudes toward Arabs and vice versa are reciprocal, except in the case of hostility, where the immigrants' attitudes toward Arabs are perceived as more extreme than those of Arabs toward immigrants. According to the findings, 69% said that immigrants are suspicious of Arabs, as compared to 66% the other way around; 31% said there is indifference in both directions; 34.5% said that immigrants exploiting Arabs as compared to 28.5% the other way around. At the same time, immigrants are perceived as much more hostile to Arabs than Arabs to immigrants: 59.5% of the respondents said immigrants are hostile to Arabs, but only 31.5% thought that Arabs are hostile to immigrants. We found a strong-significant relationship between the perceived attitudes of immigrants toward Arabs and the Arabs' attitudes toward immigrants (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 repeats the aforementioned analysis that the most meaningful attitude of immigrants toward Arabs is "hostility." Thus the relationship between the perceptions of the attitudes of immigrants

Table 8.2
Correlations of Arab Students' Perception of the Mutual Attitudes
between Immigrants and Arabs (Kendall's tau-bs)[#]

		Perceived attitudes of immigrants toward Arabs		
		Exploitation	Suspicion	Hostility
Perceived attitudes of Arabs toward immigrants	Exploitation	0.050	0.097	0.126*
	Suspicion	0.279**	0.285**	0.541**
	Hostility	0.393**	0.396**	0.363**

[#] Based on the Students' Survey (conducted at the University of Haifa, 2001).
 * Relationships are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.
** Relationships are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

toward Arabs as hostile has the strongest relationship ($r = 0.541$) with the most frequent perceived attitude of Arabs toward immigrants—suspicion.

These findings indicate that Arabs perceive immigrants as suspicious and hostile, while the Arabs' attitudes toward immigrants are mainly characterized as suspicious. Most respondents do not think that immigrants exploit Arabs. In other words, Arabs differentiate between immigrants and the Israeli establishment. Whatever discrimination the Arab minority experiences is connected with the establishment and the Jewish elite, with whom the immigrants are still not affiliated. They are even perceived by the Arabs as a disadvantaged minority. This point was highlighted in the discussions of the Arab focus group. One respondent had this to say:

> I think the Israeli establishment is responsible for our disadvantaged status and conditions, not Russian immigrants. Immigrants are also discriminated against by the Israeli establishment, even though they are perceived as part of the Jewish majority and we [Arabs] are not. Sometimes I think that immigrants are a minority among the majority.

These findings may explain the widening distance between the 1990s immigrants from the FSU and Arabs in Israel over time. It seems that the Arabs had expected that the immigrants would take a different stand toward Arabs, but the immigrants seek to join the Jewish Israeli consensus that places Arabs outside of its legitimate borders. An Arab student in the focus group reported that:

I had expected that immigrants from the FSU would be leftist in their attitudes, coming from a country that was formerly socialist and Communist. But I am surprised to see day after day how rightist these immigrants are. Most disturbing is the fact that some Russian politicians are even leading the campaign against the peace process and the Arab citizens. All of a sudden, Liberman [head of the Russian-based Yisrael Beitenu party and a minister in the Sharon government] has more rights than I do and is telling me what to do.

Another Arab participant added:

Aliya is pushing me to the further margins. It is adding to my illegitimacy as an Arab in the State of Israel. Even before this wave I could hardly make my way [in the labor market] and suddenly I face another barrier [immigration] that lowers my status even more. Immigration might be vital for Israel, but not for me. True, this immigration has expanded cultural pluralism in Israel, but this pluralism does not include me. I have been and I will remain an outsider.

Internal Divisions within Jewish Population

The findings of the 1999 survey reiterate those of the 1990 survey regarding the attitudes of different Jewish sectors toward the influence of the FSU immigrants. With regard to the perceived positive impact of Russian immigrants, the ranking of the different veteran groups from high to low is Ashkenazim, Mizrahim, Israeli-born second generation (see Table 8.3).

Table 8.3
Veteran Groups' Evaluation of the Influence of the FSU Immigrants
(Positive and Very Positive, %)

Area	Group		
	European/ American origin	Asian/African origin	Israeli-born second generation
Economic growth	65.9	50.0	38.8
Security	41.7	40.0	36.4
Cultural life	67.7	41.6	48.6
Science and technology	71.7	67.5	75.5
Political life	47.7	31.6	47.0
Crime	11.2	9.1	8.0

But when the perceived impact of immigrants is analyzed for individual areas, the picture turns out to be more complex. The different groups have a clear-cut evaluation in two areas: a positive evaluation of the immigrants' impact on science and technology and a negative evaluation of their impact on crime. Interestingly enough, the Israeli-born second generation is closer to Arabs than to other Jewish groups in its negative evaluation of the immigrants' economic impact. As indicated earlier, this may be a result of these groups' perception that their economic opportunities are threatened by Russian immigrants.

Mizrahim displayed the least-positive evaluation of the immigrants' impact in the political arena, even lower than the Arabs' evaluation. This assessment is not detached from the political situation in Israel. As noted in Chapter 2, the Israeli political culture is strongly affected by ethnicity. Various studies have shown a clear relationship between voting behavior and ethnic origin. Since the early 1970s, Mizrahim have shown a preference for the Likud while Ashkenazim continued to support the Labour party (Ben-Rafael 1991: 177). Mizrahim have had limited mobility opportunities in the economic and educational fields and more mobility options in the political sphere (Morgan-Talmon 1989: 27). The effect of the Mizrahim was largely a result of their demographic increase, given that they have higher fertility rates than Ashkenazim (Elazar 1986: 197). This was reflected in election campaigns from 1977 to 1988, in which the Likud achieved power mainly because of the massive support it received from the Mizrahim.

The 1990s influx from the FSU started to alter the Israeli ethnopolitical map. The political parties turned their attention toward Russian immigrants as a group with the potential to determine the balance of power in Israel. The formation of immigrant parties, beginning in 1996, created a new situation, in which Russian immigrants have emerged as the main counterbalance to Shas, the predominantly Mizrahi party (see chapter 6).

In the cultural field, Mizrahim display a lower evaluation of the immigrants' impact than the other Jewish groups do. As mentioned earlier, Russian immigrants seem to be closer to Ashkenazim than to Mizrahim in terms of culture, so their cultural impact is more appreciated by the former. We should note, however, that some 19% of the FSU immigrants come from the Asian republics. This group is close to Mizrahim, not only in terms of geographic classification

but also because they are far more religious and traditional than are other immigrants (see Chapter 3).

