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Ephraim Ya'ar

Continuity and Change in Israeli Society: The Test of the Melting Pot[1]

INTRODUCTION

One of the principal conventions in the sociological community that studies Israeli society is that the idea of the "melting pot"—one of the more important declared purposes of the Zionist movement as large immigration waves arrived early in the statehood period—is essentially a story of failure. In the spirit of this convention, most of the studies on immigrant absorption focused on attempting to explain why the goal was not achieved. The common assessment is that the reasons for the failure of the melting pot lie in the ideology on which the idea was based; in the narrow, ethnocentric attitude of the elites, and of the absorbing society in general, toward the objects of the idea, the new immigrants with the variety of groups and cultures they represented, and in the errors of the absorption policy along with the patronizing and bureaucratic way in which it was carried out. This is not only the conclusion of those known in the sociological discourse as "critical sociologists." A reading of the works of sociologists and anthropologists whom most of the critics refer to as the "establishment," such as Shmuel Eisenstadat, Rivka Bar-Yosef, Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Shlomo Deshen, Alex Weingrod, Erik Cohen, Moshe Lissak, Yochanan Peres, Moshe Shoked, and in certain ways also Sammy Smooha, makes it quite evident that they too did not ignore the complexity and problematic nature of the melting-pot idea, nor the difficulties and failures in the process of implementing it. They did, however, try to explain these phenomena differently in terms of normative and theoretical points of departure. Notable in this regard is a recent study by Moshe Lissak on the subject of the melting pot. In my view, it is one of the most comprehensive and systematic attempts to analyze and evaluate, from the perspective of the end of the previous century, the sociological-historical background of the melting-pot idea and its concrete outcomes, based on a wide variety of documents and empirical data. The title Lissak gave to the monograph in

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which he summarized his research speaks for itself: "The Great Immigration Wave of the 1950s: The Failure of the Melting Pot."[2]

My aim here is to offer some reflections about the conventional view, first briefly discussing the "melting pot" concept from a theoretical and historical standpoint, and then systematically examining the outcomes of this idea on the empirical level. I will anticipate by saying that the conclusion arising from the forthcoming analysis is that the answer to the question: "Has the idea of the melting pot failed?" is not at all simple and certainly not unequivocal. In some important ways one may indeed assert that the idea has not been especially successful;[3] but in other, no less important ways it is fair to say it has achieved great, perhaps even very great, success. Moreover, a careful analysis of the total balance of the relative successes and failures of the melting-pot idea, based on a varied set of empirical criteria derived from it, leads to the conclusion that the convention that it deserves a "failing" grade was apparently too hastily reached, and that the degree of its success—and some would say "too much success"—is most impressive by any standard.[4]

THE IDEA OF THE MELTING POT

Technically speaking, the "melting pot" concept is taken from the world of physical and chemical production. A "melting pot" or furnace is a container in which different kinds of metals or other substances are dissolved or broken down, usually by generating different levels of heat, with the aim of bringing them into a new state or creating a new product from them. The concept of a "compound," which comes from the world of chemistry, has a similar meaning. The compound is a substance created in a process of interactions between different elements. In this process the participating elements lose their original attributes so that the new substance has distinctive attributes of its own.

Sociological theory and research is characterized by a tendency to borrow concepts from other scientific disciplines, particularly the biological and natural sciences, and apply them to various social phenomena and processes. The "melting pot" concept is a salient example. In its common sociological applications, a melting pot is a social or political framework in which tendencies and processes occur that promote the blending of the groups belonging to it, especially in cases of immigrant groups with different ethnic, national, religious, racial, or cultural backgrounds. Similar to how the concept is used in the fields of industry and chemistry, in the

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sociological context the interactions between the different groups yield a new essence, social and cultural, while the groups lose their original cultural attributes or have them considerably weakened.

A classic example of using the melting-pot concept as a benchmark in examining integration processes in immigrant societies is the study by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, which focuses on the main immigrant groups in New York City in the first half of the previous century.[5] As this study shows, like most of the studies on the integration of immigrants belonging to different ethnic groups, the reality produced over the years by the contacts and interactions between the groups composing the New York mosaic was much more complex than the seemingly simple and abstract idea of a melting pot would suggest. On the one hand, these immigrant groups, such as the Jews, Irish, Italians, and Puerto Ricans, indeed lost and discarded over time some of their distinctive cultural traits while adopting "all-American" patterns of culture and values. On the other hand, their particular ethnic identity, together with important parts of their cultural heritage, were preserved and in some ways even redesigned. In other words, the American melting pot, at least in its New York variant, indeed fostered processes of cultural homogenization but, at the same time, enabled the different groups composing it to preserve and even cultivate some of their distinctive cultural attributes. Moreover, some of the cultural traits of these groups penetrated the majority culture and contributed to its formation and enrichment in numerous and varied areas.

Unlike the American case, the process of absorbing the immigrants who came to Israel in the large waves of the 1950s, as with the later immigration waves, was directed and overseen by the highly centralized government system headed by the Labor movement.[6] The government took upon itself, first of all, responsibility for regulating the flow of immigration, determining the priority regarding which potential immigrant groups would come and when, and also regarding the allocation of economic, political, and organizational resources for this purpose.[7] Second, after the immigrants came to Israel, to a large extent the political establishment decided where and under what conditions they would dwell, how they would earn a living, in which educational system their children would learn, and sometimes even which political parties and movements would sponsor them. Under these circumstances it appears that in the Israeli case, the concept of *assimilation* is no less, and perhaps more, relevant to describing and understanding the phenomenon of immigrant absorption than the idea of the "melting pot" which, in the Israeli discourse, was termed *mizug galuyoth*—literally: blending of the exiles.

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Shmuel Eisenstadt first analyzed the general sociological principles of assimilation in his well-known work of the early 1950s, *The Absorption of Immigrants*.[8] In an article from the 1960s,[9] Rivka Bar-Yosef applied these principles to the Israeli case, analyzing the absorption process of the mass immigration of the 1950s. Her main thesis was based on the concept of assimilation and is indicated by the title she chose: "De-socialization and Re-socialization: The Adjustment Process of Immigrants." In other words, in the context of Israeli society, the concept of the melting pot was essentially little more than an appealing slogan, since the elites who propagated it and were responsible for implementing it, actually aimed for the assimilation of the immigrant groups into Israeli society, according to the "good society" and "new man" models that emerged under their leadership during the Yishuv period.[10] An explicit example of this attitude could be found in the words of David Ben-Gurion in the *Government Yearbook* for 1951, as quoted in the study by Moshe Lissak.[11]

> The exile communities that have dissolved and come to Israel still do not constitute a People, but rather a rabble and a human dust without a language, without education. Without roots, and without imbibing the tradition and vision of the nation . . . changing this humanity into a civilized and independent nation bearing a vision—is no easy endeavor, and its difficulties are no less than the difficulties of economic absorption.

Cruder formulations about the traits of the new immigrants in general and of those who arrived from Islamic countries in particular, can be found in the statements of various leaders and intellectuals of this period, both on the Left and the Right.[12] At the same time, for the sake of historical fairness, it should be emphasized that, at least regarding the statements of Ben-Gurion and political leaders such as Giora Yosephtal and Levi Eshkol, their attitude was indeed patronizing but, as they saw it, egalitarian, in the sense that they desired and expected that the Sephardic immigrants would integrate into Israeli society in the same way as the new immigrants of Ashkenazi extraction, as the following words of Ben-Gurion make clear:[13]

> There is no basis for the assumption that the Jews of North Africa, or Turkey, Egypt, Persia, or Aden are different in their nature and fundamentals from Jews of Lithuania, Galicia, or America. Among them, too, are hidden rich founts of pioneering ability, founts of heroism and creativity. If we invest here, too, some of the efforts that we invested in Jewish youth in European countries—here, too, we will get the blessed results.

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It is not my aim here to elaborate on the historical-sociological background of the ideas of the melting pot and of assimilation, or on the image of new immigrants in general and Sephardic immigrants in particular, in the eyes of the then-elites and of the absorbing society in general. Similarly, I will not deal with the practical aspects of the absorption policy, for which the bureaucratic mechanisms of the government and the Jewish Agency were responsible, or with the related question of whether the efforts and investments referred to by Ben-Gurion and his comrades were made in a degree and manner that suited the goal that faced them—integrating the immigrants into Israeli society according to the social and cultural model that emerged in the Yishuv period.[14] Instead, I would like to address what may be called the "test of outcomes." In other words, what can we learn about the fate of the "melting pot" and "assimilation" ideas from the perspective of more than fifty years since the great immigration waves? Did the interactions between the different groups that form the mosaic of Israeli society indeed produce a social and cultural fabric that differed from the new and old elements that were blended in the pot? Were the new elements assimilated into the social and cultural infrastructure that was created in the Yishuv period, or did they maintain their original cultural characteristics? My answer to these questions will be based on examining several criteria derived from the concepts of the melting pot and of assimilation, especially in the context of the distinction between Jews who emigrated from the Arab countries (Mizrahim) and Jews who immigrated to Israel from the Western countries (Ashkenazim). In the limited format of an article, I will be able to address only a certain number of such criteria.

THE CULTURAL ASPECT

It is impossible to begin a discussion of the cultural component, which played a central role in the melting-pot idea, without highlighting the overwhelming triumph of Hebrew as a spoken language in everyday life, along with its wide and rich use in the various fields of Israeli cultural creativity.[15] Indeed, the renewal of Hebrew as a vibrant and contemporary language in itself, and its taking root in a classic immigrant society such as Israel, which still is comprised mostly of first- and second-generation children of immigrants, is so deep and wide that it is taken for granted. That attitude, however, is mistaken, since the experience of other immigrant societies, such as the United States, shows that the process of assimilating the dominant language among minority groups in general and immigrant groups in

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particular, is usually slower and more problematic.[16] From a comparative standpoint, then, the assimilation of the Hebrew language among various immigrant groups in Israeli society—from East and West—was both a vital tool and a key manifestation of social and cultural integration.

