Abstracts

"Today We Hand Over the Trust to the Entire Jewish People:" Renewed Perception of the Place of the Sigd Holiday in Israel

Abstract

This article examines the renewed perception of the place of the Sigd holiday in Israel, as expressed in the ethnic activism of social-political leaders, members of the 1.5 generation who immigrated from Ethiopia. The findings show that syncretism was created in the identity, organization of the Sigd celebrations and leadership patterns of young Ethiopian leaders, reflecting their goals. By emphasizing symbols of ethnic identity, the leadership of this excluded minority group struggled for the right to ethnic otherness and to become integrated in the Israeli space as such. They stressed the importance of ethnic celebrations as a factor for unification of the people and the symmetry of this unity. Emphasis of the pan-Jewish and pan-Israeli relevance of the Sigd created a different definition of place, which serves as an anchor for the identity and belonging of immigrants within Jewish and Israeli society.

Keywords: 1.5 generation, leadership, identity, syncretism, activism, holiday

Formation of Complex Ethnic Identity, Integration, and Intention to Leave among the 1.5 Generation

Yuliya Stavissky, Rina Shachar

Abstract

In the 1990s almost 1.5 million immigrants from the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the former USSR) came to Israel, some of whom were in their mid-teens. These immigrants are called the 1.5 generation immigrants. Studies have shown that they experienced various integration difficulties, due to the interruption of their identity formation process following their immigration and their non-participation in the decision to immigrate. The purpose of this study was to examine whether their identity formation strategy, expressed in the adoption of multiple identities, is related to their objective and subjective integration in the destination country, and whether such complex ethnic identity formation is related to the 1.5 generation's decision to remain in or emigrate from Israel. Furthermore, it examines whether such a relationship – between a complex ethnic identity and integration and the intention of leaving – also exists among the 1.5 generation immigrants who realized their intention to leave and returned to Russia. To investigate the research questions, analyses were conducted on the responses of 254 immigrants, 108 of whom decided to return to Russia and 146 of whom chose to stay in Israel. The main findings indicate a positive and strong correlation between both the objective and subjective parameters for integration in the country, whether in Russia or in Israel. These two variables were found to be predictors of the intent to leave or remain in the country. A moderated mediation model found that complex ethnic identity, defined as the adoption of several identities, among the population of immigrants who remained in Israel predicts objective integration as well as subjective integration, which in turn negatively predicts intentions to leave. Consequently, the adoption of a complex ethnic identity mediated by objective and subjective integration has a significant role in the immigrant's intent to stay in Israel. The complex ethnic identity of those who returned to Russia apparently did not contribute to integration and at times even harmed it.

Keywords: 1.5 generation, integration, returning back to the motherland, complex ethnic identity, objective and subjective parameters for integration

The Struggle of Immigrants from the CIS with the Process of Proving Jewishness

Tal Yaakoby, Simcha Gathon, Anat Rimon Or

Abstract

This article deals with inquiries conducted by Israel's Chief Rabbinate courts regarding the Jewishness of immigrants from the CIS. Most of the immigrants are secular who define their Jewish identity in terms of blood relations, domestic traditions, and antisemitic experiences in the former U.S.S.R. (Remennick, 2003). They are summoned to the Rabbinical Courts to prove their Jewishness in terms of Jewish Religious law. All of the rabbinical judges belong to the Ultra-Orthodox community and see themselves as true representatives of the Jewish tradition. The result of these inquiries is that the secular immigrants must make their claims in language defined by the Rabbinical Courts, but that does not correspond to the reality of their culture (Lyotard, 1988).

In this study, interviews were conducted with fourteen immigrants who underwent the inquiry by the Chief Rabbinate. The interviews included questions regarding their Jewish identity, immigration, and the ways they were affected by the inquiry. The findings show that the immigrants perceive their identity as based on ethnicity, rather than on religion. Their immigration was initiated for instrumental or personal reasons. Nevertheless, the choice to undergo the inquiry comes from the desire to belong to the Jewish community and from a sense of affinity with Israel. Neither their immigration, nor their decision to undergo the inquiry process were spurred by religious motivations. The procedure in the Chief Rabbinate's courts reveals a clash between two sorts of claims regarding the definition of Judaism. Some immigrants report a sense of anxiety prior to procedure and humiliation during the inquiry.

Keywords: identity, immigrants, CIS, Jewishness

From the Argentine Mesopotamia to Asia: *Correntinos* in Israel

Fanny Ran, Independent Investigator

Abstract

Very little research has focused on the small and remote Jewish communities in Latin America or on the past experiences of Jews who settled in the peripheral secondary cities in the Argentine Mesopotamia—a region that includes the provinces of Entre Rios, Corrientes and Misiones. Documentation on Jews living in Corrientes is scarce, and no research has examined their family histories, particularly during the period of the Shoah. The current study is based on the oral testimonies, recorded in Israel, of immigrants who define themselves as *Correntinos*. These testimonies refer to their personal experiences during the Shoah, to antisemitism and to the demographic aspects of their lives in the city of Corrientes. This paper aims to discover whether this group of immigrants has special characteristics and whether they are over-represented among all Argentine immigrants in Israel. The research focused on the relationship between geopolitical factors and Peron's policies, as well as on Argentinian nationalism, antisemitism, and the impact of these factors on the individual, familial and community levels. The data revealed the representative size of this community and through memory and archives made it possible to reconstruct genealogical and communal histories, with a particular focus on the immigrants' cultural background, demographic characteristics, and level of integration in Israel.

