

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL

IRE215

SPRING 2019

Session 10



Maya Hadar

On The Agenda For Today



2

- **Israel as a Melting Pot**
 - **Minority groups in Israel**
 - **Contemporary Immigration**
- **Arab-Israelis**



Israel as a Melting Pot



Immigration from Ethiopia =>

- **1980's and 1990's:** Aliyah of the ancient Jewish community of Ethiopia
- **1984:** 7k Ethiopian Jews walked to Sudan (hundreds of miles), where a secret effort 'Operation Moses' brought them to Israel
- **1991:** Another 15k arrived in a dramatic airlift from Addis Ababa, 'Operation Solomon' (took 30h)
- Several "last" groups of Ethiopian Jews 'have made Aliyah' to Israel, including 450 Ethiopian Jews who arrived in Israel in **2013**



Israel as a Melting Pot



Immigration from Ethiopia =>

- **2015:** The Israeli government approved the entry of the “last group” of Ethiopian Jews- app. 9,1k Ethiopian Jews, most of whom were at the time living in **refugee camps** in Adis Ababa and Gondar
 - The first group on October 9, 2016
- Many **families split** by Israel's migration decisions (Jews vs Falashim)
- **Low human capital** and pre-modern society
- Problems of **integration & racism**



Israel as a Melting Pot



Immigration from Western Countries =>

- While mass immigrations to Israel have mostly been from **countries of distress**, immigration of individuals from the 'free world' has also continued throughout the years
 - Mostly persons motivated by idealism/Zionism/Religion
- This aliyah gained strength **after the Six Day War**, with the **awakening feelings of Jewish identity** among Diaspora Jewry



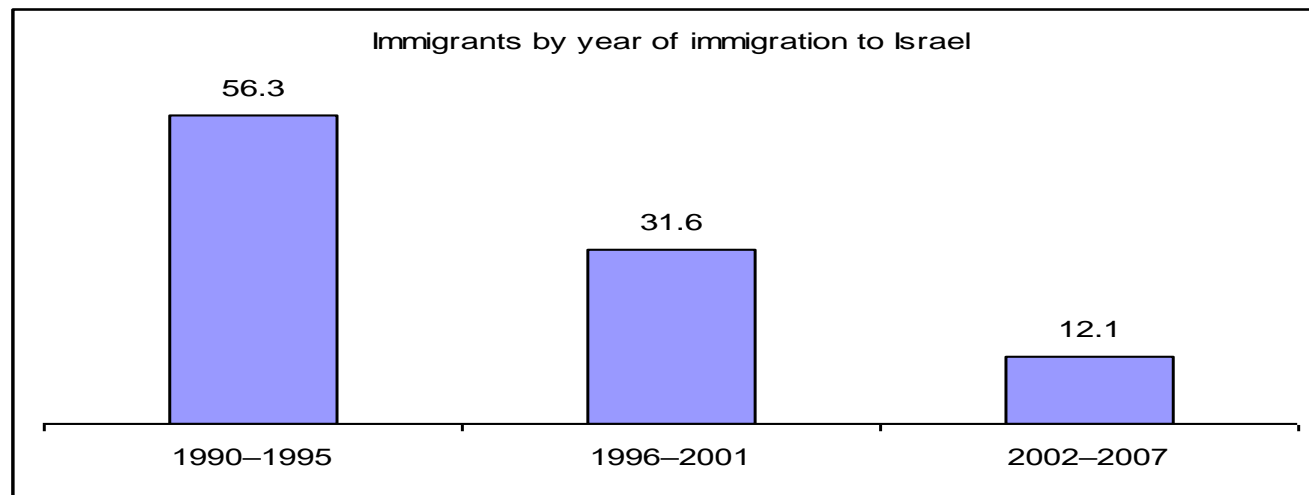
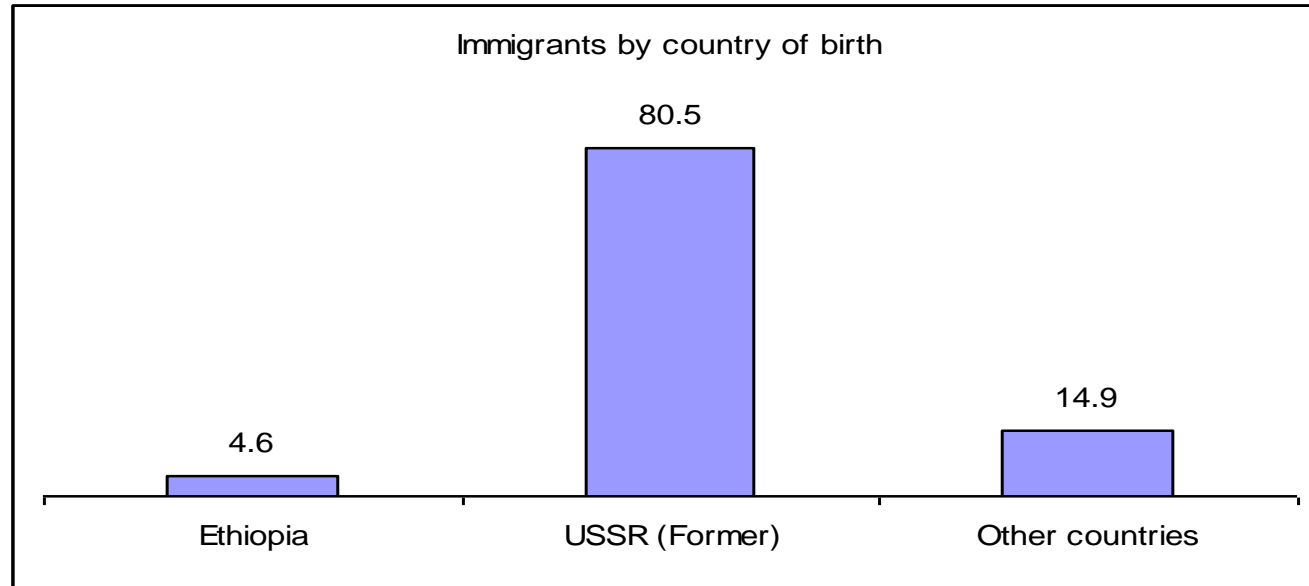
Survey- Immigrants in Israel