At the same time, contemporary Israeli cultural creativity is characterized by two trends that differ from, though they do not necessarily contradict, each other. On the one hand, a cultural pluralism has emerged that is manifested in the growing popularity of cultural forms that carry an Eastern or, perhaps more precisely, Mediterranean nature.[17] These forms indeed are mainly recognizable in popular cultural creativity, but they also appear in what is called "high culture." On the other hand, one cannot ignore the continued existence and even strengthening of the cultural trend that emerged in the Yishuv period and crystallized in the first decades of statehood. Although this trend indeed bears an Israeli-Hebrew-modern stamp, both in routine, daily aspects of the culture and in cultural creativity in various areas of art and literature, it too was subject over the years to both Eastern and Western influences. Consequently, as Motti Regev maintains, today the main Israeli trend is a hybrid of Eastern and Western influences along with the "original" (Hebrew) Israeli influences.[18]

Take, for example, the area of folk music. As Motti Regev's studies have shown, it appears that in the 1970s and 1980s there was a certain rejuvenation of Mediterranean music, which rested on foundations of Arab, Yemenite, and Greek music, and was manifested, among other things, in the popularity of what is called the "cassettes industry" or "Central Bus Station music." This music, which was clearly distinct from the canonical folk music ("Land of Israel" songs, for example) indeed did not succeed initially in penetrating the main channels through which Israeli music is disseminated and thus gain a stamp of legitimacy—namely, radio, television, and the national recording companies. However, as early as the 1980s, a new trend emerged in this area that can be characterized as a process of "mutual adjustment." Some of the outstanding creators and performers of Mizrahi music, such as Zohar Argov, Chaim Moshe, Margalit Tsanani, and Avihu Medina, and later Zehava Ben, Sarit Hadad, and Eyal Golan, assimilated elements of Israeli-Western music into the songs and ditties that they wrote and played. As a result of this process, their music became a growing part of the mainstream of Israeli pop music, tending to blurr the boundaries between the two.

A detailed, if also specific, analysis of the development of relations between "Israeliness" and "Mizrahiness" in pop music can be found in a recent article by Galit Sa'ada-Ophir.[19] In examining the style of the musical

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groups that were active in the town of Sderot in the 1990s, the author points to three "strategies" that were evident in the music of these pop groups: first, to consolidate a separate Mizrahi identity; second, to overwhelmingly adopt the values of the dominant Israeliness; and third, to accept the idea of the melting pot—involving, as she puts it, efforts "to make changes in the cultural center by increasing the dosage of the Mizrahi ingredients within it." This last strategy, which Galit Sa'ada-Ophir calls the "strategy of the new Jew," of which the Tippex group is a notable example, and which is largely similar to the strategy of the above-mentioned outstanding Mizrahi creators and performers, is "the successful and dominant strategy in the Israeli cultural space."

This conclusion may indeed be too sweeping, since the influence of "Mizrahiness" and "Mediterraneanness" on Israeli cultural creativity is still limited, especially regarding the level of "high culture." Moreover, as Galit Sa'ada-Ophir herself notes, even the groups that adopt the strategy of separateness primarily create music that is rooted in the Israeli cultural essence and include in it songs of a pronounced Israeli-Hebrew character. As a classic example she cites "Hanahlieli," a song that Matti Caspi composed and for which Ehud Manor wrote the lyrics, and that is called in its Moroccan version "Lala Eisha."

The attempts to integrate "East" and "West" were not, of course, limited to the folk-music stratum of Israeli musical creativity, or to first- and second-generation Mizrahi creators from the 1950s immigration. The history of Israeli music shows a constant, variegated effort at such integration in the "high" music of the concert halls beginning in the 1930s and involving such prominent composers as Paul Ben Haim, Mordechai Seter, Mark Lavrie, Eden Partush, Alexander Boskovitz, and Menachem Avidom—all of whom were educated in the Western musical tradition, and sought to integrate elements of Eastern music into their work. These figures, who belonged to a group of composers who immigrated to Israel from Europe before the Second World War, created, mainly for ideological reasons, "music close to an Israeli 'national school,' to which in the 1940s the composer Alexander Boskovitz and the writer, critic, and composer Max Brod gave the name 'Mediterranean' (or 'Eastern Mediterranean')."[20] This trend, which reached its peak in the 1940s through the 1960s, weakened in later years, owing both to its failure to crystallize into a real school of music and to the renewed influence on the Israeli composers of the European *avant garde* music that developed after the Second World War. At the same time, this tradition has its heirs among the generation of Israeli-born or -educated composers, such as Noam Sherif and Ami Mayani. Furthermore, some of

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the musical works that were written in this spirit, both by the first and second generations of composers, such as "Na'im Zmirot Israel" (Paul Ben-Haim) and "Ein Gev" (Eden Partush) and "Tikun Hatzot" (Mordechai Seter) from the veteran generation, or "Akdamot Lamoed" (Noam Sherif) and "Concerto for Percussion and Woodwind" (Ami Mayani) of the next generation, eventually won recognition in the international musical community and are occasionally played by the world's leading orchestras. Worth mentioning in this context is the establishment some years ago of the Andalusian Orchestra, a concert orchestra that performs classical Eastern music and whose members also include musicians who are not of Mizrahi origin, most of them from the former Soviet Union.

It should be noted that there have been similar trends of integration and differentiation between East and West not only in various kinds of music, but also in other areas of Israeli cultural creation and consumption. For example, in a recent study on differences in lifestyle in the Israeli Jewish population in certain areas, such as leisure patterns and preferred kinds of music and literature, Katz-Grau and Shavit[21] found that along with the primary influences of class and religiosity, there are also differences rooted in ethnic origin. These were manifested in the greater inclination of Ashkenazim to "high" forms of leisure and music, whereas the Mizrahim prefer popular entertainment and music. At the same time, the authors note that "the direct influence of ethnic extraction is small when compared to the total influences of class or level of religiosity," and that "these findings raise questions about the degree of centrality that is usually ascribed to ethnic extraction as a main cause of differentiation in Israeli society," since "interethnic differences in high lifestyle stem primarily from the difference in class segmentation and from inequality in education between the two ethnic groups."[22]

Comprehensive and more detailed information concerning patterns of cultural consumption within the Israeli Jewish population was recently reported in a study conducted by Hadassah Hass.[23] One of the analyses done in this study involved a comparison among first and second generation Mizrahi and Ashkenazi with respect to some 32 leisure activities, divided into four types: canonical e.g., theater, popular e.g., entertainment, interactive e.g., meeting with friends, and other. The results reveal that the gaps in the frequency of engagement in these activities were reduced, from the first to the second generation, in 21 of the 32 activities, including all the eight activities classified as canonical. Interestingly, the Andalusian Orchestra, which attracted 7% of the first generation Ashkenazi and 12% of first generation Mizrahi, was less popular in the second generation, with

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equal rates of attendance—4%—among both ethnic groups.[24] On the other hand, it appears that the "cult of the saints"[25] has become more popular among second generation Ashkenazi, so that the rates of visiting the tombs of the righteous in this group have come closer to those reported by second generation Mizrahi, as can be seen from the following figures. First generation Ashkenazi and Mizrahi—13% and 35%, respectively; second generation Ashkenazi and Mizrahi—22% and 36%.

For purposes of the present discussion, it is important to note that narrowing the gaps and interpenetration in the cultural sphere occurred not only in the domain of cultural production and consumption but also in other spheres of Israeli society, including its political culture. Perhaps the most salient example in this regard is the Shas Party, which has justifiably aroused great interest among the community of academic researchers.[26] Shas is a Mizrahi-religious-social party that challenges the veteran elites and the ruling establishment that they dominate, yet at the same time tries to integrate into that establishment by adjusting to the rules of the game and subtly exploiting them to advance its goals and interests. Shas was born as a political movement aiming not only to protest discrimination against Mizrahim but also to change the marginal role of the Mizrahi identity in Israeli society by appealing to the Mizrahi connection to the Jewish tradition and religion under the slogan "to win back the former glory."[27] Among researchers of Shas there is a debate about its degree of success in achieving its goals and about the ideological or pragmatic basis of those goals. However, there appears to be agreement that notwithstanding its radical image, Shas also functioned to a large extent as a "shock absorber" regarding the feelings of injustice among Mizrahim in general, and the socio-economically weaker Mizrahi strata in particular,[28] without making a substantial effort to change the structural conditions that caused the low position of these strata in the class hierarchy of Israeli society, and without acting to improve their potential for mobility—by, for example, exploiting the educational frameworks that Shas established so as to impart a general education, along with a Torah education. Furthermore, because over the years Shas adopted, in practice, the rules of the game of the Israeli political culture and cooperated with the veteran political establishment, both of the Right and the Left, it thus contributed—whether knowingly or not—to broadening and strengthening its basis of legitimacy. In other words, Shas is a classic Israeli product ("blue and white" in the words of Shmuel Eisenstadt)[29] that represents both the successes and the nonsuccesses of the melting-pot process with regard to Mizrahi immigrants.

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For our purposes in this article, it is important to note that Shas represents a pronounced example of duality—differentiation and integration at the same time. On the one hand, it integrated into the established, Western-modern political system; on the other, it emphasizes traditional political symbols and principles such as the authority of religious figures, particularly Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, along with a strong emphasis on the Mizrahi identity.

Although the Shas movement has characteristics that make it distinct in the political landscape of Israeli society, it is also one manifestation of a wider tendency with regard to the integration of Mizrahim into the political establishment, with its various levels and domains. Where, at the beginning of the integration process, this tendency emerged mainly at the level of the local authorities and workers' councils, over the years it has also penetrated the high levels of the political hierarchy, including the Knesset and the government. For example, a considerable part of the senior cabinet positions in the current and/or previous government, such as the foreign, finance, and defense ministries, were filled, or are filled today, by ministers of Mizrahi extraction. It should be emphasized that the integration of Mizrahim into the political establishment was achieved both via an ethnic party such as Shas and via the larger veteran parties, such as Likud and Labor. To put this trend in historical perspective, it is worth recalling that in the early years of the state it was common to give ministers of Mizrahi extraction, such as Bechor Shitrit, rather marginal portfolios such as minorities or the postal service. And, finally, the symbolic-national importance of the institution of the presidency should not be underestimated. It is now occupied, for the first time since the establishment of the state, by Moshe Kazav, a scion of a Mizrahi family that came to Israel in the large immigration waves of the 1950s.