Tolerance of Separate Immigrant Organizations

The 1999 survey of the general population reveals that Arabs are much more supportive and tolerant than are Jews about separate immigrant political, educational, and cultural organizations. A majority of the Arabs (51%) think that it is important that Israel have parties based on FSU immigrants (as compared to 41.4% of the Jews); 50% think that immigrants should be allowed to have Russian-language schools and cultural organizations (as compared to 21.7% of the Jews); 10% of Arabs said cultural organizations only (14.8% of the Jews) and 2% of Jews and Arabs said Russian-language schools only. In other words, 62% of Arabs, but only 37.5% of Jews, think that immigrants should be allowed to have their own educational and/or cultural organizations.

The veterans' attitudes show that most of the Jewish majority in Israel is still closed toward pluralism and multiculturalism even with regard to other Jewish groups (in this case, Russian immigrants). Their attitudes might also be affected by zero-sum-game considerations, in which the emergence of a new ethnic group threatens to reduce the others' potential influence.

Based on these findings, we could argue that the Arabs in Israel are more supportive of the idea of pluralism and multiculturalism than the Jews are. This is because the Arabs, as a national minority, are more open toward and more knowledgeable about Israeli Jewish society than the other way around. As noted in Chapter 2, Israeli Arabs have a long experience of bicultural and bilingual processes. These processes, however, are in part imposed on the Arabs by their economic dependency and the cultural hegemony of the Jewish majority. Still, they have strongly influenced their attitudes and orientation toward Israeli society.

The Arabs may have had another reason for supporting institutional and cultural diversity (as reflected in their tolerance of separate immigrant organization), because such diversity contains the seeds of turning Israel in the direction of civil society that Arabs could participate in and away from an exclusive ethno-national state. And the legitimization of autonomous educational and cultural organi-

zations for some groups might also increase perception of the Arabs' right to the same.

One could argue that Arabs support educational and cultural autonomy for Russian immigrants because they realize that the main competition in this field is Jewish-Jewish, with no potential to harm the Arab population. This argument, though it sounds plausible, contradicts the fact that Arabs support the immigrants' right to their own political parties, even though this is an area that does seem to be more of a zero-sum game. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the rise of the FSU immigrants' political power has further decreased the Arabs' potential political influence and reduced their bargaining power in the national political arena.

Social Distance

In the 1999 survey of immigrants, we measured the social distance between different groups in Israeli society by asking respondents whether they were willing to have the following as their neighbors: secular Jews, religious Jews, Ashkenazim, Mizrahim, Arabs, Ethiopian immigrants, and immigrants from the FSU. Taking into consideration the limited number of questions we could ask, we selected the question about immigrants as neighbors. To judge from our immigrants' survey, this kind of relationship ranks between formal relationships (such as one's superior at work) and very close relationships (such as marriage). We combined data from the veteran Israelis and immigrants surveys in order to examine mutual social distance between the different groups in Israel. The findings are summarized in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 shows that social distance among the different groups in Israeli society is determined by three main factors that may be ranked according to their salience (from high to low) as follows: nationality, religiosity, and ethnic affiliation.

On the national level, Jewish groups exhibit highly exclusive social borders, including all Jewish groups and excluding Arabs. Most Jews accept any Jewish group and reject Arabs as neighbors. However, there is diversity among the groups in the degree of their rejection of Arabs, with Russian immigrants the most rejecting and second-generation Israelis least rejecting.

As for religiosity, most groups in Israel, including Arabs, prefer to

Table 8.4
Willingness for Social Relationships among Different Groups in
Israel (Willing or Absolutely Willing to have Members of the
Group as Neighbors, %)

Willing to have neighbors who are:	Respondent group				
	Ashkenazim	Mizrahim	Israeli-born second generation	Immigrants from the FSU	Arabs
Secular Jews	92.9	86.7	86.6	97.6	87.2
Religious Jews	83.3	95.0	94.3	49.6	47.0
Ashkenazim	98.8	98.3	95.4	95.6	76.0
Mizrahim	91.1	98.8	94.2	85.2	76.0
Immigrants from Ethiopia	77.6	88.4	85.5	26.6	66.4
Immigrants from FSU	92.3	81.6	83.7	—	73.0
Arabs	38.8	30.0	46.1	18.2	98.0

have secular Jews as neighbors; only Mizrahim manifest a slight pref-
erence for religious Jews. On the ethnic level, Ashkenazim are the most
desired by all groups and Ethiopian immigrants are the least desired.

Russian immigrants are the most selective of all Jewish groups,
even when it comes to Jewish-Jewish relations. For these immigrants,
secular Jews are the most acceptable as neighbors, followed by
Ashkenazim, Mizrahim, and religious Jews, with Ethiopian immi-
grants least acceptable. But even the last rank higher than Arabs.

On the whole, the Arabs' openness toward Jews is much higher
than the other way around. Although Arabs display a preference for
social relationships with other Arabs, they are open toward the
different groups among the Jewish population, except for religious
Jews, who are placed at the edge between acceptance and rejection.
It should be noted that Arabs are aware of the heterogeneity within
the Jewish population. Accordingly, Arabs differentiate between Jewish
groups when it comes to social relationships. Their neighbor-prefer-
ences decline from secular Jews, to Ashkenazim and Mizrahim (these
groups have the same rank), FSU immigrants, Ethiopian immigrants,
and religious Jews at the bottom.

The Attitudes of the Younger Generation

In this section we shall present the findings of the students' survey conducted at the University of Haifa in 2001, with the aim of examining the attitudes of the educated younger generation (Jews and Arabs) toward immigrants from the FSU.

We found that the students' attitudes toward immigrants are basically the same as those of the general population (presented above). For example, Jewish and Arab students take a different point of view regarding immigration to Israel. Among Jews, 84.3% think that immigration is vital to Israel, but only 16.2% of Arabs do. When it comes to paying the price of immigrant absorption, however, the picture completely changes. Only 39.2% of Jewish students (and 2.7% of the Arabs) said they were willing or completely willing to accept a cut in their standard of living in order to absorb immigration. When willingness to sacrifice on behalf of immigrant absorption was examined against students' socioeconomic background we received the same picture as shown by the 1990 survey. That is, each group's attitudes toward immigrants are a result of its position in the social stratification system: Ashkenazim are most willing, Arabs least willing, and Mizrahim somewhere in the middle.