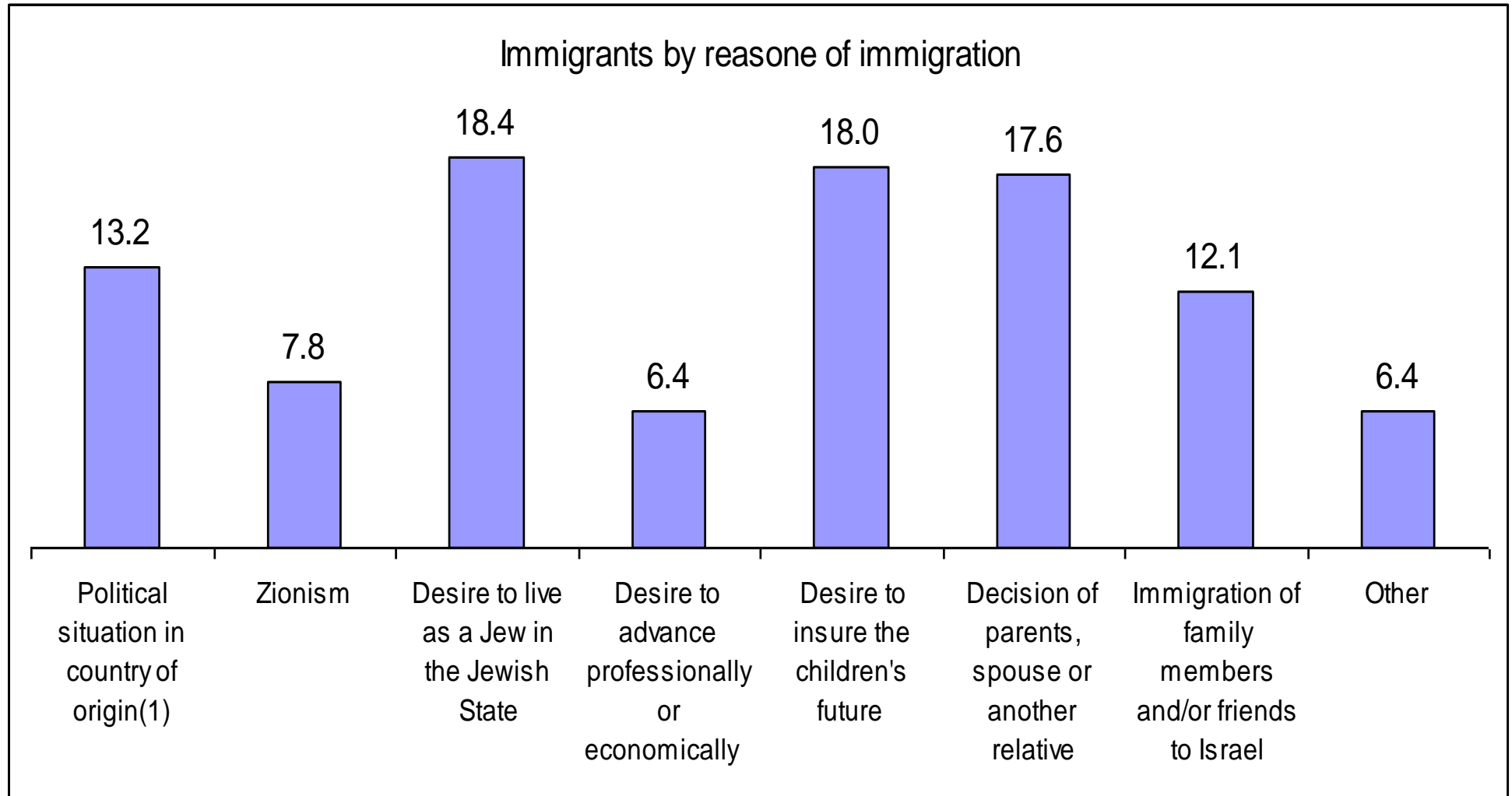
- **Survey population:** immigrants who arrived in Israel during 1990-2007 and were ages 26 – 74 in 2010
- **Methods of data collecting:** regular mail, Internet and CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing)