ASPECTS OF FAMILIAL PATTERNS

One of the salient differences between the Mizrahi and Ashkenazi populations in the 1950s and 1960s concerned family structure, including number of children and division of roles and authority according to gender. The structure of the Mizrahi nuclear family in those years was characterized by a relatively large number of children and a traditional division of labor between the parents that was manifested, among other things, in a lower educational level for women and their lower rates of participation in the workforce compared to Mizrahi men. In comparison, the dominant pattern

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of the Ashkenazi Israeli family was a small number of children, the attainment of education by women that didn't lag behind the education level of Ashkenazi men, and their being encouraged to join the workforce.[30] These characteristics fit the value system of the veteran Israeli society, which, inspired by the Zionist ideology, adopted the family pattern of the modern Western state as a desirable model.[31] From the view point of the melting pot idea, the expectation was that with the passage of time the structure of the Mizrahi family would become similar to that of the Ashkenazi family. The statistics presented below shed some light on the changes that have occurred in the Mizrahi and Ashkenazi family structure since the 1950s with regard to three of the central aspects of the familial pattern.

A. Family Size[32]

Among families of Ashkenazi extraction the proportion of families numbering six or more people came to only 1.3% in the 1950s, whereas in families of Mizrahi extraction this figure was 21.7%. Similarly, the average number of children of Mizrahi women who were born abroad stood at 5.68 in 1955, compared to 2.63 among Ashkenazi women who were born abroad. The trend of diminishing gaps between the two groups of women was already evident in the early 1960s. Thus, in 1963, the average number of children for Mizrahi women was 4.61, and for Ashkenazi women, 2.39. In 1998, that is, 35 years later, the corresponding figures were 3.21 for women born in Asia-Africa and 2.29 for women born in Europe-America. Already, in the first generation, the gap between the fertility rates of Mizrahi and Ashkenazi women had diminished considerably. The trend of decreasing the gap in number of children for the two groups of women only intensified in the second generation, as shown by the figures below:

1963, first generation: Asia-Africa: 4.61; Europe-America: 2.39
1998, first generation: Asia-Africa: 3.21; Europe-America: 2.29

1963, second generation: Asia-Africa: 2.75; Europe-America: 2.60
1998, second generation: Asia-Africa: 2.74, Europe-America: 2.71

Thus, in the second generation the gap in fertility rates between the two groups of women actually disappeared, with a trend in the direction of mutual, though not symmetrical, convergence, the Mizrahi families drawing closer in this regard to the pattern of the Ashkenazi families rather than vice versa. In this context it is interesting to note the increase in number of children among the second-generation Ashkenazi women—as compared

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to the first-generation women of the same group—a phenomenon that deviates from the usual pattern in Western countries. This trend is even more salient among Israeli women of the third generation, that is, those whose fathers were born in Israel. In 1998, the average number of children for this group was 3.0.[33]

B. Age at Marriage

Along with number of children, age at marriage is another important aspect of the disparities between the traditional and modern families. In general, the age at marriage in families of the second type tends to be later than in families of the first type—a phenomenon that is affected by various processes related to modernization, such as more time spent in the educational system and later entry into the workforce, preference for individual and rational considerations in decisions on whether, when, and with whom to marry, and so on. All this contrasts to traditional societies in which the norms of family and community encouraged marrying as early as possible, especially for women. Indeed, as a study by Ruth Katz and Yochanan Peres demonstrates,[34] a comparison between ages at marriage for men and women of Mizrahi and Ashkenazi extraction reveals that at the start of the 1960s, the average age at marriage for Mizrahim was considerably lower than for Ashkenazim, both among women and men, as follows: Mizrahi grooms, 25.7, Ashkenazi grooms, 29.0; Mizrahi brides, 21.3, Ashkenazi brides, 24.1. Over the years, changes in the average age at marriage occurred in both ethnic groups, but in opposite directions: for both Ashkenazi men and women it decreased, whereas for both Mizrahi men and women there was an increase. As a result of these trends, in 1975 the disparities in age at marriage for the two ethnic groups actually vanished for both men and women, as shown by the following figures: Ashkenazi men, 26.0, Mizrahi men, 26.1; Ashkenazi women, 23.0, Mizrahi women, 23.2. Similar to the pattern regarding number of children, during those years the two ethnic groups came to resemble each other in terms of their average age of marriage, and by the mid-1970s the differences between them had disappeared completely.[35]

C. Women's Participation in the Workforce[36]

One of the clearest hallmarks of the family in modern society is women's growing participation in the workforce—a process that is related to structural, cultural, and normative changes. Israeli studies on this subject in the 1960s and 1970s found that Mizrahi women's participation rates were

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lower than those of Ashkenazi women, as would have been expected based on the traditional background and socioeconomic status of the Mizrahi families. For example, Reuven Gronau[37] showed that the value of time spent in housework was higher among Mizrahi women—a phenomenon related, among other things, to the large number of children they had to care for. Similarly, Rivka Bar-Yosef[38] found that the division of labor in Mizrahi families tended to be more traditional, with women in those families devoting more time to family roles and receiving less help than women in Ashkenazi families. Before we examine the differences between the two groups of women in workforce participation rates, it should be noted that for Israeli women in general, these rates are not particularly high compared to the common levels in advanced industrial societies, though they are on the rise.[39] For our purposes, the question is whether the past disparities in this area between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi women have changed, and in which direction. The following data indicate the general trends in this regard. Thus, in 1970 and 1995, respectively, the workforce participation rates of Israeli women were as follows:

First-generation Mizrahi women: 25.6% and 39.1%
First-generation Ashkenazi women: 34.1% and 43.0%

Second-generation Mizrahi women: 35.5% and 60.9%
Second-generation Ashkenazi women: 38.4% and 66.4%

These figures are quite clear-cut: for both groups of women there was a considerable increase in workforce participation rates, both from the intragenerational and intergenerational standpoints, with most of the increase between the two points in time occurring in the second generation. As for the gaps between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi women, a mixed picture emerges. For first-generation women, the gap between the two groups narrowed over time from 8.5% in 1970 to 3.9% in 1995. An even larger change occurred, however, between the first and second generations; in 1970 for Mizrahi women the intergenerational increase was 10.0%, while for Ashkenazi women the rise in the participation rate came to only 4.3%. For the second generation, the rate of increase from 1970 to 1995 was slightly larger for Ashkenazi women (28%) than for Mizrahi women (25.4%). The main trend that emerges from these data is that over time the two groups of women adopted a very similar pattern of behavior regarding workforce participation, even if a certain disparity remains.

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PATTERNS OF INTER-ETHNIC AND INTRA-ETHNIC MARRIAGE

Inter-ethnic marriage is significant both as a manifestation of "melting" and as a factor that promotes "melting." Understanding the trends in this domain are an extremely complex task because of the mediating influences of various structural variables, such as size of the groups, age composition, and levels of education and income, on the structure of opportunities for women and men in the marriage market. For example, Haya Steir and Yossi Shavit[40] pointed out that the greater rise in level of postsecondary education among Mizrahi women, compared to men of the same extraction, reduced the supply of available Mizrahi men as potential spouses for them. Worth noting in this context is that this study, like others on the subject, indicates a growing importance over time of the educational factor in choice of spouse. Apparently for this reason, along with other structural factors, most of these studies found an increase in the rates of mixed inter-ethnic marriages, though a recent study by Steir and Shavit found that this trend did in fact prevail in the 1970s and 1980s but did not continue in the 1990s.[41] One of the explanations for this, as the authors note, apparently lies in the rise in educational level among Mizrahi men—which increases the stock of potential spouses for Mizrahi women, who previously were forced to look for educated spouses among the stock of Ashkenazi men.

Barbara Okun, who recently examined the trends in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriage rates, taking into account the effects of structural factors via multivariate statistical analyses, arrived at the following conclusions:[42]

- The tendency to ethnic monogamy has declined considerably, but is still very substantial.
- There is a rise in "intra-bloc" marriage rates, particularly among women. That is, women of Asian-African extraction tend to marry men from this "bloc," whereas for men, it was found that those from North Africa tend to marry women from Europe and from North Africa at an equal rate.
- There is a decline in marriages based on barter relations—for example, a man or woman with a high ethnic status and a low educational status who marries a man or woman with a low ethnic status and a high educational status.
- There is a considerable rise in the tendency to educational monogamy.

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- The positive connection between women's education and their chances of marrying is strengthening.

On the one hand, these trends indicate the weakening of ethnic extraction as a factor in choosing spouses and as a type of "resource" that can be used to acquire other resources. On the other hand, the continued influence of this factor, along with the rise in rates of a certain pattern of intra-bloc marriage, likely indicates the endurance, and perhaps even the intensification of ethnic identity in terms of the Mizrahi-Ashkenazi dichotomy. Furthermore, the strengthening of the effect of the educational factor in choosing a husband or wife could, as noted, both weaken the tendency to ethnic monogamy and strengthen it. In any case, the picture that emerges regarding marriage patterns among the Israeli Jewish population indicates a variety of factors that affect preferences in choice of spouse, educational level becoming the important among them. This suggests that closing the gaps in education between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, for both women and men, would clearly contribute to an increase in rates of inter-ethnic marriage within Israel's Jewish community.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GAPS

Income Disparity

The importance of this issue, along with that of education, with regard to the integration of Mizrahim into the stratification structure of Israeli society does not require explanation, and it is no surprise that considerable research effort was devoted to it in the 1950s. Most of the studies that have accumulated over time indicate that from the 1950s to the mid-1970s, there was a trend toward reduction in the income gap between the two ethnic groups. However, as a study by Yinon Cohen shows,[43] from 1975 to 1995 not only did the gap between second-generation Mizrahim and Ashkenazim fail to narrow, it grew significantly, especially up to the early 1980s. This occurred despite the fact that the period under study (1975–1995) saw a decrease in the disparities in human capital (education) and other factors of productivity (age and job seniority) between the two groups.