One of the basic points we sought to explore is the extent of contact between veterans and immigrants and the way immigrants are identified by veterans. We found that most Jewish and Arab students have had personal contact with immigrants. Not surprisingly, however, the Jews had more exposure to immigrants than the Arabs did: 56.8% of the Jews said they had met immigrants in person several times (as compared to 39.9% among Arabs), 21.4% said they met once but were scheduled to meet again (15.5% among Arabs), and 21.8% said they had never had personal contact with immigrants (44.6% among Arabs).

Both Jewish and Arab students identify immigrants mainly by the ethnic-Russian component of their identity. However, the tendency to identify immigrants by the ethnic component is much stronger among Arabs than among Jews. Only 7.5% of the Arabs identify immigrants by the Jewish-Israeli component, whereas 92.5% identify them by the purely ethnic component or by a complex identification that includes the ethnic component: 39.9% as Russians, 32.4% as Russian Jews, and 20.2% as Russian Israelis or Israeli Russians.

Among the Jewish students, 54.6% identify immigrants by the

Figure 8.2
Social Relationships of Jewish and Arab Students with Immigrants from
the FSU (Frequently, Very frequently, %)*
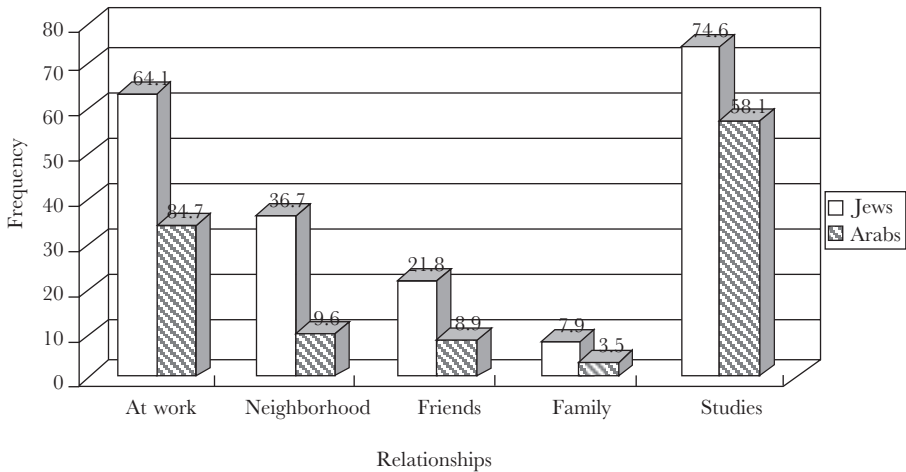
* Based on the students' survey (conducted at the University of Haifa, 2001)

ethnic component, though mostly combined with other Jewish or Israeli components: 34.3% of veteran Jewish students see immigrants as Russian Israelis or Israeli Russians; 11.6% see them as Russian Jews; and 8.7% see them as Russians. Among the balance, 21.1% see the immigrants as Israeli Jews, 19.8% as Israelis, and 4.5% as Jews.

We examined social relationships with FSU immigrants in the various arenas of contact. Among the students, just as among the general population, most relationships with immigrants are formal, in school or the workplace. Fewer meetings take place in the neighborhood and very few in the framework of intimate social networks. As expected, in all these settings, veteran Jews meet immigrants more frequently than Arabs do (Figure 8.2)

Social Distance as Felt by the Younger Generation

First we asked both Jewish and Arab students a general question to learn how close they feel toward FSU immigrants as compared to Ethiopians. We found that 26.4% of Jewish students feel closer to immigrants from the FSU and 14.8% feel closer to Ethiopians.

A plurality (33.6%) feel equally close to both groups, while 25.2% said they do not feel close to either group. Among the Arab students, the majority (73.8%) said they do not feel close to either group. A sizeable minority (26.2%), however, feel equally close to both groups (though with a very slight tendency to feel closer to FSU immigrants).

The students' survey, more than the survey of the general population, enabled us to examine other dimensions of the Arab students' attitudes toward FSU immigrants. Whereas in the general population survey we asked only about attitudes toward having members of various groups as neighbors, in the student survey we also asked about having them as children's friends, children's spouses, and a superior at work. We also examined the factors behind Arabs' willingness to have social relationships with immigrants. The findings are summarized in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5
Arabs' Willingness to have Social Relationships with Immigrants, by Background Factors (Willing/absolutely willing, %)

Willing or absolutely willing to have FSU immigrants as:	Religion			Religiosity		Sex	
	Muslim	Christian	Druze	Religious/ Traditional	Secular	Male	Female
Neighbors	32.6	50.0	64.3*	29.2	73.7**	44.4	38.7
Children's friends	30.4	66.7	57.1*	31.3	63.2**	41.7	38.7
Children's spouses	10.6	16.7	7.1	4.1	26.3**	10.8	9.7
Superior at work	44.7	66.7	71.4*	43.0	63.2*	54.1	51.6

 * Significant relationship at the p < 0.05 level.
** Significant relationship at the p < 0.01 level.

Table 8.5 shows that all groups are less willing to have social relationship that involve greater commitment. They are most willing to have an immigrant as their boss and least to have one as their children's spouse. The most significant variable for social relationships between Arabs and immigrants is religiosity. Those who identify themselves as traditional or religious manifest the least willingness to have social relationships with immigrants in every arena. There was an interesting

picture regarding religion: Druze evinced the greatest willingness to have social relationships that require less commitment (neighbors and superior in the workplace), whereas Christians were more willing than the other groups to countenance relationships that involve a stronger commitment (children's friends and children's spouses). Muslims systematically manifested the least willingness to have social relationships with immigrants. No significant relationship was found between sex and willingness to have social relationships with immigrants, although men are more willing than women in all arenas.

These findings show that the attitudes of the different Arab groups toward immigrants are affected by both national and socio-cultural considerations. Being more Israeli-oriented, Druze are relatively more open than Christians and Muslims to have those relationships with immigrants that are not perceived as threatening to their culture. Close relationships with immigrants are perceived as a social and cultural threat mainly by the traditional-religious segments of the Arab population, which are most highly represented among the Muslims and Druze.