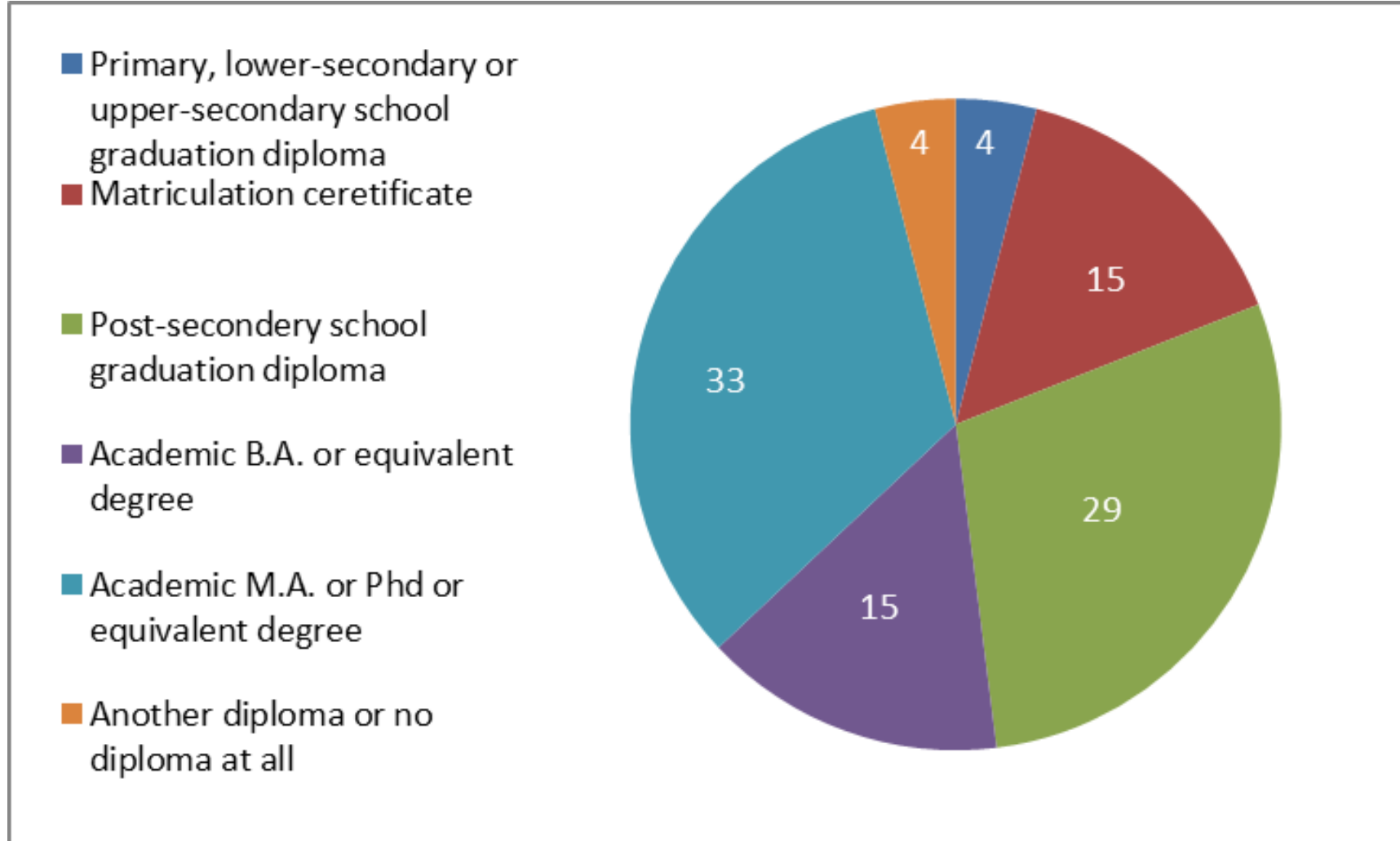
Demographic Characteristics



Reasons of Immigration



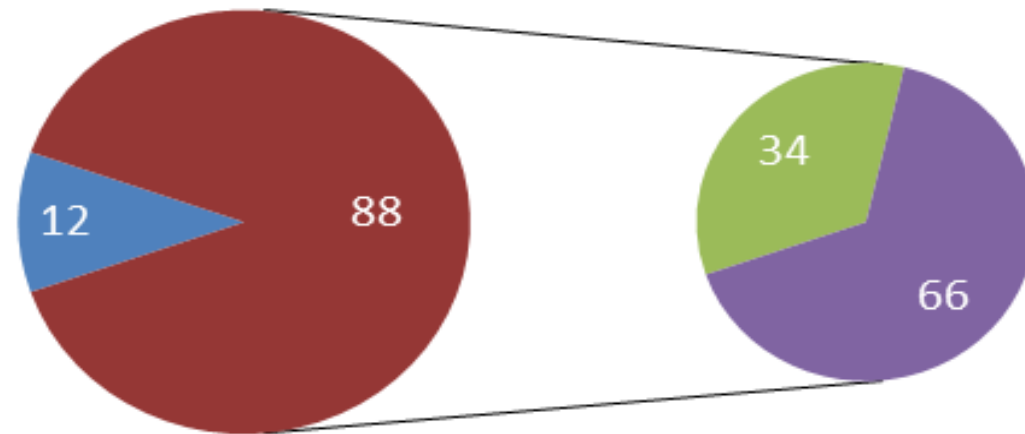
Education level at the time of immigration