Thus, from 1975 to 1982 the average income of second-generation Mizrahim, as a percentage of the average income of Ashkenazim of the same generation, fell from 79% to 70%. From 1982 to 1995 the gap did not narrow, and among adults aged 35 and over they, in fact, widened. The author points to a number of possible explanations for this phenomenon,

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emphasizing the educational gap that still remains between the two groups, particularly on the academic level. According to the analyses he performed, these gaps directly explain about one-third of the income disparities in 1995 and about another third indirectly, that is, via the effect of education on the two groups' occupational segmentation. An additional factor the author cites is the general growth in inequality of income distribution that characterized this period, and which particularly afflicted the more vulnerable groups in Israeli Jewish society, namely, Mizrahi men as well as women in general, with Mizrahi women earning slightly less than their Ashkenazi counterparts.

The effects of an increase in overall income inequality on the growth in income gaps between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and between women and men, were recently studied in greater detail by Yinon Cohen and Yitchak Haberfeld.[44] The researchers explain the seemingly paradoxical phenomenon of an increase in income gap between these groups despite the decrease in the gap between the characteristics of their human capital, not in terms of discrimination but as a structural result of the considerable overall growth in income inequality during these years. Thus, based on a statistical method of analysis that enables "decomposing" the income gaps into their different factors, they concluded that if the overall inequality in income distribution in 1999 had stayed at the level that existed in 1975, the Mizrahim would have reduced the gap by 19%, whereas in actuality it increased during this period by 32%. In other words, the increase in overall income inequality worsens the situation of all the low-income groups in Israeli Jewish society, including Mizrahim, women, the ultra-Orthodox, and immigrants from the former Soviet Union. In later works by the same researchers,[45] based on income surveys conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 1975, 1982, 1992, and 2001, they reached similar conclusions: during those years there occurred an increase in intergroup inequality, notwithstanding that the gaps in human capital did not grow between the groups, and some of the groups even reduced the gaps between themselves and the Ashkenazim. As in the previous study, the main explanation for the increase in intergroup inequality lay in the growth in overall income inequality from 1975 to 2001, and not in some differential treatment by the labor market toward the different groups, with the exception of the Arabs. As the authors put it:[46]

> Thus the rise in the earnings gap between Ashkenazim and the other Jewish groups during the 26-year period must not be attributed to rising gaps in productivity-related traits, or to changes in market treatment of these groups.

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> In fact, Mizrahi men and women, as well as Ashkenazi women made impressive gains in productivity-related characteristics (and their treatment by the market) in most periods. However, rising inequality . . . more than offset these gains, and blocked their relative economic progress. These results imply that labor market discrimination against Mizrahim or women has not grown during that period. Rather, to the extent that Mizrahi men and Mizrahi and Ashkenazi women are discriminated against in the Israeli labor market, the level of discrimination declined during the 26-year period.

The structural explanation, however accurate, does not change the fact that the overlap between ethnicity and income levels has increased in recent decades. One may conjecture that this reality of a worsening relative situation for Mizrahim on the economic level contributed to strengthening the feelings of ethnic discrimination and relative deprivation among them, as a study by Yariv Tsafati indeed found.[47]With this background, it may also be possible to understand the voting patterns of Mizrahim in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly the increase in voting for Shas, the large majority of whose voters came, as noted, from the low-income and low-education strata of the Mizrahi sector.[48]

Educational Gaps

In the era of the postindustrial knowledge society, one of the main mechanisms for narrowing intergroup income gaps in particular, and differences in the structure of socioeconomic opportunities in general, is, to reduce the intergroup disparities in education. Indeed, the above study by Cohen and Haberfeld indicates that the increase in the income gap between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim occurred despite the fact that the education gap between them decreased. However, one must take into account that, first, the disparities in this area still have not disappeared, and second, the reduction stemmed mainly from an improvement at the low and medium educational levels for the Mizrahim, whereas at the high levels, especially that of academic education, which has a marked influence on the structure of opportunities in the labor market, the reduction in gaps was more limited. In this context it is important to stress that the more modern the Israeli economic and occupational systems become, the greater the influence of academic education on the structure of opportunities in the labor market, as Cohen and Haberfeld[49] have demonstrated. Thus, in intergenerational comparisons, rigorous analysis of the trends regarding gaps in academic education is of great importance. Recently, two studies were conducted that were based on such comparisons: one by Friedlander and colleagues,[50]

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the other by Cohen, Haberfeld, and Kristal.[51] These studies are unique because, among other things, they also include Israeli natives of the third generation, making it possible to compare the trend of interethnic gaps in a three-generation perspective. The study by Friedlander and colleagues also included two different birth cohorts, one born in 1950–1954 and the other in 1965–1969, and examined their educational levels based on 1995 census data and correlations with earlier census data.

The study by Cohen, Haberfeld, and Kristal shows that the gap in rates of those with academic degrees between the two main ethnic groups in the Jewish population did not diminish in the third generation compared with the second generation, and still are quite considerable: in the third generation 40% of the Ashkenazim and 15% of the Mizrahim are university graduates, while in the second generation the corresponding figures were 35% and 11%. The ethnic effect is also manifested in the fact that the rates of higher education in mixed families, in both the second and third generations, are in the middle. These findings raise the question of to what extent these gaps are affected by the socioeconomic background of the family, as compared to the effect of ethnic origin in itself. After performing a multivariate analysis that sought to answer this question, the researchers came to the following conclusions:

- In short, among persons of the same family background, the persistence of the educational gaps depends on gender. Among women, the direct effect of ethnicity on education has virtually disappeared in the third generation. Family background rather than ethnicity governs daughters' college education. By contrast, among men, Mizrahi ethnicity depresses college graduation rates in the third generation more than it depresses it in the second generation. Consequently, the claim that ethnicity no longer plays an independent role in college graduation in the third generation has received support in our data for women, but not for men.
- The gender disparities regarding factors that affect educational attainments of Mizrahim are also manifested in findings for mixed families.
- Among women of the same family background, persons of mixed ethnicity in both the second and third generations are as likely as Ashkenazim to be college graduates . . . Among men, however, only the third generation achieved parity with Ashkenazim. The chances the second generation of mixed origin being college graduates are not greater than the chances among second generation Mizrahim.

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The study by Friedlander and colleagues[52] indicates that parents' education considerably influences the educational achievements of their children and that, in the researchers' view, the dramatic changes in the education levels of the Mizrahi parents contributed about 50% of the rise in education level of their offspring as manifested, for example, in the rate of those among them who matriculated. At the same time, compared to the findings of Cohen, Haberfeld, and Kristal, the study by Friedlander and colleagues points to a more considerable reduction of the interethnic gaps in education, including at its higher levels.[53] Thus, the detailed findings cited in their study show a general trend of reduction of the interethnic gaps in education, with the rate of increase in the education level of Asian-Africans more rapid than of European-Americans, and with this trend strengthening from birth cohort to birth cohort and from generation to generation, among both men and women, and at all education levels including academic education. For example, they show that the rates of matriculants in the older birth cohort (born between 1950–1954) of second-generation men were 61% among Ashkenazim and 25% among Mizrahim, whereas in the younger birth cohort of the same generation (born in 1965–1969) the corresponding rates were 65% and 40%. A more considerable reduction of gaps occurred among the women of the same birth cohort and generation: Ashkenazi women, 68% and 77%; Mizrahi women, 30% and 51%. A similar trend also occurred in the rate of those studying in universities. For example, among men of the later birth cohort (1965–1969) the rates of those studying in universities in the mid-1990s for the second generation of Asian-Africans and European-Americans were 14% and 37%, while for the third generation they were 32% and 37%. A sharper reduction at the same education level occurred among the women: in the second generation the corresponding rates came to 9% and 35%, and in the third generation they were 33% and 38%.

In assessing this data one should recall, on the one hand, that it still does not express the full effect of the growth of academic colleges. Unlike the universities, most of growth of the former institutions of higher education, which was expected to increase the rate of those with an academic education among the Mizrahim, occurred in the 1990s. On the other hand, these data do not take into account the potential disparities in "value" of the degrees awarded by the two types of higher educational institutions, nor the disparities between different fields of study in terms of occupational prestige and labor-market demand. Indeed, according to a study by Chana Ayalon and Avraham Yogev,[54] the rate of Mizrahim studying in the colleges (34%–42%) is considerably higher than that in the universities (18%–23%).

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Moreover, the study shows that the highest rate of Mizrahi students is found in the less prestigious institutions of teachers colleges and the lowest rate in the elite universities. In addition, according to the study by Cohen, Haberfeld, and Kristal, which focused on comparing the ethnic gaps in the second and third generations in terms of the rates of those with academic degrees, in the third generation there was no reduction in these gaps. Momi Dohan and colleagues[55] arrived at similar findings regarding reduction of the ethnic gaps in terms of matriculants.

As noted, because there are substantial methodological disparities between the above studies, particularly in definitions of variables and methods of analysis, their conclusions do not necessarily contradict.[56] However, also taking into account the lack of clarity about the size of the reduction in the relative gap in education level according to ethnicity, if we take as a point of departure the situation in the 1950s, when, for example, 40% of the North African women and half the Middle Eastern women had no formal education,[57] then the Mizrahi population has seen far-reaching changes in the domain of education, even if the educational gap between them and the Ashkenazim has not fully closed. The effects of these changes are evident in major areas of the life of the individual and society, such as the family, work, culture, and politics.