We used the focus-group discussions to hone our understanding of the differences between Christians on the one hand and Muslims and Druze on the other with regard to close relationships with FSU immigrants. The discussions show that Muslims and Druze tend to perceive immigrants from the FSU as atheists, pork-eaters, and sexually permissive. Christians feel less of a cultural threat from the immigrants since they share with them lifestyle norms that derive from Christian tradition.

These points were reflected in the discussions of the focus groups. A Christian student from Nazareth had this to say:

> I feel close to Russian immigrants since they are secular. I feel they are very similar to me. We can live with them and accept their culture. In my town there is a phenomenon that is unprecedented—many Arab families hire Russian babysitters. Russians also come to the city market because prices are lower than in Upper Nazareth where they [the immigrants] live.

A Druze student said:

> As a matter of fact, I feel very close to immigrant students [from the FSU]. I have Russian friends at the university. I even had a Russian girlfriend. But it is difficult to imagine that I could have a Russian wife. This would not suit my religion and culture, nor would my parents agree.

A Muslim student, who identified himself as religious, intervened:

> I never felt close to them because their values and lifestyle are at odds
> with mine. I think they come to Nazareth to buy pork. Since they
> came here, the number of stores that sell pork has more than dou-
> bled and this of course disturbs me as a religious person. I have heard
> of many cases in which Arab families broke down because the hus-
> band left his wife to live with Russian girlfriend. . . .

Another Muslim student intervened:

> I do not fear the culture of Russian immigrants. I do fear their rad-
> ical attitudes toward Arabs. The events in October 2000 [the start of
> the al-Aqsa Intifada] proved that they [immigrants] have a deep hatred
> of Arabs. Look what happened in the attack on Nazareth by people
> who came from Upper Nazareth, in which two Arabs were killed.
> Many of those who came from Upper Nazareth were Russian immi-
> grants and they were the most extreme against Arabs.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

This monograph has dealt with ethnic formation, adjustment patterns, and social and political orientation among the 1990s immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Israel. It has also addressed the dynamic relationships between these immigrants and veteran groups and the immigrants' expected and actual impact on multiculturalism in Israel. We have employed a variety of sources that yield a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative methods, including field surveys, focus groups, and secondary sources.

The issues under study have been placed within the historical context of the development of Israeli society, the impact of the Zionist movement, and the implications of the economic, political, and ideological changes that have taken place in Israel, including developments in the peace process and the deterioration in Israeli-Palestinian relations since October 2000.

One of the major questions raised in this study is, are the immigrants being assimilated within the existing ethnic structure of Jewish society in Israel or are they emerging as a new ethnic group in their own right? This question was examined at various levels derived from the theoretical framework: objective characteristics of immigrants, subjective elements connected with their identity patterns, and behavioral factors that have to do with the maintenance of their original culture and modes of ethnic mobilization. The factors facilitating ethnic formation, which are associated with the home country and host society, were also explored.

As far as objective elements are concerned, FSU immigrants enjoy a common history, a common origin, a common language, and a group label. As shown in our analysis, one of the main cultural characteristics of the 1990s wave is its strong Russian orientation. It was largely isolated from Jewish education in the home countries and was part of the Soviet middle class, which served as the agent of Russian culture in different parts of the empire (see Ben-Rafael 1995; Zilberg and Leshem 1999; Gitelman 1995). The deep acculturation process (with its voluntary and involuntary elements) made the Jews one of the most Russified minorities in the USSR (see Hirszowicz 1991: 275). Consequently, Russian language and culture have been

an integral part of the FSU immigrants' identity at both the individual and group levels. In addition, this wave of immigration was mainly motivated not by Jewish-Zionist ideology but by push factors and pragmatic cost-benefit considerations.

The immigration process and transition to Israel have not wiped out or even weakened the "Russian" cultural orientation of the 1990s immigrants. On the contrary, we found that these immigrants enjoy a deep "cultural pride" and sense of cultural superiority vis-à-vis Israeli society. They are strongly committed to cultural continuity and eager to maintain their cultural institutions.

Indeed, the immigrants have established a wide range of cultural institutions, ethnic organizations, ethnic media and Russian-language press, and ethnic places of entertainment. Our field study found that the immigrants' sources of information are relatively insular, produced mainly within the group or derived from the home-Russian culture.

Cultural continuity among the immigrants is facilitated by the very fact of their large numbers—the largest single group in Israel by country of origin. Hence culture becomes not only accessible but also economically viable. The Russian "culture industry" has become an important economic sector that attracts immigrant as well as veteran-Israeli investors. The active diplomatic relations between Israel and the various republics of the FSU play an important role in facilitating the continuity of the immigrants' social and cultural links with their countries of origin.

The immigrants' geographical concentration is both a result of and catalyst for ethnic cohesion. We found that immigrants' residential patterns are group-centered on both the neighborhood and locality levels. No less important, we have shown that the immigrants' tendency to live in neighborhoods where they form a majority or a sizeable minority is not a passing phenomenon. Such socio-demographic stability constitutes an important basis for the reconstruction of ethnic borders and the behavior as an "inclusive group."

The examination of the subjective elements or self-identification also shows that the ethnic component—"an immigrant from the FSU" or "a Jew from the FSU"—is central to the immigrants' identity. These components are manifested along with their Jewish identification, which is mainly secular and isolated from Orthodox Jewish religion and culture. The ethnic-Russian component of their identity is a unifying factor among those who are Jewish and those

who are non-Jews according to halakhah and compose, according to our findings, about 30% of the 1990s wave.

Despite the strong group cohesion among the FSU immigrants, we found that they constitute a diverse and heterogeneous group. Any analysis of their identity and orientation must take account internal divisions based on class, age, Jewishness (according to halakhah), geographical origin (European or Central Asian), and other factors (such as length of time in Israel and command of Hebrew). Ten years after the start of the wave, the 1990s FSU immigrants have become even more diverse. This diversity is manifested in their identity patterns, among other things. Our analysis suggests three main types of identity, which may be described as follows: (1) the multifaceted identity, which applies to a majority of the immigrants, and is composed of the Jewish component in combination with others, mainly the ethnic component and the Israeli component; (2) the ethnically centered identity, where self-identification is mainly derived from the affiliation with the country of origin; and (3) the ideologically centered identity type, which applies to a small minority who strongly identify with the Israeli-Zionist components. The dominance of the "multifaceted type" is compatible with the "situational identity" characteristic of immigrants in other countries who must adapt to rapid changes and multiple social contexts (Cohen 1994). This type of identity allows them a flexibility that is vital for the preservation of their ethnic identity, on the one hand, and for openness toward the host society, on the other.