Employment after Immigration



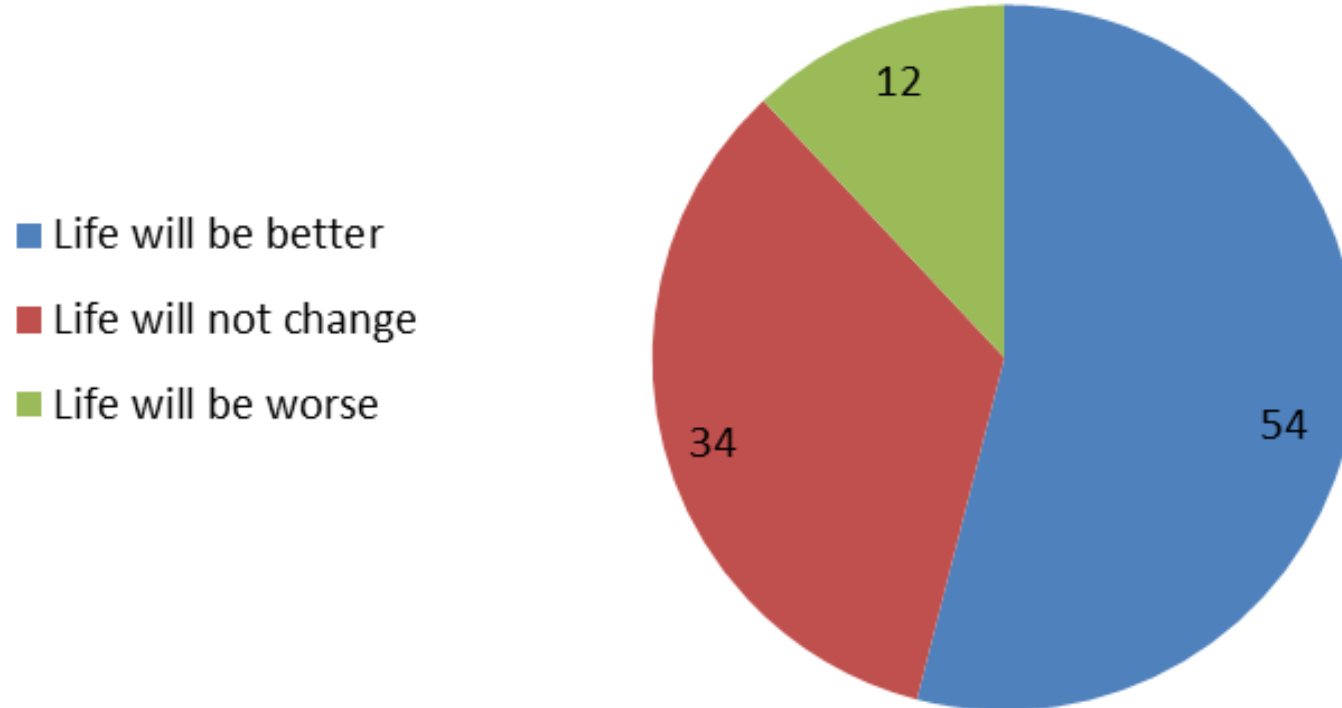
- Never worked in israel after immigration
- Working or worked in Israel after immigration
- Working or worked in the same profession they had abroad
- Working or worked in a different profession than the one they had abroad



Future Optimism



Immigrants by optimism concerning the future



Contemporary Immigration



Contemporary Immigration

- 2014: **Spike** in immigration to Israel
 - 32% increase (compared to 2013), about 26,500 immigrants
- Immigration from the **Ukraine** increased more than 190% due to the ongoing **civil war and social unrest**
- First time in the history of Israel **immigration from France surpassed immigration from every other country**
- More people immigrated to Israel from **free countries** rather than from countries in distress



Contemporary Immigration



Contemporary Immigration

- 2015: Rising tide of **anti-Semitism** + fear of **terror attacks** prompted the largest immigration of Jews to Israel from **Western Europe**
- 9,880 Western European Jews made aliyah, the largest annual number ever recorded
 - The vast **majority** of these immigrants (7,900) **came from France**, where there were **two large terror attacks** and several individual **violent attacks against Jews** during that year
 - 800 individuals made aliyah from **England**
- 31,013 Jewish individuals made Aliyah, a 12-year high



Contemporary Immigration



Contemporary Immigration

- **2016** => Only 27k immigrants made aliyah to Israel, a significant decrease compared with 2015
- **2017** => 37k new immigrants, arriving from **Russia** (27%), the **Ukraine** (25%), **France** (13%), and the **United States** (10%)



