

Editors' Note

We are pleased to present our readers with the eighth volume of the online journal *Hagira*. This volume contains seven articles that discuss a variety of topics, all centering on the theme of different aspects of identity: social, cultural, professional, ethnic and national. The discussion reflects the ways in which individuals or groups can today create their own systems of meaning and choose their identity. It also sheds light on the ongoing process of reestablishing identities as a result of individuals and groups interacting with the "other"/"others" according to their own point of view.

The first two articles examine the emergence of dual identities among immigrant groups in Israel. These identities are rooted in their unique ethnic identity on the one hand and in the collective Israeli identity on the other. The volume opens with the article by **Rachel Sharaby** titled "Renewed Interpretation of the Ethnic Tradition of Kurdish Immigrants in Israel." The article traces the Seharane celebrations, the traditional spring celebrations of the Jews of Kurdistan, as they move towards the cultural center and describes the ongoing syncretic process in the renewal of this ethnic tradition. Sharaby concludes that this dynamic process underscores the human freedom inherent in shaping tradition, that is, in choosing the foundations upon which identity is built, and she sees the dual interpretation of the members of this traditional community as an expression of resistance.

The article by **Daniella Arieli, Yael Skorkowich and Miriam Hirschfeld** titled "Ethnic Encounters in the Academic Space: The Ethiopian Sigd Festival as a Negotiation of the Rules of the Game" also discusses a ceremonial tradition as it attempts to integrate into the social milieu and even to change the rules of the game. The article examines a celebration of the Ethiopian Sigd festival that was organized by students at an academic college in Israel. The writers contend that the organizers—Israeli-Ethiopian students—used the event as a means of reifying the ethnic symbols of their culture on campus and of transitioning from a position of exclusion to one of leaders influencing the agenda on campus.

The article by **Wovit Worku-Mangisto** and **Gabriel Horenczyk** titled "Hidden Dropout from the Education System among Ethiopian Adolescents in Israel" focuses on social identity. The article examines aspects of hidden dropout among adolescent students

of Ethiopian origin. Hidden dropout describes a situation in which a student is often absent from the education system or is present but only passively. The research findings point to the school system's perspective of group and individual discrimination as well as to the importance of developing in-service programs for teachers and heterogeneous intervention programs for students on the topic of education for multiculturalism.

In the article titled "Building a Professional Identity in Israel: Experiences of New Immigrant Speech Therapists in Israel," **Orly Alshech** considers the ways in which immigrant speech therapists build their professional and social identity within the educational system of their new country. Using narrative research that focuses on the creation of meaning and identity, the author describes the multi-stage process experienced by the immigrants over the years on their way to realizing their dream of working as speech therapists in Israel. The pace of their integration is similar yet unique and dependent upon individual characteristics.

Shlomit Landman's article titled "From an onomastic point of view: Cultural consolidation in the Jewish sector in Israel " analyzes a corpus of first names given to Jewish children in the period 1948-2007 in order to examine trends of cultural change and national identification among parents. The research findings point to three major periods: naming in accordance with Diaspora customs (1948-1960); emergence of Israeli onomastics in the 1960s and 1970s; and western influences in the wake of globalization since the beginning of the 1980s.

The article by **Riva Ziv** titled "Role Division in Multicultural Relations" examines family dynamics and role division in mixed marriages in which one spouse was born in Israel and the other is an immigrant. The research findings indicate that in general multicultural families did not generate a new hybrid product that obliterated traditional distinctions in the division of roles between the members of the couple.

In the article titled "Exiles from South America in Israel (1973-1978)" **Efraim Davidi** discusses groups of political exiles who came to Israel in the 1970s during the rule of the military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. After surveying their social and political background, the author discusses the many contradictions deriving from the presence of these exiles, many of whom had no ties to Israel or to Zionism and some of whom were not even Jewish according to the religious orthodox definition.

The volume also includes a link to a position paper prepared by the Institute for Immigration and Social Integration at the Ruppin Academic Center together with the ERI Institute on the topic of "Placement of Asylum Seekers in Relevant Occupations: Economic Aspects." Recently the topic of refugees, asylum seekers and foreign workers has become a major focus of public and political discourse in Israel. Israel's lack of a consolidated and solid immigration perspective became quite evident recently when the Israeli government changed its policy on this topic three times within a 24-hour period by means of public declarations that were not always based on solid foundations of knowledge. The appendix to this volume serves as an example of reasonable and in-depth research material that can be useful to those charged with making decisions in this important and sensitive area.

The articles included in this volume underwent meticulous review by expert readers in order to maintain the high academic level of *Hagira*. We wish to thank the readers who responded to our requests and contributed to the scientific quality of this journal through their careful reading and precise comments. Our deepest gratitude goes to Doron Dgani for his diligent and dedicated work as editorial coordinator of the journal and coordinator of the migration and demographics community. We also wish to thank Elia Demeter, linguistic editor for Hebrew, and Donna Bossin, linguistic editor for English, for their excellent professional work. Above all we are grateful to Prof. Galia Sabar, President of Ruppin Academic Center, for her ongoing support of the journal.

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