Changes in Israeli society have further facilitated ethnic formation among FSU immigrants. Probably the most important of these are the retreat from the "melting pot" ideology and the gradual weakening of collectivism. These changes have legitimized the manifestation of group and individual identities and given an impetus to pragmatic-sectarian politics. The immigrants have quickly realized that ethnic affiliation is an asset rather than a burden.

Hence one of the main factors that have accelerated ethnic formation among immigrants is that ethnic origin forms a salient basis for the "other-identification" in Israeli society. As happened to the Mizrahim in the 1950s, the 1990s immigrants from the FSU are identified by veterans on the basis of their ethnic origin. We found that the vast majority of the immigrants think that veteran Israelis identify them mainly by the Russian component of their identity: as

"Russians," "Russian Israelis," or "Russian Jews." But the immigrants want to be identified by veteran Israelis as "Israelis," "Jews," or "Israeli Jews." Although the "other-identification" as Russians was initially a source of disappointment for the immigrants, they have learned to capitalize on it. When dealing with the identity of FSU immigrants we must accordingly consider the simultaneous existence of various and not-necessarily identical forms thereof: how immigrants identify themselves, how veteran Israelis identify them, and how they want to be identified by veterans.

The immigrants' strong ethnic consciousness is also reflected in a strong sense of group solidarity and the activation of ethnic borders as a framework for social organization and political mobilization. We found that the immigrants' openness to social relationships with veteran Israelis is mainly declarative. On the behavioral level, most relationships with veterans are formal—as coworkers, classmates, or neighbors. At the same time, the FSU immigrants' social networks are ethnically centered and composed mainly of other 1990s immigrants, reflecting the significant in-group homogeneity of these networks. Consequently, the FSU immigrants' social adjustment lags behind their residential and economic adjustment.

The activation of ethnic borders among immigrants is reflected in their political behavior and organization. We found that FSU immigrants in Israel have adopted an ethnic mobilization strategy and seek to integrate at the collective level, not just as individuals. This finds expression in national parliamentary elections as well as in local elections. At both levels, immigrants have formed their own parties and lists whose boundaries are identical with the group boundaries. Although a considerable fraction of the immigrants support veteran parties, the bulk of the immigrants vote ethnically (for ethnic-Russian parties or mixed lists with the active participation of Russian politicians) and support the formation of ethnic political organizations.

Ethnic mobilization among immigrants is facilitated by their group characteristics, which have enabled them to exploit the sectarian structure of Israeli society and manipulate the weaknesses of the Israeli political system. The immigrants quickly realized that, in the existing social structure and political culture, ethnicity is an asset and made use of their considerable voting potential and group cohesion. They have also utilized the well-developed network of Russian ethnic organizations in Israel, including the broadcast and print media.

The rapid ethnic organization by immigrants also benefited from the ethnocratic structure of Israel, which minimizes the cost of ethnic mobilization for groups that are affiliated with the dominant ethnos. Unlike new immigrants elsewhere, who are often obliged to consider the cost that the host society may exact for ethnic mobilization, FSU immigrants in Israel have successfully penetrated the political system at the group level and become legitimate part of the national power center within a few years of their arrival. This was made possible by the ethno-national character of Israel, which grants citizenship and privileges on a religio-national rather than universal civic basis. Immigrants from the FSU automatically receive full citizenship and political rights the moment they arrive in the country, under the Law of Return, which applies exclusively to Jews.

The exclusionary system in Israel, with its ethno-national basis, is a catalyst for ethnic mobilization among immigrants. The absence of an all-encompassing civil identity has facilitated the emergence in Israel of ethno-sectarian "tribal" identities. The ethnocentric political structure, which places the Arab citizens beyond the pale, has facilitated the immigrants' efforts to maximize the return on their ethnic mobilization and left them as the main counterpart/counterweight to the Ultraorthodox parties, which are also group-based.

It should be noted that the FSU immigrants' voting patterns—supporting Russian-ethnic parties in parliamentary elections and ethnic lists in local elections—reflect a pragmatic mobilization strategy that aims at enhancing their status and increasing their access to national resources. These patterns are not the outcome of despair, alienation, or disappointment with their absorption. In other words, the immigrants' political behavior and organization is a pragmatic decision rather than reactive behavior. However, precisely for pragmatic reasons, immigrant leaders may form joint immigrant-veteran lists in local and national elections in order to attract the massive support of immigrant voters. Furthermore, because they are overwhelmingly secular and politically right-wing, immigrant voters tend to support veteran parties on the right or those that share their interest in secularizing Israeli society. In this sense the 2003 Knesset elections did not reflect a radical change in the Russian immigrants' orientation and voting patterns. The results are compatible with their basic orientation: right-wing, secular, and ethnic. The results do, however, indicate a decline in direct ethnic voting—a fate shared

by other sectarian lists (Shas lost more than a third of its Knesset strength), which is largely due to the return to the single-ballot system and the dominance of national issues in light of the Palestinian Intifada. Still, various estimates indicate that about 40% of the FSU immigrants voted for Yisrael Ba'aliya (strictly ethnic) or the National Union, whose ticket was headed by Liberman (and which may be considered to be at least partly ethnic, since more than half its voters were recent immigrants).

Relying on the above analysis, we may safely conclude that, by all measures, the FSU immigrants form a distinct ethnic group in Israel. We should present this group as a separate category, alongside Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, in any sociological analysis, rather than as actual or potential Ashkenazim—the usual practice in official statistics and studies of immigration. As a matter of fact, the aforementioned elements of ethnic formation among the 1990s FSU immigrants were never enjoyed so strongly by either of the two major ethnic groups in Israel. In this sense, the identification of the "group label" of immigrants from the FSU is easier and more clear-cut than that of Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. To some extent Ashkenazim are easier to identify as non-Mizrahim and vice versa (Mizrahim as non-Ashkenazim); but immigrants from the FSU have their own group label based on the above-mentioned objective, subjective, and behavioral elements that define and identify typical ethnic groups.