Aliyah of Rescue



- **Helping Jews Escape Hostile Areas**
- Organized **rescue missions** of Jews who, for safety's sake, must immigrate to Israel on short notice
- **Israel as a safe haven**
- Priority areas today for "Aliyah of Rescue" are countries where living a Jewish life is dangerous (countries that are openly hostile to Israel)

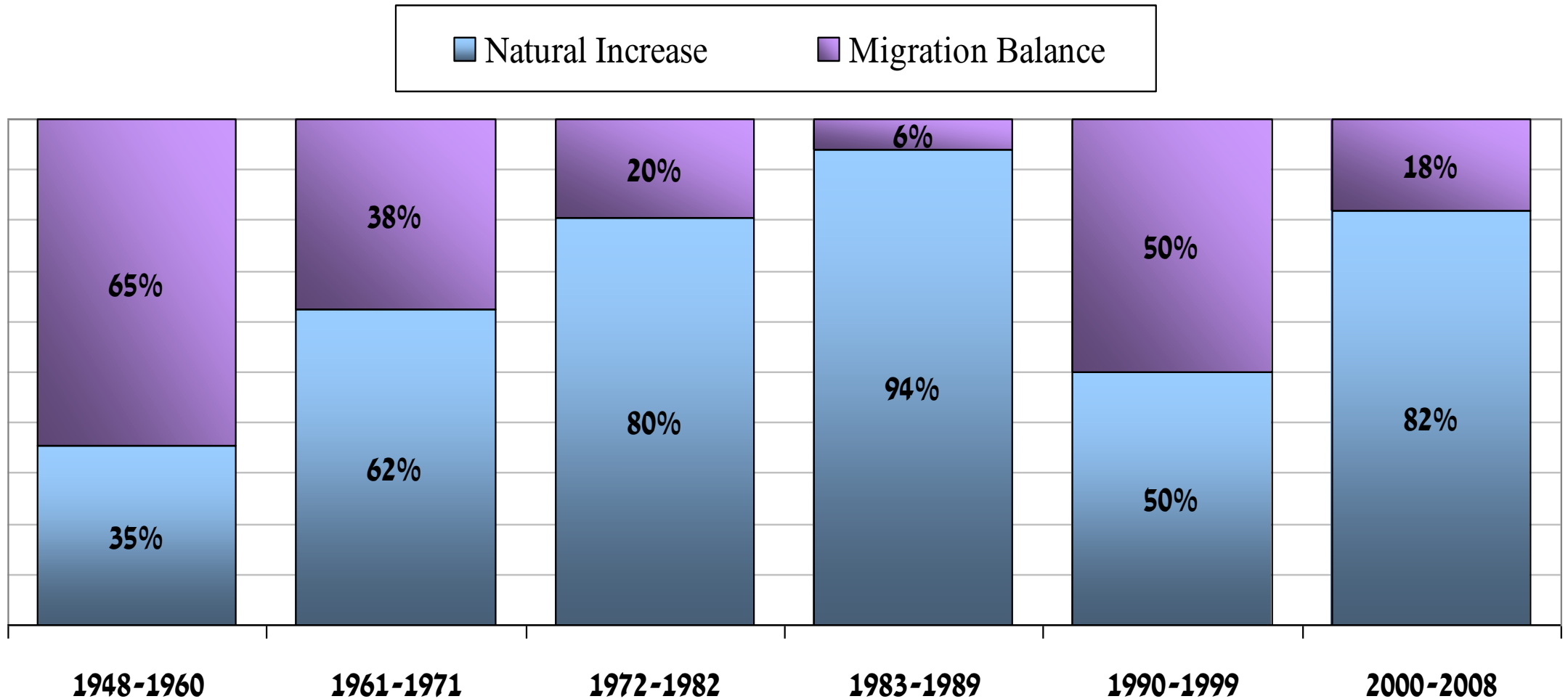


Operation Magic Carpet Airlifts Yemenite Jews to Israel, 1949



Migration Share of Total Population Growth

16



Israel as Ethnic Democracy



- According to the 'Law of Return', a 'Jew' for the purposes of Aliyah and citizenship is **broadly defined**, similarly to the Nazi anti-Jewish laws of the 1930s
- The gap between a civic and Halachic definitions of Jewishness is a source of discrimination of non-Jews
- Lack of separation between state and religion & religious monopoly in personal status laws
- The Law of Return does not include Arabs



Israel as Ethnic Democracy



- The problem of occupied territories and status of Palestinians beyond the Green Line (including East Jerusalem)- Minority rights
- Two State solution vs State of all Citizens



Social Cleaves



- Ahkenasim, Spharadim & Mizrahim
- Old-timers vs. recent immigrants
- Social class and wealth
- Center vs periphery
- Political right-center-left-radical left
- Skin color, accents, dress & behavior codes



