

The gap between ideal family size and actual fertility among immigrants to Israel from the Former Soviet Union

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Abstract

Despite the dramatic increase in women's labor force participation, especially that of mothers with young children, working women continue to assume the primary responsibility for their families. Thus, it is likely that women who intend to develop demanding careers postpone childbirth and intend to have fewer children. However, in the context of immigration, immigrant women, but also immigrant men who face economic uncertainty and hardships in the labor market of the destination country are expected to weigh the costs of having children against opportunities in the labor market, and, as a result, to limit their fertility level and aspirations. The study, based on the Israeli social survey Of 2009, compares immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU), who came to Israel after 1989 with Native-born Israeli Jews. As expected, among immigrants I found no gender differences in the impact of employment and education on the gap between ideal family size and actual fertility. Among Native-born Israeli Jews, educated and employed women present lower fertility gap than their male counterparts. Thus, my main conclusion emphasizes the importance of the role of economic aspirations of FSU immigrants, and their unique characteristics in understanding gender differences in fertility behavior and ideas.

Identity jump: Parkour Practice as an Identity Construction Scene for Young Immigrants in the Israeli Periphery

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Abstract

This research deals with the parkour practice and the ways in which this practice is experienced by young, mostly immigrants from the former CIS. The research focuses on the identity of the actors of this spatial practice, and from their identity, through its many dimensions, seeks to understand the practice's meaning not just as a universal rebellious-subversive language but also as an act of taking a position in a specific national cultural context – an Israeli peripheral and migration one.

As a theoretical Structure, this study draws on Henri Lefebvre's concept of space, which integrates the ideological, users and physical dimensions of space to produce the social space. These dimensions are dialectically interconnected; creating both opportunities and limitations arising from the structure framework. The sketched logic, points to three theoretical dimension which are highlighted in this work. First, theoretical thinking regarding space, the ways space has been shaped and the different ways to operate it. Second, the theoretical literature dealing with parkour practice and other similar practices will be discussed. Third, some theoretical literature concerning the actor's identity - which in the Israeli context focuses on young migrant from the former Soviet Union - will be presented.

Two scenes were selected to serve as empirical arenas – one in Netanya, the other in Dimona. The study was based upon observations and interviews conducted with ten people who operate parkour groups, which are mostly made of immigrants. The implications of parkour practice for immigrants are examined through the groups, focusing on two complementary questions. The first relates to the ways by which parkour practice participates in shaping identity and sense of place of group members in space. The examination corresponds with the ways by which parkour both constructs identity and feeds from it. The other question concerns how the visualization of the young immigrant body is being constituent through various uses of parkour practice. This view deals with questions such as whether and how the practice serves as a resource to symbolic power for these young people and to what extent the uses of parkour contribute to a positive recognition of their identities.

This paper marks the significance of parkour as a practice that is simultaneously transformative and reproductive, that is, as a practice that produces opportunities for actors and at the same time, contains restrictions on these opportunities. This argument is drawn from a development process experienced by the two groups of parkour actors, despite the fact that each one is facing a different development process and moving in somewhat oppositional direction.

The article is based upon the thesis required for a degree of Master of Arts at the department of sociology and anthropology, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, under the supervision of Dr. Sara Helman and Dr. Julia Lerner

Does contact online enhance direct line? - The potential of social media to promote immigrant integration

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Abstract

The current study analyzes whether cross-cultural communication in online social platforms between immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and different sectors of veteran Israelis reduces social distances and facilitates immigrants' integration. The research objectives were: to examine whether online social contacts between immigrants and veterans correlate with social distances and to explore the direction of this correlation – whether online contact between immigrants and veterans positively affects the social distances between them according to the intergroup contact theory, or alternatively, that immigrants who feel closer to veterans tend to enter into online contacts with them, in keeping with the social homophily approach. The research was conducted through an online survey of 296 FSU immigrants that immigrated to Israel after 1989 and use social media sites in Hebrew. A double directional Amos statistical analysis was applied. The findings support the intergroup contact theory about the positive impact of online contacts on social distances toward groups with very different cultures and relatively small offline contact: Arabs and ultra-orthodox Jews. However, the social homophily theory was also supported by our findings: the social distances from Ashkenazim, Mizrahim, secular and religious Jews positively impact the frequency of online contacts with them.