We may conclude, then, that the FSU immigrants' ethnic identity is not a temporary phenomenon that can be expected to decline or disappear in the future. This conclusion challenges the conventional expectation among most Israeli sociologists that the FSU immigrants will assimilate into the Ashkenazi middle class or wither into a "subculture," "cultural ghetto," or "Russian bubble." Instead, it seems likely that they will intensify their instrumentalized ethnicity while reducing the contradiction between the ethnic and Israeli components of their identity. Longer residence in the country, increased adjustment to Israeli society, and recognition by Israeli society of the legitimacy of cultural uniqueness will certainly weaken the reactive element in the immigrants' ethnic identity, which results from alienation, and strengthen the instrumental element, which derives from cultural pride coupled with pragmatic ethnic mobilization. Eventually, the "multifaceted type" of identity may be expected to prevail, with two core components: the Israeli component and the Russian-ethnic component. Russian Israelis can be expected to form an "ethnic

community" that is an integral part of Israeli society, rather than an "ethnic minority," which is usually the result of denial and rejection by the host society.

As to the theoretical perspective, our findings about ethnic formation among the 1990s FSU immigrants suggest that basic models of ethnic mobilization need to be seriously reconsidered. Grosso modo, they support the competitive model of ethnic mobilization. Ethnic formation and patterns of mobilization among immigrants are not a mere reaction to the disadvantaged status of immigrants and their rejection by the host society. Rather, they represent a strategic decision to activate the ethnic boundaries as a means to compete over the opportunity structure. At the same time, however, these patterns are not completely devoid of alienation and frustration at the group and the individual levels. We may conclude, then, that the competitive and reactive approaches are complementary rather than contradictory. Ethnic mobilization, for all that it is pragmatic and competitive, also involves some reactive elements.

Taken together, the reactive and competitive approaches fall short in that they overestimate factors connected with the group level while overlooking those affiliated with the individual level. At the other extreme, however, analysis based on rational-choice theory overemphasizes factors connected with the pragmatic-individual level, while neglecting those associated with the group level. These approaches overlook the dynamic interaction between the group and individual levels and hardly touch on the role of the state as a major "ethnicizing" factor, especially in countries with an opportunity structure based strictly on ethnic stratification. Hence economic, sociodemographic, and political-contextual factors should be taken into consideration. In countries that are in a state of war, the dynamics of the interaction between internal conflicts (within countries) and external conflicts (between countries) should be also examined as an integral part of the analysis of ethnic relations.

We would accordingly suggest a multidimensional approach for analyzing ethnic formation and mobilization among immigrants. Such an approach should take account of the characteristics and orientation of both the immigrants and the host society. In addition, immigrants should not be treated as cultural consumers only (the approach of most studies), but also as cultural producers. In other words, immigrants, mainly those who constitute a sizable group and tend to maintain their ethnic borders, may adopt an integration strategy that

involves "acculturation without assimilation," accompanied by "cultural partnership"—that is the production of new cultural forms in which they play an active role. Just as immigrants recognize that culture is power, they are also inclined to develop political patterns based on ethnic mobilization. This "instrumentalized ethnicity" is based on a dynamic interaction between group and individual. In this context, group boundaries are consolidated by ethnic-oriented leaders and utilized by group members as an instrument for socio-cultural adjustment and a means of penetrating the power system. By so doing, immigrants seek to integrate into the host society from a point of strength rather than to assimilate from a position of weakness. This instrumentalized ethnicity, which is flexible and dynamic, can maintain group solidarity while at the same time evincing openness toward veteran groups. These characteristics facilitate the newcomers' adaptability to changing circumstances and increase the efficiency of the ethnic group as an exchange system.

One of the main issues raised in this monograph is the expected impact of the 1990s influx from the FSU on multiculturalism in Israel. Our analysis suggests that to answer this question we must address the dynamics of the internal conflicts within Israeli society as well as the external Israel-Palestinian Arab conflict (though the latter can also be viewed as internal in many respects, especially in the wake of the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank after the 1967 war). We have shown that at the core of the political culture in Israel, an "exclusion system" has been developed at two levels: the Jewish-Jewish level and the Jewish-Arab level. The levels do not exist in isolation from each other. They involve cultural and class elements that exclude Mizrahi Jews and the indigenous Arab population. The Jewish-Zionist character of the State of Israel, however, has located the borders of legitimacy of Israeli society on the axis of the Jewish-Arab ethno-national division. Although this system does not eliminate the contradictions within the Jewish sector, it has created an ethnocratic apparatus for resource allocation that includes all Jewish groups (regardless of ethnic affiliation and religious observance) and excludes only the Arabs.

The continuing Israel-Arab conflict has reinforced the aforementioned exclusion system and at the same time has been exploited by the Israeli establishment to manipulate ethnic and religious conflicts within the Jewish majority. Like other states in which national security plays a major role, the state apparatus and state elites in Israel

have used "state security maps" to draw the borders of legitimacy in Israeli society. In this sense, the opportunity structure and reward system have been strongly affected by each group's estimated risk or positive contribution to national security (for an analysis of the impact of "state security maps" on ethnic order, see Enloe 1980). In addition, the external conflict has created a sort of national consensus, which, though fragile, has survived several challenges, creating a mythical solidarity and overshadowing social and ethnic divisions.

The peace process that followed the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993 strongly affected the dynamics of group relationships within Israel. Given the fragile civic culture in Israel, the transition from conflict to peace sharpened the internal divisions within Israeli society. National, ethnic, and religious divisions, long overlooked, rose to the surface and presented a real challenge for the internal stability of Israeli society. This situation provided an impetus for the rising sectarian identities that, as mentioned in our analysis, became more conspicuous during the last decade of the twentieth century.

The 1990s influx from the FSU began arriving in Israel at the zenith of the first Palestinian Intifada, against the background of confusion in Israeli society and a public debate about the best way to achieve security, maintain the Jewish character of Israel, and stabilize Israel's status in the international community. In these circumstances, we could argue that the mass 1990s immigration from the FSU served as a catalyst for resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict, because the transition from conflict to peace was crucial for Israel to achieve economic prosperity and create the sense of security and political stability vital for attracting a large number of immigrants from the FSU (given that their motives are mainly pragmatic rather than ideological) and absorbing them. During that period, the Israeli government even bowed to President Bush's demand that it freeze settlement activity in order to obtain American guarantees for loans to be used to absorb immigrants. In addition, despite the government's effort to direct immigrants to settle in the occupied territories, they rather preferred to settle within the Green Line. Furthermore, in the 1992 elections the majority immigrants gave to the Labour party and Meretz played a major role in making it possible for the left-wing bloc, led by Yitzhak Rabin, to form the government coalition, and thus to move toward a reconciliation with the Palestinians.