Minority Communities in Israel



- Israel is a Democracy AND a Jewish State
- All citizens of Israel have the right to vote (eligible) and be represented in the Israeli Parliament (Knesset)
 - Pay taxes and are entitled to social welfare and health benefits
 - Hold Israeli passports and identity cards
- Over 2 million people (app. 26% of Israel's population) are not Jewish and considered an **ethnic minority**
 - Other minorities exist: cultural, religious etc.
 - For example, Arabs are the largest cultural minority- common language, different religious



Minority Communities in Israel



Religious minority groups in Israel =>

- Christians
- Muslims
- Druze
- Cherkassy
- Achmadis
- Bahais
- Hindus
- Non homogenic



Minority Communities in Israel



- Collectively defined as '**Arab citizens of Israel**', non-Jewish communities include a number of **different** (primarily Arabic-speaking) **groups**, each with **distinct characteristics**

Muslim Arabs =>

- Over 1.2 million people, most of whom are Sunni
- Reside mainly in small towns and villages, over half of them in the north of the country



Minority Communities in Israel



Bedouin Arabs =>

- Appr. 250k, Muslims
- Belong to some 30 tribes, a majority scattered over a wide area in the South
- Formerly **nomadic shepherds**, the Bedouin are currently in **transition** from a **tribal social framework** to a **permanently settled** society and are gradually entering Israel's labor force



Minority Communities in Israel



Christian Arabs =>

- Some 1 23k, live mainly in **urban areas** (e.g. Nazareth, Shfar'am, and Haifa)
- The majority are affiliated with the **Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox** and **Roman Catholic** churches

The Arameans =>

- Ancient nationality, small minority (200 families)
- Recognized as a Christian non Arab minority since 2014
- **Distinguishing** between Christian and Muslim citizens of Israel- **why?**



Minority Communities in Israel



The Druze =>

- Tradition dates back to the 11th century and incorporates elements of Islam, Hinduism and even classical Greek philosophy
- Some 122k Arabic-speakers living in 22 villages in the northern regions of the Galilee, Carmel and the Golan Heights
- Constitute a **separate** cultural, social, and religious **community**
- Israeli Druze rarely marry across religious lines



Minority Communities in Israel



The Druze =>

- The Druze tradition has been closed off to outsiders and proselytism has been prohibited. Since that ban, the Druze population has continued to exist solely based on the continuation of its previous generations
- While the Druze religion is **not accessible to non practitioners**, one known aspect of it is **taqiyya**- complete loyalty and adherents to the government of the country in which they reside
- In Israel, the Druze are active in public life and subject to the military draft (in contrast with Israeli Arabs, who are exempt from military service)



Minority Communities in Israel



Cherkassy/Circassians =>

- Originate in the Caucasus
- Invaded by the Russians in the 19th century
- The Cherkassy community felt threatened
- The Ottoman Empire (ruled Palestine) considered the Cherkazi to be good allies (good fighters, could protect their interests in Palestine)
 - Invited them to come over + gave them land in the Galilee

Geopolitical map of the Caucasus Region (2008)



The Caucasus is an area situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, occupied by Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan & Armenia

Minorities in Israel



Cherkassy/Circassians =>

- (Sunni) Muslims but not Arabs
 - Share neither the Arab origin nor the cultural background of the larger Islamic community
- Around 4,000 Cherkassy living in 2 main villages in the Galilee
- While maintaining a distinct ethnic identity, they participate in Israel's economic and national affairs without assimilating either into Jewish society or into the Muslim community
 - Mandatory army service (for men)
 - Education systems are in Hebrew, Cherkassic and Arabic



Minorities in Israel



Religious groups in Israel => Achmadim

- 'New' religion (19th Century), originated in India
- A combination of several religions, mostly Islam, Hindu, and Christianity
- Do not accept the Jihad (Holy War) aspect of Islam
- Urban, live in Haifa, around 2k people



Arab Israelis



Arab Community Life =>

- Israel's Arab community is essentially non-assimilating
- The community's distinct identity is facilitated through:
 - The use of Arabic (Israel's second official language)
 - A separate Arab/Druze school system
 - Arabic mass media, literature, and theater
 - Maintenance of independent Muslim, Druze, and Christian denominational courts which adjudicate matters of personal status