Keywords: secondary cities, Argentine Mesopotamia, Shoah, education, migration, Corrientes.

Eritrea: A Land that Devours its Exiles

Guli Dolev-Hashiloni

Abstract

Following Eritrea's ongoing migration crisis, this article seeks to examine changes in the relationship between Eritrea and its diaspora. The article is based on an analysis of international reports, secondary literature reviews, and interviews with human rights activists and leaders of the Eritrean community in Israel. It argues that alongside long-term attempts to restrict the escapees' flow from Eritrea, the Eritrean government is actively involved in their emigration, from which it profits. The development of political frameworks that undermine Eritrean identity in several different ways has led to a structural change in the relations between Eritrea and its diaspora. Building on existing theories of African states, such as 'the gatekeeper state' and 'the mafia state,' this article attempts to conceptualize the unique case of a government which takes part in the human trafficking of its own citizens and bases its economy on its refugees. The Eritrean regime persecutes refugees, forcing them to pay the regime they fled so that it will not continue to oppress them and their families, thus making them eternal prisoners of Eritrea and increasing their suffering.

Keywords: immigration, Eritrea, diaspora, human trafficking, Africa, refugees, diasporization

Babylon in Lesbos – A Place of Hope: The International School of Peace for Refugee Children

Tsvia Walden, Eitan Shahar, Ephrat Huss, Smadar Ben Asher, Shifra Sagy

Abstract

The ongoing refugee crisis in Lesbos has led Jewish and Arabic Israeli youth movement educators to collaborate in order to create a school for the refugee children in the island. All teachers are refugees themselves, and all classes are held in the native languages of the different communities.

An interdisciplinary research team was commissioned to assess the project and its sustainability and to extract a replicable model for refugee education. The team applied a phenomenological arts-based methodology; a quantitative methodology to study the notion of hope; and field-driven theory qualitative methods using a large number of individual interviews as well as the analysis of inside documentation.

The main findings are:

The school staff has managed to maintain stability despite the constant turnover of the students, the teachers and the Israeli educators. It draws its resiliency from an informal values-driven praxis, insisting that the school be open to all and abolishing any form of violence.

Students, teachers, and parents alike consider learning English as the ultimate goal of the school.

War refugees and work immigrants differ in their linguistic choices.

In order to overcome the "tower of Babel" challenge, the school has shaped its own unique language, which draws upon three sub-languages used in everyday life by both students and teachers.

Keywords: refugees, children, youth movements, school, peace education, Jewish-Arabic

Place as Ideal or Place as Problem Solution: A Research Note on Internal Migration to Judea, Samaria and Gaza as International Migration

Sergio DellaPergola

Abstract

One significant fact in the demographic development of the State of Israel since 1968 was the rapid increase in the number of Israeli residents in the Judea, Samaria and Gaza areas - and after the 2005 Gaza disengagement in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria region. This increase was initially due to the movement of residents from other places in the country, and later was mainly due to the natural increase in the number of local residents. Every year, with the exception of 2005, a positive balance in the internal migration movements to and from the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) areas contributed to the growth of their Jewish population. According to the prevailing hypothesis, the reasons for the settlement of Jewish Israelis and their families in those areas were and are mainly ideological. The assumption is that geographical mobility and settlement is first and foremost an expression of an aspiration of that part of the Israeli population to expand the Jewish presence in areas that came under Israeli control during the June 1967 war, and even to extend the sovereignty of the State of Israel to the entire territory of western Palestine, from the sea to the Jordan River.

These hypotheses were tested in this research note for the period 1978-2018. In actual practice, socio-economic variables that operate as a routine in every society – including Israeli society – play a significant role in explaining the nature of Israeli immigration to these areas. Strong correlation was found between unemployment rates in Israel and immigration rates to the WBG, and between these and emigration rates from Israel to countries abroad. In this respect, immigration to the WBG is much more similar to other migration movements than might have been initially assumed. The intriguing finding is that in the logic of the intra-Israeli migration system, WBG may appear as a kind of close and accessible substitute for emigration to other countries. Certain elements of protest, on the one hand, and of adventure and uncertainty, on the other, are common to both types of immigration. In the case of WBG, the element of uncertainty is mainly related to security and personal safety risks in an area where there is an ongoing conflict. In the case of international migration, physical distance plays a more crucial role.

Keywords: Israel, Judea, Samaria and Gaza, internal migration, emigration, unemployment.