Paradoxically, although the immigration from the FSU was initially a catalyst for peace, ten years after arrival these immigrants

seem to be pulling in the direction of intensification of conflict. Our data reiterate the findings of other studies that FSU immigrants in Israel tend to be hardliners in their attitudes toward territorial compromise as a vehicle for peace with the Arab countries and with the Palestinians. This orientation is affected by the immigrants' political socialization in the Soviet Union and by their desire to find their place in the national consensus in Israeli society. As our analysis shows, since the start of the al-Aqsa Intifada the immigrants have become a leading force in the radicalization of Israeli society through their political leadership and print media.

As experience elsewhere shows, and judging by Israel's own experience, a protracted war climate can be used to "homogenize" extremely diverse populations and reinforce national solidarity (for an analysis of the consequences of war, see Smith 1981). In this sense, the retreat from peace and the persistence of a "manageable conflict" may work to the advantage of the Israeli establishment, at least in the short run. After absorbing nearly 900,000 immigrants from the FSU, Israel seems to have largely exhausted the potential for Jewish immigration from these republics. The authorities' focus has consequently shifted from "headhunting" in the FSU to absorbing those already in Israel—from attracting and settling as many immigrants as possible to helping them adjust and investing in their resocialization. The deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since October 2000 and the reemergence of a state of war, accompanied by fear for personal security and the return of the sense that Israel is a "society under siege" may form a catalyst for alleviating internal conflicts among the Jewish population and consolidating the Israeli consensus. These circumstances are a hotbed for modifying ethnic formation among the immigrants from strictly ethnic into a "manageable ethnicity" that is interwoven within the Israeli ethnos.

The actual and potential impact of immigrants from the FSU on the prospects for enhancing multiculturalism and civil society in Israel is rather complex. As expected, most FSU immigrants support the secularization of the state. To a large extent they resemble the secular sector of veterans in their attitudes toward state and religion. The size of the FSU immigrant community and its members' commitment to maintaining their ethnocultural uniqueness have helped enrich and expand the multicultural structure of Israeli society. Because their ranks include many who are not Jewish according to

halakhah, the immigrants were expected to push toward a change in the existing exclusion system and a redefinition of the borders of legitimacy that would also include non-Jews. In addition, the immigrants' efforts on behalf of their right to develop autonomous cultural institutions could be expected to boost the struggle of other groups, mainly the Arab minority, to achieve the same goal.

But the immigrants quickly elected to become an integral part of the existing exclusion system, redefining its borders to fit their own needs while keeping the Arabs on the outside, a natural target for discrimination. Thus those who support the secularization of Israel, both immigrants and veterans, do not have a holistic and all-encompassing civil perception. It is mainly restricted to the internal Jewish-Jewish discourse. In this sense, immigrants support a state with nonreligious but ethno-national character.

The prospects that the immigrants will merely reinforce the ethno-national character of Israeli political culture also depend on their attitudes about freedom of expression and civil society. We found that the immigrants' views about issues of civility, freedom of expression, individual rights, and others associated with a multicultural outlook are largely based on instrumental and pragmatic rationales rather than on an all-encompassing concept of democratic-civil culture. Also, immigrants (like veteran Jews) perceive security considerations as of utmost importance and they are placed above other values of freedom of expression. As a consequence, immigrants evaluate these issues according to their group and individual interests and not through the lens of universal measures and values.

Our analysis shows that immigrants have already found their own location within the social and political structure. They are extremely selective socially, more so than other ethnic groups in Israel. They feel closest to secular Jews and Ashkenazim and most remote from Arabs. The other groups fall in the middle, with Ethiopian immigrants not very different from Arabs. Thus the immigrants have adopted the social map of the Jewish majority, which excludes Arabs from primary social networks and ongoing close relationships. At the same time, the ranking of their social distance from other Jewish groups is determined mainly by cultural affinities, religious orientation, and lifestyle. The immigrants perceive Ashkenazim as a group that is mainly secular and Western oriented, whereas Mizrahim and Ethiopians are perceived as religious and Oriental.

All of this suggests that the FSU immigrants will spearhead a

movement toward a type of multiculturalism that may be denominated "ethnocratic multiculturalism." This type derives from the ethnocratic model of regimes and differs from the models familiar from democratic Western countries. It is not at all like "critical multiculturalism," which, in addition to recognizing the right to be different, assumes the reconstruction of power relationships in the wider society and the redivision and sharing of power by all groups, regardless of their ethnic, national, religious, or other ascriptive affiliation. Nor does it resemble mainstream multiculturalism, which relates to issues of diversity and shared civility as all-encompassing notions, albeit in a way that is consistent with the interests of the dominant group. Ethnocratic multiculturalism is selective: it draws the borders of legitimacy on an ethno-national exclusive basis, rather than on inclusive values. Hence it assumes the development of a multiculturalism that is restricted to those groups considered to be part of the dominant ethnos. In the framework of this model, duration in the country loses its significance, as indigenous groups are further marginalized.

As a matter of fact, such "ethnocratic multiculturalism" already exists in Israel, where there is a wide gap between the social structure, which is deeply multicultural, and the political culture, which is primarily ethnocentric. However, since the immigrants have chosen to integrate into Israeli society as a group rather than as individuals, they can be expected to expand its ethnic and cultural borders. Taking into consideration the immigrants' social structure (with the admixture of a sizable non-Jewish contingent) and their cultural and political orientation, we may conclude that the immigrants will reinforce the current ethnocratic multiculturalism while fueling a redefinition of the borders of legitimacy of Israeli society to include non-Jewish immigrants within the new borders. In this sense, for most immigrants the unifying factor is not the Jewish character of the state, which is concomitant with the Orthodox perception of Jewishness, but rather a Jewish state with a secular ethno-national meaning of Jewishness. At the same time, such character is clearly "non-Arab" in the sense that it places Arabs outside of its legitimate borders, while other groups, even the non-Jews among immigrants, are included within these borders (see also Lustick 1999; Shumsky 2001). In order to comply with the Western-secular orientation shared by the immigrants and their natural Ashkenazi allies, the afore-

mentioned process will most likely also intensify the character of Israel as a "non-Mizrahi" state.