The Arab Minority in Israel

Total Arab Population:
1,800,000, 2016

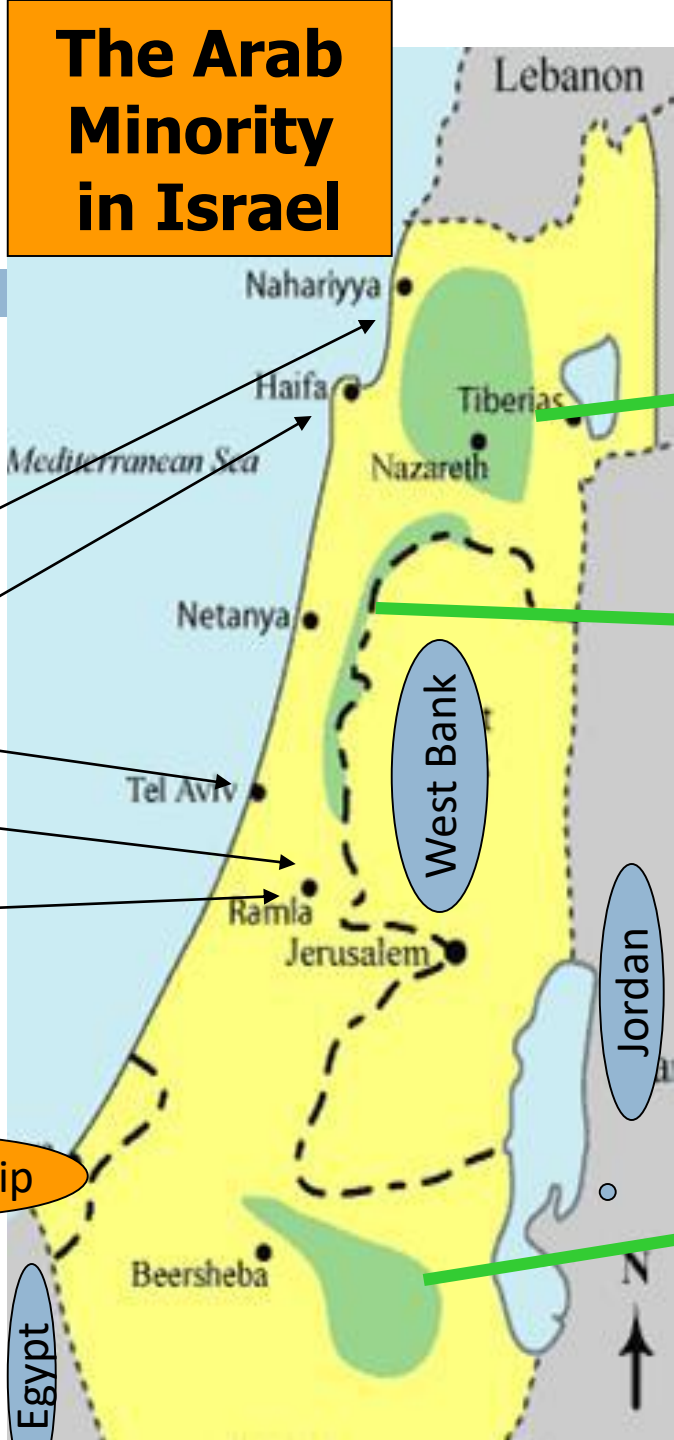
Arabs in mixed Cities: (Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Ramla, Lod)
180,000

Galilee
750,000

Triangle
750,000

Gaza Strip

Negev
250,000



Arab Israelis



Arab Community Life =>

- **Late 19th century:** when Jewish immigration stimulated economic growth, many Arabs were **attracted to the area** by its employment opportunities, higher wages, and better living conditions
- The majority of Israel's Arab population lives in **self-contained towns and villages** in Galilee, including the city of Nazareth, the central area between Hadera and Petah Tikva, the Negev, and in **mixed urban centers** (Jerusalem, Acre, Haifa, Lod, Ramle, and Jaffa)



Israeli Arabs: Between Citizenship & Palestinian Nationalism



■ Before 1967 =>

- 1956: The shock of Kafr Qasim Massacre
 - Took place in an Israeli Arab village, situated on the (former) border with Jordan
 - Carried out by the Israel Border Police who killed Arab civilians returning from work during a curfew, imposed earlier in the day, on the eve of the Sinai war, of which they were unaware
 - 48 people were killed, among which women and children
 - The border policemen involved in the shooting were brought to trial, found guilty and sentenced to prison terms (all were pardons and released within a year)
 - The Israeli court found that the command to kill civilians was “blatantly illegal”
 - December 2007: President Shimon Peres formally apologized for the massacre



Israeli Arabs: Between Citizenship & Palestinian Nationalism



- **Before 1967 =>**
 - Softening restrictions
 - 1966 final abolition of military regime
 - Gradual mutual rapprochement
 - Growing political involvement

- **Post 1967 =>**
 - Growing awareness of discrimination
 - Problem of division between national consciousness and loyal citizenship
 - 1976 – First “Land Day”



Israeli Arabs: Between Citizenship & Palestinian Nationalism



- **March 30th, 1976 => First 'Land Day'**
 - In response to the Israeli government's announcement of a plan to expropriate thousands of dunams of land for state purposes, a general strike and marches were organized in Arab towns in Israel
 - Confrontations with the Israeli army and police resulted in dozens of wounded Arab Israelis, 6 were killed, many arrested
- Acknowledged as a pivotal event in the struggle over land and in the relationship of Arab citizens to the Israeli state. It was the first time since 1948 that Arab Israelis organized a response to Israeli policies as a Palestinian national collective
- Marked annually by Arab Israeli + Palestinians ever since



Israeli Arabs: Between Citizenship & Palestinian Nationalism



Between two loyalties =>

- **1987-1993: The first Intifada**
 - Palestinian pressure to join
 - Israel tightening security = separation
- **Post Oslo Era (1993)**
 - Growing hopes for solving the dilemma