Adherence to Religion and Tradition

One of the outstanding differences between Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Israelis—differences that existed in the Yishuv period and continued into the statehood era what with the variegated composition of the large immigration waves of the 1950s and 1960s—concerns the adherence to religion and tradition. Generally speaking, the Mizrahim who came to Israel were closer to religious faith and practiced a more traditional lifestyle than the Ashkenazi immigrants. Indeed, the Mizrahi religiosity usually was not as rigid and formalistic as the Ashkenazi Orthodoxy, particularly the ultra-Orthodox or Haredi stream within it.[58] However, whereas most of the immigrants from European countries in the Yishuv and statehood periods were secular to one extent or another, only a small minority of the Mizrahi immigrants adopted a distinctly secular worldview and defined themselves as such. In other words, whereas among Ashkenazi Jewry polar trends developed of extreme Orthodoxy on the one hand and antireligious secularism on the other (particularly in the socialist and Marxist streams) Mizrahi Jewry was characterized by a moderate religious approach, without the extreme manifestations of either religious or secular doctrines. One of the main explanations for the differences in this domain concerns

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Mizrahi Jewry's relatively late and more limited exposure to modernization, similarly to the people it lived among, so that it was less subject to the influences of modernity and thus not forced to choose between religion and "progress" like European Jewry, which was exposed to these influences relatively early and in their full intensity.[59] In any case, on the background of the religious-traditional tendency of the immigrants from the Eastern countries, in the 1950s harsh struggles were waged between the secular parties, particularly those representing the Labor movement, and the religious and Haredi parties, over which streams would educate the immigrants' children. In the context of these struggles, the religious parties accused the Education Ministry of "hunting souls" and an "inquisition against the Jewish religion"; they themselves saw the Mizrahi immigrants as their "natural territory."[60]

With this historical background, it is worth considering two sets of data on the extent of religiosity/secularism among Mizrahim and Ashkenazim and the intragenerational and intergenerational changes that have occurred in this regard. The first data set segments the two ethnic groups on a "scale" of four levels—Haredim (ultra-religious), religious, traditional, and secular—in keeping with the subjects' self-definition.[61] The data are based on a cumulative sample that encompassed over 50,000 Jewish interviewees, and relates to the period of June 1994–August 2002.[62]

	Haredi	Religious	Traditional	Secular	Total
First-gen. Mizrahim	6%	15%	53%	26%	100%
First-gen. Ashkenazim	5%	8%	22%	65%	100%
Second-gen. Mizrahim	7%	11%	40%	42%	100%
Second-gen. Ashkenazim	10%	9%	15%	66%	100%
Third-gen. Israelis	11%	9%	21%	59%	100%

The findings show, as expected, that in the first generation of immigrants there are considerable differences between the two ethnic groups. The Mizrahim tend to be more religious and, particularly, more traditional, whereas a large majority of the Ashkenazim are secular. Presumably, these disparities do not reflect the full differences between the two groups in terms of connection to religion during the large immigration waves, since many of those who came to Israel as adults in that period had already died, and most likely the proportion of the religious and traditional among the Mizrahi immigrants among them was even higher. This claim is supported by a study conducted on a representative sample of high school students in

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the mid-1960s, in which the rate of nonreligious among parents of Mizrahi children came to only 10%. For comparison's sake, the rate of nonreligious in the corresponding group of Ashkenazi parents then stood at 42%.[63] The comparison regarding the first generation reaffirms that the connection to religion and tradition was much more widespread among the immigrants from Eastern countries than among the European immigrants. As for the second generation, the data clearly show that, compared to the first generation, the rate of seculars among the Mizrahim increased considerably, so that the gap between them and the Ashkenazim of the same generation narrowed greatly compared to the intergenerational gap that existed in the first generation. Thus, whereas in the first generation the traditionals represented the largest category among the Mizrahim, the second generation shows an equal distribution between the categories of traditional and secular, with a slight advantage for the latter. These changes seem to indicate that the second-generation Mizrahim underwent a secularization process, and it is reasonable to conjecture that this trend strengthened among the third-generation Mizrahim, as the numbers in the bottom row of the table suggest.

Another aspect of the trends on this issue is indicated by data from a survey conducted in November 2002 in the context of a research project on Jewish identity in Israeli society, based on a sample of about 1000 interviewees who represented the adult Israeli Jewish population.[64] In the survey, the interviewees were asked whether, compared to their parents' home, they practice a more religious, more secular, or the same kind of lifestyle. A segmentation of the answers shows that 27% of the first-generation Mizrahim responded that they had become more religious, 44% that they had become more secular, and 29% that they were the same. A similar, but more pronounced, pattern was found among second-generation Mizrahim. Thus, 21% of this group answered that they had become more religious than their parents, 56% that they had become more secular, and 23% that they were the same. There is, then, a clear trend of secularization both within the two generations of Mizrahim and in an intergenerational comparison. As expected, the secularization trend among the two generations of Ashkenazim was less substantial because their starting point was much more secular. In any case, the total data set on this issue points to a considerable reduction of the ethnic gaps with regard to approach to religion and tradition, with the Mizrahim becoming more similar to the Ashkenazim in this area.

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Identity and Collective Values

The next relevant criterion to be examined is the extent of interethnic similarity and difference regarding several key aspects of collective identity and national values, with emphasis on the attitudes toward Israeliness and Jewishness, the meaning of "who is a Jew," and the importance of Israel's connection with Diaspora Jewry. The data presented below are also taken from the above-mentioned study on Jewish identity. The first data set (a) provides the percentages of respondents who positively answered the following questions: Are they proud or not proud to be Israelis; are they proud or not proud to be Jews; are they emotionally connected to Israel? The second data set (b) concerns the respondents' choice of the answer that best expressed for them the personal meaning of the concept "to be a Jew," out of a list of possible meanings. Finally comes a segmentation of the rates of agreement with the statement that there is great or very great importance in maintaining the connection between Israel and Diaspora Jewry (c).

(a)

	First-gen. Mizrahim	First-gen. Ashkenazim	Second-gen. Mizrahim	Second-gen. Ashkenazim
Proud to be an Israeli	90%	77%	91%	85%
Proud to be a Jew	95%	84%	95%	86%
Emotionally connected to Israel	96%	91%	94%	97%

(b) The personal meaning of "being a Jew"

	First-gen. Mizrahim	First-gen. Ashkenazim	Second-gen. Mizrahim	Second-gen. Ashkenazim
A religious tradition	67%	36%	54%	44%
A cultural tradition	78%	84%	80%	84%
An ethnic group	23%	45%	32%	39%
A racial group	23%	30%	27%	21%
A people	94%	94%	91%	91%

(c) Percentages of those agreeing that it is important to maintain the connection with Diaspora Jewry

	First-gen. Mizrahim	First-gen. Ashkenazim	Second-gen. Mizrahim	Second-gen. Ashkenazim
	84%	86%	84%	84%

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Overall, these findings indicate that the Israeli Jewish population is characterized by a strong link to the national component of their identity in its dual sense—Jewish and Israeli—with Jewish identity having a slight advantage over Israeli identity, especially in the first generation of Mizrahi and Ashkenazi immigrants. However, even though the link to Jewish and Israeli identity is widespread in all the groups, it is more pronounced among the Mizrahim—both in the first and second generations. Thus, 95% of the first-generation Mizrahim say they are proud to be Jews compared to 84% of the Ashkenazim in that generation. Similarly, 90% of the first-generation Mizrahim are proud to be Israelis compared to 77% of the Ashkenazim in that generation. The inter-generation comparison indicates that the Jewish and Israeli connection has not weakened in the second generation, and among the Ashkenazim has even strengthened slightly. It can, of course, be claimed that the finding on the relatively high salience of Jewish identity among the Mizrahim is not surprising given their stronger connection to religion and tradition, especially in the first generation. However, this explanation does not apply to the same degree to the higher salience of Israeli identity in this group. From this standpoint, at least, the pervasive sense of Israeliness amongst the Mizrahim suggests that their integration into Israeli society is a story of success rather than failure, whether it occurred as a result of "melting pot" or "assimilation" processes.

In my view, this phenomenon has certain weighty implications for different domains of Israeli society, a detailed discussion of which goes beyond the bounds of this paper. Suffice it to say that the strong connection to Israeli Jewish nationality among the Mizrahim can serve not only as an important indicator of their degree of integration but also of their supremacy at least on the subjective level, in carrying the standard of Jewish and Israeli nationality. These feelings apparently have a strong connection with the nationalist political positions and voting patterns of Mizrahim, especially in recent decades.[65] Moreover, carrying the flag of nationality can also be a vital resource in the struggle over their place in the hierarchy of Israeli society. Indeed, the history of social groups with low status for reasons of ascriptive background, such as ethnicity or religion, shows that in certain conditions these groups' emphasis on nationality as a central component of their collective identity may reflect the desire to counteract the causes of their low status in society.[66]

As for the subjective meaning of Jewish identity, there appears to be a consensus (over 90%) about its national component, along with the stress on cultural (over 80%) with all the other ingredients appearing at

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lower frequency, especially ethnicity and race. The comparison by ethnic and generational groups shows no significant disparities between them regarding the importance of Jewish nationality and its cultural heritage, whether in terms of ranking or the total values of their frequency. There are, however, some disparities on the other ingredients of identity. Whereas the Mizrahi Israelis, especially in the first generation, give more emphasis to the religious heritage in Jewish identity, a finding that fits the data that were obtained about the connection to religion and tradition, the Ashkenazi give slightly less emphasis to the cultural ethnic ingredient. This latter disparity is not to be belittled and worth discussing in itself, but, again, that would lead too far a field.

The International Community: East and West

In Israeli society the question occasionally arises as to whether it is desirable for Israel, as a country situated in the Middle East, to seek economic, political, and cultural integration among the peoples of the geographic region to which it belongs, or, instead, to continue upholding the "Western" orientation, whose origin lies in the worldview of the Zionist movement and its continuation in the statehood era. This is not the place to discuss the ideological and practical arguments that have been made over the years about drawing Israel closer to the Middle East and cultivating a connection with it, such as Uri Avnery's idea of the "Semitic space" in the 1950s or, from a different perspective, Shimon Peres's vision of the "New Middle East" in the mid-1990s, which reflected the then-prevailing optimism among much of the Israeli public after the signing of the Oslo agreement, though this initiative mainly addressed the economic dimension. Another idea raised recently by some of the Mizrahi intellectuals, such as Shimon Blass, is that Israel should "geopolitically" integrate into the countries of the Middle East.[67]

Yet, as noted, the historical fact is that under the leadership of its dominant elites from both Left and Right, Israel has maintained a definite Western orientation in the three main dimensions of activity of the society and the state—political, economic, and cultural. It is worth noting parenthetically that in principle there need not be an overlap, or at least not a full overlap, between these three dimensions, especially between the cultural dimension and the other two, though in actuality there are mutual influences. Thus Israel could, for example, have developed political and economic ties with the Western countries while simultaneously encouraging and developing an Eastern or Middle Eastern culture. In any case, the interesting question in this context is whether the historical hegemony of

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the Western orientation is accepted to the same extent, and in relation to the three dimensions and especially the cultural one, by the Mizrahi and Ashkenazi publics. In other words, do the "Arab Jews," as Mizrahi Jewry is sometimes called,[68] prefer the East to the West? To answer this question, if only partially, we have data that were obtained in a Peace Index survey conducted early in 1995. In the survey, based on a representative sample of the Israeli Jewish population (n=503), the following question was posed to the interviewees: "In each of the following areas—political, economic, and cultural—are you interested in having Israel integrate into the Middle East or with Europe-America?" Analysis of the responses by ethnic and generational distribution yielded the following findings:

Integration into a Political Framework

	First-gen. Mizrahim	First-gen. Ashkenazim	Second-gen. Mizrahim	Second-gen. Ashkenazim	Third-gen. Israelis
Middle Eastern	46.7%	28.7%	25.2%	26.4%	23.5%
European-American	33.3%	51.5%	51.0%	51.6%	61.2%
In neither	2.7%	7.9%	7.3%	2.2%	4.7%
In both	12.0%	7.9%	7.9%	9.9%	7.1%
Don't know	5.3%	4.0%	8.6%	9.9%	3.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Integration into Business and Economy

Middle Eastern	36.0%	22.8%	21.9%	22.0%	18.8%
European-American	48.0%	61.4%	59.6%	60.4%	74.1%
In neither	2.7%	2.0%	3.3%	0.0%	1.2%
In both	8.0%	8.7%	5.3%	7.7%	3.5%
Don't know	5.3%	5.1%	9.9%	9.9%	2.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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Integration in Terms of Culture and Way of Life

Middle Eastern	24.0%	12.9%	15.9%	6.6%	15.3%
European-American	56.0%	66.3%	60.9%	69.2%	69.4%
Neither	6.7%	8.9%	9.3%	5.5%	9.4%
Both	8.0%	7.9%	6.6%	8.8%	2.4%
Don't know	5.3%	4.0%	7.3%	9.9%	3.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The picture that arises from these findings leads to several conclusions. The first generation shows a different pattern of preference between the Mizrahim and Ashkenazim on the political dimension: the Mizrahim prefer Israel's integration into the Middle East (47%) over integration with the Western countries (33%) whereas the Ashkenazim of the same generation have the opposite order of preference: 27% and 51.5%, respectively. As for the other two dimensions, the first-generation Mizrahim also show a clear preference for the West over the East, both on the economic dimension (48% *vs.* 36%) and, even more, the cultural one: 56% *vs.* 24%. However, one cannot ignore that on these dimensions, too, the Mizrahim have slightly lower rates of preference for the Western countries than the Ashkenazim of the same generation, 61% of whom favor the West on the economic dimension and 66% on the cultural dimension. Second, the second-generation Mizrahim have higher rates of preference for the West than the first generation on all three dimensions. Furthermore, on two of the dimensions—political and economic—there is no difference between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, with the Ashkenazim showing a slightly higher rate of preference than the Mizrahim in the cultural area—69% and 61%, respectively. Overall, the second generation shows a clear preference for the Western countries on all three dimensions among both Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and this tendency strengthens among the third-generation Israelis, that is, Israeli natives whose parents were born in Israel.

It appears, then, that in choosing between East and West, the Israeli Jewish public tends clearly to prefer the West over the East on all three dimensions that were examined. Although the inclination toward the West is not overwhelming, and a not inconsiderable minority is interested in integration into the East, the ethnic factor only marginally affects the distribution of tendencies on this question. Furthermore, the intergenerational

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comparison shows a strengthening of the Western orientation among the Mizrahim and the third-generation Israelis—a phenomenon that probably reflects the influences of globalization to which the various sectors and strata of Israeli society have been exposed and the Israeli elites encouraged. Also interesting in this context is that among the three dimensions that we checked, "the West" receives the highest rates of preference in the total sample (64%) precisely on the dimension called "Culture and Way of Life" (on the economic dimension, 61%; on the political dimension, 50%) with this order of priorities being maintained in each of the five groups we examined. This finding raises the question of the subjective meaning of such general concepts for the respondents, especially with regard to "Culture and Way of Life." If, on the political dimension, they perceive the advantages of Western democracy over the authoritarian regimes of the Arab states, in addition to the negative influence of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the Arab countries' image, and if on the economic dimension they relate mainly to the standard of living in the Western countries that is incomparably higher than in most Middle Eastern countries, there is a need to ask what explains the attractiveness of the Western culture and way of life for those of both ethnicities. The answer to this important question is outside the scope of the present article.

CONCLUSIONS

The different criteria by which we examined the question of the melting pot, whether as an idea or a slogan, do not, of course, exhaust the complexity of the issue. Clearly, it is extremely difficult, if at all possible, to evaluate its outcomes in a precise and commonly acceptable way. At the same time, the materials and data we have presented seem to enable a reasonable assessment of the evolution of the melting-pot idea from its inception, with the large immigration waves of Mizrahi Jewry in the 1950s, to the present. During this period Israeli society underwent profound changes in its demographic composition, institutional structure and collective identity that can be characterized, without exaggeration, as "nation-building" processes. However, it is important to keep in mind that these changes have not been influenced by internal processes alone. Among the factors that influenced the formation of Israeli society one should, first and foremost, attend to the profound effects of the Arab-Israeli conflict on practically all aspects of Israeli state and society. Similarly, it is impossible to understand the trends of Israel's development without taking into account the broader

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effects of worldwide external influences, especially those influences stemming from the acceleration of globalization in the domains of economy, culture, and politics. The impact of this process is evident, among other things, in changes that have occurred in the structure of Israel's economy and in its socioeconomic policy, one of the main results of which has been the strengthening of market economy and tendencies of inequality in Israeli society. Likewise, through the growth of mass communication, globalization has strengthened, according to the principle of isomorphism, inter-group similarity in life styles and cultural consumption.

Notwithstanding these comments, our exploration of the melting pot issue suggests that the cultural, socioeconomic, and identity variables discussed in this article point to clear trends of growing convergence between the two ethnic communities, though not to a uniform extent, with some of these trends manifesting processes of "melting," particularly in the cultural and political domains, and some, processes of assimilation, as exemplified by the changes in family structure and the status of women. Indeed, the "ethnic factor" still endures, and the Mizrahim-Ashkenazim distinction is still one element of the mosaic of Israeli society. At the same time, it appears that the importance of this factor has gradually weakened, especially when compared to other axes of differentiation and divergence that characterize Israeli society such as Jewish-Arab, religious-secular, or Right-Left relations. In other words, whether because of processes of a melting-pot nature, namely, mutual adjustment and integration, or of the assimilation type, it appears that the convergence between the two communities, as also manifested (albeit partially) in the intimate domain of marriage patterns, has led to a state of affairs where their common basis as Israeli Jews plays a much more central role in their personal and collective identities than their ethnic identity, though that, as noted, has not disappeared completely.[69]

The ethnic factor has different manifestations, some negative and some positive. On the negative side, ethnicity is still reflected in the socioeconomic hierarchy, and though social scientists debate its reasons and extent of this phenomenon, the opportunity structure for Mizrahim still does not appear to equal that of Ashkenazim, especially in the higher levels of the educational system and, consequently, in the higher levels of occupational status. At the same time, as we have shown, the Mizrahim have come a long way since their immigration in the 1950s and 1960s, with most of them belonging to the middle classes in terms of education and income. True, they still are overrepresented at the low income levels compared to the corresponding generational groups among veteran Ashkenazi Israelis.

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Even by this criterion, however, it is worth recalling that there are groups in Israeli society with a larger representation at the low income levels, particularly the Arabs, the Haredim, and immigrants from the former Soviet Union, not to mention the foreign workers.

On the positive side, we saw that Israeli culture has become more pluralistic by the incorporation of Mizrahi and Mediterranean elements as an inseparable part of it, especially in popular culture but also at the level of "high culture," as, for example, in literary creativity. Likewise, we saw that the Mizrahim, particularly of the second generation, do not significantly differ from the Ashkenazim in their cultural preferences regarding East and West. However, the most striking manifestation of the melting pot exists at the political level. Unlike the socioeconomic domain, the integration and salient presence of Mizrahim in the political establishment, at its different levels, indicates that the principle of equality in the structure of opportunities has been largely realized in this domain

With regard to Israeli politics, it is worth noting that the Mizrahi public tends to be more nationalistic (and therefore closer to a right-wing worldview) compared to the Ashkenazi public, which has both a right-wing nationalist camp and a left-wing camp. The latter has a more cosmopolitan character, though it too, in its large majority, desires to preserve the Jewish identity of the state.[70] Overall, however, the centrality of the Mizrahi Israeli-Jewish identity, flavored by various elements of traditional beliefs and life-styles, plays an important role in the process of forming the collective identity of Israeli society

Notwithstanding these trends, it should be borne in mind that the Mizrahi community has experienced over time physical, e.g., living conditions, economic, social, and cultural difficulties of adjustment, especially in the first years after the immigration waves. No less important is the heavy psychological price that was paid in terms of harm to the self-image and self-respect, and group image and group self-respect, the scars of which are still evident today, as manifested by the appeal of Shas.

All in all, it is clear that the developments that have characterized Israeli society since the early days of statehood were not negotiated solely according to the planned route of the founding fathers, though some changes have also accorded with the model they desired.

For one, compared to the reality of the 1950s, Israeli society has become less statist in terms of the concentration of power in the political elite and more liberal and democratic, an important aspect of this being the broadening spheres of influence of the civil society. Particularly important in the context of this article is that Israeli society has become, on the one

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hand, more culturally diversified and open to influences from inside and outside, but, on the other, more "Jewish-national"—some would say overly nationalistic—a process in which Mizrahi Jewry played, as noted, a not inconsiderable role. Furthermore, the power of the collective identity that crystallized in the Yishuv period, and of the elites that shaped it, has been considerably undermined by the success of the new forces, which took shape over time and played a central role in the process of reconstituting Israeli society. Yet it is precisely the growth of forces of this kind, some of which emerged among groups that not too long ago were on the periphery of Israeli society, such as Mizrahi or religious Jewry, and lately also immigrants from the former Soviet Union, that can indicate the impressive success of the principles of assimilation and the melting pot, even when the ideas these forces represent do not accord with aims of the veteran elite.

We have already learned from the founding fathers of sociology, such as Spencer and Weber, about the unexpected consequences of trends and ideas in the history of human societies. Similarly, the founding fathers of Israeli society may not have been aware of the possibility of a dialectical process, in which precisely the successes in realizing the ideas of the melting pot and assimilation would yield, over the years, a social reality that was different and more complex than the society that was supposed to be built according to their "Zionist vision." That is, it was precisely the successes of the leaders in realizing the overarching goals of Zionism, including immigration and absorption, during the early years of political independence, that laid the foundation from which new forces—social, political, and cultural—emerged that challenged the collective identity that had formed in the Yishuv period and poured new contents into the mold. Here it is important to remember that already in the early years of statehood, it became increasingly clear that the attempt to continue implementing the "good society" model that developed in the Yishuv period, especially in terms of the commitment to the collective goals on a basis of voluntary activity, asceticism, and social egalitarianism, was encountering many difficulties—not only because of the cultural and ideological background of the new immigrants ("human dust") and the lack of the "Zionist vision" among many of them, but perhaps mainly because of the veteran Israelis themselves, who did not respond to the challenge. In addition, the more the processes of bureaucratization, differentiation, and modernization of Israeli society grew, so did the distance between the semi-utopian model of the Yishuv period and the social reality that emerged in the statehood period.[71]

Nevertheless, along with the intensification of the intergroup struggles and tensions, the common elements of the different groups composing the

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Israeli Jewish mosaic[72] have grown stronger as well, the main manifestation of this being the crystallization of the Israeli Jewish national identity, among whose standard-bearers are, and not by accident, the Mizrahim. At least in this major sense, the idea of the melting pot seems to be a story of success.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this article was presented in a conference on "Generations, Spaces, Identities: Perspectives on the Building of Israeli Society," Seminars in Honor of Prof. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadat, 23–24 December 2002, Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem. I thank Zeev Shavit for his helpful comments.

2. Moshe Lissak, *The Large-Scale Immigration of the 1950s: The Failure of the Melting Pot* (Jerusalem, 1999) [Hebrew]. The title of the book is somewhat misleading since the author fully acknowledges both failures and achievements in the complex process underlying the absorption of the large waves of immigrants of the 1950s, as summarized in the epilogue of his study (134–136).

3. Assessing the degree of success or failure of the melting pot idea still leaves open the question of whether the idea in itself was appropriate, taking into consideration the historical circumstances in which it emerged. Discussing this question would exceed the scope of the present article.

4. It should be emphasized that the melting pot idea from the start referred only to the Jewish population, while ignoring the question of the Arab citizens' place in Israeli society.

5. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto-Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York* (Boston, 1963).

6. For a detailed discussion of the concept of "*aliyah*" [Hebrew] and its distinction from "immigration," see: Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit, "Collective Identity in the Yishuv Period," in Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit (eds), *Trends in Israeli Society*, vol. 1 (Tel-Aviv, 2001) 164–168 [Hebrew].

7. On the considerations and debates around the question of priorities, see e.g., Devorah Hacohen, *Immigrants in the Storm* (Jerusalem, 1994) [Hebrew]; Devorah Hacohen, "Policy of Immigrant Settlement in the First Decade of the State, the Attempts to Limit Immigration and Their Fate," in Devorah Cohen (ed), *Ingathering of the Exiles: The Immigration to the Land of Israel—Myth and Reality* (Jerusalem, 1998) 285–316 [Hebrew]; Arnon Ishai, "Immigration and Absorption Policy in 1954–1956: Implementation and Results," in Devorah Cohen (ed), *Ingathering of the Exiles: The Immigration to the Land of Israel—Myth and Reality* (Jerusalem, 1998) 17–41 [Hebrew]; Zvi Tsameret, *Days of the Melting Pot*, Sde-Boker, 1993 [Hebrew]; Zvi Tsameret, "Ben-Gurion and Lavon: Two Positions

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toward the Appropriate Absorption of Immigrants in the Large Immigration Waves," in Dalia Ofer (ed), *Between Immigrants and Veterans: Israel during the Large Immigration Waves 1948–1953* (Jerusalem, 1996) [Hebrew].

8. Shmuel Eisenstadt, *The Absorption of Immigrants* (London, 1954).

9. Rivka Bar-Yosef, "De-socialization and Re-socialization: The Adjustment Process of Immigrants" was first presented at an international conference in Geneva in 1966 and published in Ernest Krausz (ed), *Studies of Israeli Society: Migration, Ethnicity and Community*, vol. 1 (New Brunswick, N.J., 1980) 19–37.

10. On the nature of the "new Jewish nationality" and the "new Jew," see Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit, "Collective Identity in the Yishuv Period," 127–145.

11. Lissak, *The Large-Scale Immigration of the 1950s*, 63.

12. The use of language such as "human dust" was, already in the 1930s and 1940s, quite common among different leaders of the Zionist movement, including Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion and originally related to those parts of European Jewry who were not committed, in the eyes of these leaders, to the Zionist movement, and did not possess the values, skills, and motivation that were required to take part in building the nation and the land. An historical examination of the underlying circumstances of this concept, and the ways of using it, will be discussed in an article by Zvi Tsameret.

13. Lissak, *The Large-Scale Immigration of the 1950s*, 63.

14. For a detailed and systematic discussion of these issues with different approaches to analysis, see Devorah Cohen, "Immigration and Absorption," in Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit (eds), *Trends in Israeli Society*, 365–486; and Moshe Lissak, *The Large-Scale Immigration of the 1950s*.

15. See, for example: Robert Alter, *Hebrew and Modernity* (Bloomington, IN, 1994); Benjamin Harsahv, *Language in time of Revolution* (Stanford, 1999); Tamar Katriel, *Talking Straight: Dugri Speech in Israeli Sabara Culture* (Cambridge, 1986); Ze'ev Shavit (ed), *The Construction of Hebrew Culture in Eretz Ysrael*, (Jerusalem, 2002).

16. On the struggles to defend the English language and its promotion among immigrant groups under the slogan "English only," see e.g., J. Citrin, B. Reinlods, E. Walters, and D.P. Green, "The 'Official English' Movement and the Symbolic Politics of Language in the United States," *Western Political Quarterly* 43 (3) (1990) 553–560; J. Crawford, *Hold Your Tongue: Bilingualism and the Politics of "English Only"* (Reading, MA, 1992); J. Crawford (ed), *Language Loyalties: A Source Book on the Official English Controversy* (Chicago, 1998); D.A. Kibbee (ed), *Language Legislation and Linguistic Rights* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1998); C. Schmid, "New Immigrant Communities in the United States and the Ideology of Exclusion," *Research in Community Sociology* 6 (1996) 39–67; C. Veltman, *Language Shift in the United States* (Berlin, 1983).

17. This article does not deal with the immigration from the former Soviet Union.

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18. Motti Regev, "Introduction to Israeli Culture," in Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit (eds), *Trends in Israeli Society* (Tel Aviv, 2003) 823–898 [Hebrew].

19. Galit Sa'ada-Ophir, "Between 'Israeliness' and 'Mizrahiness': Musical Hybrids from the Town of Sderot," *Israeli Sociology* 3 (2) (2001) 253–276 [Hebrew].

20. For a discussion of the development of the Mediterranean school, from which the above quotation was taken (p. 64), see Tomer Lev, *The Israeli Rubin Academy of Music—the First Fifty Years: 1945–1995—Chapters in the History of Higher Musical Education in Israel* (Tel-Aviv, 1998) [Hebrew]. On the difficulties involved in attempting to integrate Western and Eastern music from the composer's standpoint, see Alexander Boskowitz, "Problems of Original Music in Israel," *Orlogin* 9 (1953) [Hebrew].

21. Tali Katz-Grau and Yossi Shavit, "Lifestyle and Social Classes in Israel," *Israeli Sociology* 1 (1) (1998) 91–114 [Hebrew].

22. *Ibid.*, 108, 109.

23. Hadassah Hass, "Leisure Culture in Israel," *Panim,* 10 (1999) 107–139; see particularly Table 3, p. 111.

24. The Andalusian Orchestra is devoted to the encouragement and performance of Mediterranean music.

25. On the historical background and contemporary significance of this cult see, for example, Zvi Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous in the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1997).

26. See, e.g., the collection edited by Yoav Peled, *Shas: The Challenge of Israeliness* (Tel-Aviv, 2001) [Hebrew].

27. For discussion of the different meanings of "to win back the former glory," see Zvi Zohar, "'To Win Back the Former Glory': The Vision of Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef," in Yoav Peled (ed), *The Challenge of Israeliness*, 159–209; Ricky Tesler, "The Price of Revolution," 210–278.

28. The socioeconomic composition of Shas voters, compared to Mizrahim who voted for other Jewish parties in the 1996 and 1999 Knesset elections, indicates the connection between Shas and the low-income strata of Mizrahim. On a cross-section by income, about 50% of Shas voters had low incomes, 29% medium, and 21% had high incomes. The corresponding figures for voters for the other parties were: 28%, 32%, and 40%. Similarly, 23% of Shas voters had low education (up to partial high school), 64% high school (with or without matriculating) and 13% had an academic education, partial or full. The corresponding figures for voters for the other parties were: 15%, 55%, and 30%. See Tamar Hermann and Ephraim Yaar, "The Dovishness of Shas: Image and Reality," in Yoav Peled (ed), *Shas: The Challenge of Israeliness* (Tapuach, 2001) 343–389 [Hebrew].

29. Lecture delivered at a conference in honor of Moshe Lissak, Jerusalem, Van Leer Institute, 1996.

30. However, despite the egalitarian ethos, discrimination against women in the Israeli labor market in terms of job opportunities and income level has been widespread.

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31. On the issue of number of children there is, in my view, a contradiction between the aspiration for modernization of the family and the encouragement already given in Ben-Gurion's time for large Jewish families for national demographic reasons. On this issue, see Ephraim Yaar, "On Large Families," *Basha'ar* 6 (1999) 24–26 [Hebrew].

32. The data are taken from the *Yearbook* of the Central Bureau of Statistics (Jerusalem, 1999) [Hebrew].

33. This figure is taken from Table 10 of the *Statistical Yearbook* (Jerusalem, 2001) [Hebrew].

34. Yochanan Peres and Ruth Katz, "Stability and Centrality in Modern Israel," *Social Forces*, 59 (3) (1981) 687–704.

35. It appears that in the last two decades there has been a trend in delaying the age at marriage among Jewish young people, but it has affected both ethnic groups.

36. The data are taken from a book by Vered Kraus, *Secondary Breadwinners: Israeli Women in the Labor Force* (Westport, CT, 2002).

37. Reuven Gronau, "The Effect of Children on the Housewife's Value of Time," *Journal of Political Economy*, 81 (2) (1973) 168–199.

38. Rivka Bar-Yosef, "Household Management: An Organizational Model Applied to Comparative Family Research," *Human Relations*, 26 (5) (1973) 581–598.

39. Although Israeli women's participation rates are still lower compared to women in Western countries, the participation rates of Israeli men are even lower compared to their counterparts in the West.

40. Haya Steir and Yossi Shavit, "Age at Marriage, Sex-Ratios and Ethnic Heterogamy," *European Journal of Sociology*, 10 (1) (1994) 79–87.

41. Haya Steir and Yossi Shavit, "Two Decades of Educational Intermarriage in Israel," in H.P. Blossfeld and Andreas Timm (eds), *Who Marries Whom? Educational System and Marriage Markets in Modern Societies* (Oxford, forthcoming).

42. Barbara Okun, "Ethnicity and Educational Attainment in Marriage Patterns: Changes among the Jewish Population of Israel, 1957–1995," *Population Studies* (forthcoming).

43. Yinon Cohen, "Socioeconomic Gaps between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, 1975–1995," *Israeli Sociology*, 1 (1) (1998) 115–134 [Hebrew].

44. Yinon Cohen and Yitchak Haberfeld, "Rising Wage Inequality and the Wage-Gap between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim," Discussion Paper No. 9–2002, Pinhas Sapir Center for Development, Tel-Aviv University, August 2002.

45. Yinon Cohen and Yitchak Haberfeld, "The Effect of Economic Inequality on Income Gaps between Demographic Groups in the Labor Market," paper presented at a conference at the Pinhas Sapir Center for Development, Tel-Aviv University, 25 February 2003 [Hebrew]; Yinon Cohen and Yitchak Haberfeld, "Gender, Ethnic, and National Earnings Gaps in Israel: The Role of Rising Inequality," Discussion Paper No. 5–2003, Pinhas Sapir Center for Development, Tel-Aviv University, August 2003.

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46. Cohen and Haberfeld, "Gender, Ethnic, and National Earnings Gaps in Israel," 1.

47. Yariv Tsafati, "The Ethnic Genie in Israel: Inside the Bottle—on a Low Flame," *Megamot,* 40 (1) (1999) 5–30 [Hebrew].

48. Bar-Yosef, "De-socialization and Re-socialization," 19–37.

49. Steir and Shavit, "Two Decades of Educational Intermarriage in Israel."

50. Dov Friedlander, Barbara S. Okun, Zvi Eisenbach, and Lilach Lion Elmakias, "Immigration, Social Change and Assimilation: Educational Attainment among Birth Cohorts of Jewish Ethnic Groups in Israel, 1925–29 to 1965–69," *Population Studies*, 56 (2002) 135–150.

51. Yitchak Haberfeld, Yinon Cohen, and Tali Kristal, "Ethnic Gaps in Higher Education among Israeli-Born Jews," (unpublished manuscript).

52. Cohen and Haberfeld, "The Effect of Economic Inequality on Income Gaps between Demographic Groups in the Labor Market;" Cohen and Haberfeld, "Gender, Ethnic, and National Earnings Gaps in Israel."

53. It is important to note that, unlike the study by Cohen, Haberfeld, and Kristal, in academic education the reference is to the rate of students and not to the rate of graduates. This distinction may be one of the causes for the differences in results between the two studies. See Friedlander et al., "Immigration, social Change and Assimilation," 143 (Table 2).

54. Chana Ayalon and Avraham Yogev, *A Window on the Academic Free Period: Social Implications of the Spread of Higher Education in Israel*, Ministry of Education, Bureau of the Chief Scientist, 2002, Table 4.1 [Hebrew].

55. Momi Dohan, Natalia Mironichev, Eyal Dvir, and Shmuel Shai, "Have the Gaps in Education Narrowed?" *Economic Quarterly*, 49 (1) (2002) 159–188 [Hebrew].

56. Thus, for example, in the study by Momi Dohan and colleagues, which was conducted with a sample aged 18–21 years in 1995, the Haredi population was not included at all, both because it "does not see the matriculation certificate as a goal in the course of education" (*Ibid.*, 162) and because of partial cooperation by the Haredi sector. Without considering these reasons themselves, it is worth recalling that the percentage of the Haredi population in that age bracket is not negligible, so that excluding them from the study seriously detracts from its comparative basis.

57. See Haberfeld and colleagues, "Ethnic Gaps in Higher Education among Israeli-Born Jews."

58. On the differences in the significance of religion for Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jewry, see e.g., Shlomo Dahan: "Why Did a Haredi-Mizrahi Party Grow Here at This Time? The Religiosity of Mizrahi Jews in the Diaspora Past and in the Israeli Present," an article prepared for a collection edited by Avi Ravitsky, the Rabin Center, in preparation [Hebrew]; Binyamin Brown, "The Wise Men of the East and Religious Zealotry: Toward a Reexamination," *Akademot*, 10 (2001) 289–324 [Hebrew]; Zvi Zohar, *"Awaken the Skies of the East:" Halacha and Thought among*

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Jewish Scholars in the Middle East (Tel-Aviv, 2001) [Hebrew]; Moshe Shoked and Shlomo Dashan, *The Generation of Transformation: Continuity and Change in the Worlds of North African Jewry* (Jerusalem, 1998) [Hebrew].

59. See Roni Baum-Bnai, "A Haredi-Zionist Movement?" in Yoav Peled (ed), *Shas: The Challenge of Israeliness*, 106–107 [Hebrew].

60. See e.g., Moshe Lissak, The Large-Scale Immigration of the 1950s, 68–72; Zvi Tsameret, "Ben-Gurion and Lavon: Two Positions toward the Appropriate Absorption of Immigrants in the Large Immigration Waves," in Dalia Ofer (ed), *Between Immigrants and Veterans: Israel during the Large Immigration Waves 1948–1953* (Jerusalem, 1996) 73–97 [Hebrew].

61. On the significance and empirical validity of the scale, see Yochanan Peres and Ephraim Yaar, *Between Agreement and Controversry: Democracy and Peace in Israeli Consciousness*, Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem, 1998, Part 5, 147–174 [Hebrew].

62. The sample is taken from Peace Index surveys that have been conducted each month since June 1994 by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel-Aviv University, under the responsibility of Ephraim Yaar and Tamar Hermann. Each survey is carried out with a representative sample of the adult Israeli population (n=570). For the present analysis, only the Jewish interviewees were included.

63. Simon Herman, *Israelis and Jews: The Continuity of Identity* (New York, 1970).

64. Ephraim Yaar and Anat Oren, *Jewish Identity, Religious Beliefs and Upholding Tradition* (Tel-Aviv, 2003).

65. On this issue see, for example, Tamar Hermann and Ephraim Yaar, "Shas: The Haredi-Dovish Image in a Changing Reality," *Israel Studies*, 5 (2) (2000) 32–77.

66. Thus, for example, it is no coincidence that Christian Arabs played a central role in the emergence of the Arab national movement, such as George Antonius in Lebanon and Michel Afleq in Syria. Further examples can be found in modern Jewish history as well as in the history of other minority groups in Europe.

67. From statements by Prof. Shimon Blass during a discussion on Avirama Golan's program, *On a First Reading*, Israeli television Channel 2, 13 December 2003.

68. See e.g., Yehuda Shenhav, *The Israeli Arabs* (Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2003) [Hebrew].

69. Although the torch of Mizrahi identity is mainly carried by Shas, we should notice the activities of the "Mizrahi Rainbow" (Hakeshet Hamizrahit)—a small yet active group of intellectuals of mostly Mizrahi origin.

70. See Tamar Hermann and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar, "Divided yet United: Israeli-Jewish Attitudes towards the Oslo Process," *Journal of Peace Research*, 39 (5) (2002) 597–613.

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71. This discussion is largely based on Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit, "Processes and Trends in the Collective Identity," in Yaar and Shavir (eds), *Trends in Israeli Society* (Tel-Aviv, 2003) 1197–1266.

72. For different reasons, here not being the place for a discussion of them, the Arab citizens of Israel are perceived by the majority Jewish group as a foreign, and often hostile, minority group, which is outside the boundaries of the Jewish collective, and has no legitimate basis for involvement and influence over its fate and actions.

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