This process will not be straightforward, however, since the immigrants themselves are heterogeneous and affected by the processes taking place within Israeli society. Furthermore, the immigrants' reinforcement of ethnocratic multiculturalism will deepen the existing contradictions within Israeli society, especially those between its democratic and the ethno-national aspects and between its social structure and political culture. Should the peace process resume, it is safe to hypothesize that internal divisions will again rise to the surface and become even stronger, increasing the potential for internal conflict. This would present another contradiction—conflict resolution at the external (Israel-Arab) level accompanied by conflict evolution at the internal Israeli level.

We may conclude that in ethno-national states, with ethnocentric immigration laws, newcomers tend to perpetuate the "exclusion system" while attempting to redefine its borders according to their sectarian interests. Because of the weak civic culture, the immigrants' efforts are directed toward safeguarding their own legitimacy and pragmatic needs, rather than toward making the system all-encompassing. Moreover, the ethnocratic-sectarian structure fans the newcomers' tendency to reinforce this exclusion system in order to maximize their gains. In these circumstances, the legitimacy of the "in group" leads to increased illegitimacy of the "out group." This situation magnifies the existing internal contradictions, however. As a way of overcoming these contradictions, the new borders are based on what the various sectors of the "in group" have in common that differentiates them from the "out group," not on what all groups have in common. In other words; what the "in group" is not, rather than what the "in group" is.

In any event, the immigrants' emergence as a new ethnic group already poses a major challenge to Israeli society as a whole. The signs of such a challenge are evident in how veteran Israelis relate to the immigrants. Our findings reiterate the conclusion of other studies that the veterans' enthusiasm has gradually been replaced by suspicion and even some hostility. Although Jewish veterans demonstrate strong support for the ideal of Jewish immigration to Israel, when it comes to paying the cost of immigrant absorption the response of the different groups is affected by their location in the stratification

system and the actual or potential effects of immigration on their status and mobility opportunities.

This is why Mizrahim and the second-generation among veteran Jews are the least supportive of immigration. Mizrahim present the lowest positive evaluation of the impact of immigrants in both the political and the cultural arenas. Veteran Israelis often perceive the FSU immigrants' insistence on maintaining their culture and speaking Russian in public as a provocation. We found that despite the retreat of collectivism, most long-settled Israeli Jews remain closed to the concepts of pluralism and multiculturalism, even with regard to other Jewish groups.

The Palestinian minority in Israel is more open than the Jewish majority to multiculturalism and civil society because it has a vested interest in them. As a national minority that has systematically suffered from the exclusionary system in Israel, Arabs initially hoped that the FSU immigrants, while insisting on maintaining ethnic-cultural continuity, would turn cultural pluralism in Israel into a more inclusive system, thereby opening an avenue for the Arab population to enter. Consequently, even as they expressed their anxieties about the immigrants' economic impact, Arabs were most supportive of their right to have their own political and cultural institutions. But the Arabs quickly realized that the immigrants had decided to reinforce the exclusionary system and even to play a leading role in rejecting them. As a result, the Arabs' sympathy for the immigrants' social and cultural contribution waned, to be replaced by mutual suspicion and estrangement. This does not mean, however, that the door has been slammed against potential coalitions between the Arabs and certain immigrant sectors; chiefly those that have close contact with Arabs and the non-Jews, many of whom are Christians and some are Muslims.

Placing the 1990s immigrants from the FSU in the context of the historical development of Israeli society, we may conclude that they represent one of the greatest challenges to ever confront the Zionist project. Their motives for immigration pose a salient challenge to the "uniqueness" argument that has accompanied the Zionist movement, before and after the establishment of Israel. True, this is not the first wave for which push factors, not ideological ones, are the major impetus (see Shuval 1998; DellaPergola 1998). But it is undoubtedly the first wave to acknowledge this fact publicly and from the very beginning. Their pragmatic orientation has been manifested in

their attitudes as well as in their behavior. Nor does this wave fit in with the typical Zionist model of Diaspora and the ingathering of the exiles.We found that a substantial number of these immigrants still have a strong nostalgia for and social and cultural ties to their country of origin and a deep pride in their original culture coupled with a sense of superiority to Israeli culture. Hence many members of the 1990s wave should be seen as "normal" migrants who had left their home in search of a new one. It could be even argued that a considerable part of them are better defined as a "Russian-Soviet Diaspora" in Israel than as a Jewish Diaspora that has come home again.

The 1990s immigrants also challenge the Zionist paradigm that has systematically seen the elimination of ethnic division among the Jews in Israel as an ultimate goal even while acknowledging it as a de facto attribute of social life (see Lewis 1985; Weingrod 1985). Just as the Mizrahi Jews threatened this paradigm in the 1950s, the FSU immigrants jeopardized it in the 1990s. As such they call into question the traditional dichotomy of Ashkenazim and Mizrahim and suggest a tripolar ethnic structure of the Jewish population in Israel, including "Russian Israelis." The challenge presented by the FSU immigrants is even stronger than that posed by the Mizrahim, given that the state and its ruling Ashkenazi elite have been largely successful in "de-Arabizing" the latter (in the sense of detaching them from their original Islamic-Arab culture), whereas the efforts to "de-Russify" the 1990s immigrants have not borne substantial fruit.

This monograph has tried to answer some key questions about the 1990s immigrants from the FSU, but it raises others: What are the dynamics of the relationships between the 1970s and the 1990s waves of immigration from the USSR/FSU? Will the later wave "absorb" the first and redefine its cultural-ethnic borders? Or will the leadership of the first wave use their accumulated experience in Israel to manipulate the later wave and turn its members into clients of "instrumentalized ethnicity"? What impact will the 1990s immigrants have on the resurgence of other ethnic groups who seemed to have been assimilated into the bipolar ethnic structure? Will the successful ethnic mobilization of the FSU immigrants drive Mizrahim who are not affiliated with Shas to reconsider their mobilization strategy? Will the "Russian" elite share the power system with the Ashkenazi elite or gradually replace it? Will the social distance between FSU immigrants and Arabs continue to widen, or will they eventually

manage to form coalitions on practical issues? What impact will the immigrants have on the fluid "status quo" that prevails between religious and secular groups in Israel? Is the immigrants' reinforcement of ethnocratic multiculturalism irreversible? Or perhaps, being a pragmatic group, will they switch to favor an inclusive civil culture if the ethnocratic model fails to endure its inherent contradictions? For the present, these questions must remain open.

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INDEX