Israeli Arabs: Between Citizenship & Palestinian Nationalism

Escalating Problem=>

- **1995:** Rabin's assassination
- **2000:** Camp David Summit: an effort to end the conflict failed
 - The **Second/AI Aqsa Intifada** (2000-2005) Palestinian uprising against Israel
 - **The October 2000 events**- series of protests in Arab cities and towns in northern Israel that turned violent, escalating into rioting by Israeli Arabs throughout Israel, led to counter-rioting by Israeli Jews + clashes with the Israeli Police
 - Resulted in the death of 13 Arab demonstrators
 - The 'Or Commission' was established to investigate the police response to the rioting
- Israeli Arabs demand to define Israel as a non-Jewish nation => Removing Jewish state symbols



Arab Israelis



Arab Community Life =>

- **Compulsory education** + participation in Israel's **democratic** processes are rapidly affecting traditional outlooks and lifestyles
 - Gradual weakening of tribal and patriarchal authority
- Israeli Arab women: significantly liberalized by legislation stipulating equal rights + prohibition of polygamy and child marriage
- The political involvement of the Arab sector is manifested in national and municipal elections
 - Arabs run political + administrative affairs in their own municipalities and represent Arab interests through their elected representatives in the Knesset



Arab Israelis



Arab Community Life =>

- Since Israel's establishment, Arab citizens have been **exempted from compulsory service** in the IDF
 - Out of consideration for their family, religious, and cultural affiliations with the Arab world (which has subjected Israel to frequent attacks)
 - Out of concern over possible dual loyalties
- **Volunteer military service** is encouraged
- Since 1957, at the request of their community leaders, IDF service has been mandatory for Druze and Circassian men, while the number of Bedouin joining the career army voluntarily increases steadily



Arab Israelis



Arab/Jewish Dynamics =>

- Development of inter-group relations between Israel's Arabs and Jews has been hindered by deeply-rooted differences in religion, values, and political beliefs
- Co-exist as two self-segregated communities
- Contact and segregation
 - As a multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-religious, and multi-lingual society, Israel has a high level of **informal segregation patterns** (groups are not separated by official policy but keep apart)



Arab Israelis



Arab/Jewish Dynamics =>

- Arab citizens exist on the margins of the conflicting worlds of Jews and Palestinians
- While remaining a **segment of the Arab people** (in culture and identity) and disputing Israel's identification as a Jewish state, they see their future tied to Israel
 - Adopted Hebrew as a second language and Israeli culture as an extra layer in their lives
 - Exhibit patriotism
- Strive to attain a higher degree of participation in national life, greater integration into the economy and more benefits for their own towns/villages



Arab Israelis



Arab/Jewish Dynamics =>

- Despite a fairly high degree of social cleavage, economic disparities and heated political life, the Israeli **society** is relatively **stable**
 - The **low level of social conflict** between the different groups (notwithstanding an inherent potential for social unrest) can be attributed to the **country's judicial and political systems**, which represent strict legal and civic equality
- From a melting pot society to a mosaic society
- Made up of different population groups coexisting in the framework of a democratic state

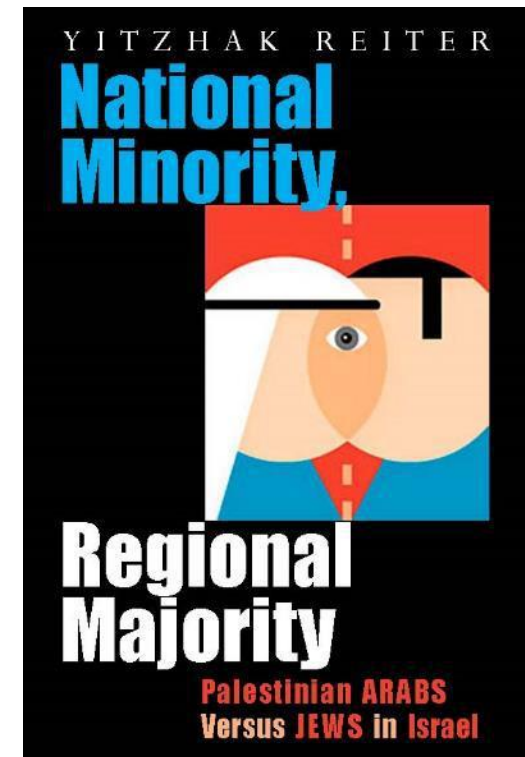


Israeli Arabs: Between Citizenship & Palestinian Nationalism



Caught between a rock and a hard place

- Non-Jews, excluded from the Israel society insofar that it revolves around a Jewish common denominator
- Some identify as Palestinians, actively support the Palestinian cause
- Often face discrimination
- High living standards and freedoms compared to neighbor states
- 'Shared destiny' after 70 years- relative coexistence
- Cultural similarities + secularization => inclusion?



Reite, Syracuse University
Press, 2009

Arab Israelis



Arab Community Life =>

- The Israeli **police** force welcomed its first Muslim-Arab deputy police commissioner in February 2016
 - Is heading a new division within the Israeli police force, tasked with promoting law enforcement in Israel's Arab sector and recruiting fellow Muslims and/or Arabs to join the force



Next Session...

45



- Religion and Army in Israel



Thank You For Your Attention!

Questions???