Strangers among Us? Post-Soviet Immigration Through The Lens of The New York Times

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Abstract

Around half a million Russian immigrants were naturalized in the United States between 1991 and 2004. How did the New York Times cover this phenomenon? Is there a cohesive narrative in the New York Times reports concerning the Russian immigration? Is the coverage of the country of origin different from that of the New York Times? Analysis of the New York Times articles reveals the immigration narrative from the point of view of the New York Times. The immigrants' country of origin is being denounced because it is failing the democracy test. Putin's authoritarian regime is being painted in a bad light. The tone of the articles with respect to the original societies depends on the extent to which they attributed the absence of democracy in Russia to the societies. Reporters who saw a certain society as a victim of the regime tended to describe it in a positive light, while on the other hand, reporters who saw the society as responsible for the Putin's rise to power, blamed it for the regime's injustices and crimes. Russian immigration itself was described in a positive light, as a catalyst for growth in American society. Commentaries aimed at preventing resentment on the part of the readers for the illegal activity, in which some of the immigrants were involved, were sometimes added. To avoid contradictions in the positive immigration narrative, the articles were edited simplistically. There were no opposing opinions, and when focusing on the contribution of the immigration, they refrained from covering the complexity of the issue, which also includes negative aspects.

Second-Generation Moroccan Immigrant Women: Self-Transformation for Mobility into the Low Middle Class in Israel

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Abstract

In her life history narrative, Ruth, a 45 year old second-generation Moroccan immigrant woman, described the process of self-transformation she initiated to enter the Israeli low middle class. She acquired an education in a post-secondary, non-academic institution and a semi-profession, a kindergarten teacher's assistant. Ruth reconstructed her feminine gender ethnic norms to include an egalitarian spousal relationship; reformulated her ethnic group's definition of motherhood to resemble her perception of middle-class motherhood, as typified by Ashkenazi middle-class women, and changed the presentation of her body to coincide with her image of Ashkenazi women's bodies. The changes that Ruth, and women like her, undertook reflect the totality of the process of self-transformation into their class position.

"And I will imagine - for the end has come; my soul has found its homeland" - The immigration narrative of the poet Elisheva: its implications and reception in literary circles

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Abstract

This essay deals with the poet Elisheva Bichovsky, (Elizaveta Zhirkova) (1888-1949) who was born in Riazan in Russia to an Irish-Catholic Mother and Pravoslav (Russian Orthodox) Father, was interested in Jews and their culture and immigrated to Eretz-Israel in 1925, but she never converted. Her immigration motives as were expressed in her poems were void, detachment, and lack of roots in the origin homeland and its cultural. Therefore, loneliness, estrangement and alienation were the fundamental issues in the poems that she had written in Russia. Even the move to Eretz-Israel did not cause her to overcome these feelings, hence in an early stage she accepts the fact that she feels no sense of belonging to either one of her homelands. For this reason, there is no territory on earth that can embrace her in its boundaries, and finding such a territory means the end of her life search travel. As a consequence, the narrator creates itself a new place in her imagination, a fiction autonomous homeland. Lacking a sense of belonging, already in the early stages of her poetry, the hero of her poems is the soul while the scarce landscape that is described in the poems, that is almost does not grasp real things, serves only as scenery to the soul's happenings. The poet's legitimate response as a woman, an immigrant, and a stranger, as was expressed in the image of the narrator, is her "other" and "distinct" other. Eventually, this representation, in a period that sanctified the physical linkage to the country, is one of the main reasons that brought about the disappearance of the poet from the literary circles.

Supportive Family: Helping immigrant families whose children have broken the law

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Abstract

Adolescent delinquent behavior, which results in arrest and opening of criminal proceedings, is a stressful situation for his family, which is required to mobilize its resources and cope to restore the family balance. This situation is particularly difficult for immigrant families, due to language barriers, lack of familiarity with the law and absence of social support. This article describes a unique program designed to help immigrant families from the former Soviet Union whose children have broken the law. The program is a joint initiative developed by the Ministry of Absorption, Juvenile Probation Service and the "Immigrant Parents Forum". The program offers comprehensive support to families, including parental guidance and emotional support, as well as promotes cooperation between families and parole officers, and other government institutions. The information presented in this paper is obtained from program internal documentation and interviews with key figures involved in it, namely, the chairwoman of the Immigrant Parents Forum, the program coordinators, the program supervisor, the director of the Juvenile Probation Service, the deputy head of the regional Juvenile Probation Service office in charge of implementing the program, and the regional social worker at the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption.