POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL

IRE215

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Session 9

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On The Agenda

- Immigration to Israel

- Ingathering of the exiles

- Israel's Multicultural Society

- Minor groups in Israel

- Minorities' politics

Ingathering Exiles

The Idea of "Ingathering Exiles"=>

- Jewish **religious** belief stemming from the Bible (Prophets):

  - Isaiah 11:12 – *He (the Lord) will hold up a beacon to the nations and **assemble the banished of Israel**, and **gather the dispersed of Judah** from the four corners of the earth*

  - Jeremiah 31:10: ***He who scattered Israel will gather them** and will guard them as a shepherd his flock*

- The Holocaust

- Enabling immigration became a core value of Zionism

Ingathering Exiles

The Idea of "Ingathering Exiles"=>

▪ The **Proclamation of the Establishment of the State of Israel** stated:

*"The State of Israel will be **open for Jewish immigration** and the **ingathering of the exiles**; it will foster the development of the country for all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice, and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex . . . ."*

Ingathering Exiles

The Idea of "Ingathering Exiles"=>

- 1950: Law of Return was set to regulate immigration to Israel
  - Granted every Jew the automatic right to immigrate to Israel and become a citizen of the state

- "Ingathering of the Exiles" became a reality: Jews immigrated to Israel from various countries as early as in the 1950s

- Israel as a **melting pot**

"Israel Melting Pot" T-shirt , 2008

Ingathering Exiles

<u>Integration of immigrants</u>=>

- The process of absorbing these immigrants was difficult:

  - Reality of *ma'abarot* (transit camps) versus dream of Promised Land
  - Ties to place of origin and religious/family customs versus pressure to "become" Israeli

(Legal) Immigration to Israel

- **Definition** => Households move to permanently live in a new country- 'Aliah'

- **Motives of receiving Country => Social-political**: Jewish Alia (Israel) and political refugees

  - **Economic**: Australia – point ranking
  - US: Quota by region and industry
  - EU: young workforce to replace aging population

- **Motives of Immigrants** => Economic, social, religious

- **Policy =>** Local economic assistance and equal/preferred labor market status, welfare and taxes

Immigration to Israel

Historic outline =>

- Israel was established by Jews from Europe- **Askenazi Jews** (88% of Jews living in Israel before the establishment of the state)

- Pre-state immigration (1930-1940s)

- Mizrahi Immigration waves (**North Africa, Middle East, Asia,** 1950s')

"During the 1950s and 1960s, over half a million Mediterranean, North African, and Middle Eastern Jews came to Israel with little more than the clothes on their collective back. . . . Completely dependent upon state institutions intent on remolding them in their own image, choices were limited and autonomy, except in the most private sense, was unimaginable. . . . "

-Keys to the Garden: New Israeli Writing

Immigration to Israel

Historic outline =>

- Post 1967

- Immigration from the former **Soviet Union** (1990's)

- Immigration of Jews from **Ethopia** (1990's-2000's)

- Immigration from **France** (2015-)

Immigration to Israel

Who are the immigrants?

- The majority of immigrants arriving in Israel are Jewish (e.g., a person born to an Israeli citizen abroad arriving in Israel with an intention to settle there)

- Their non-Jewish family relatives (e.g., non-Jewish spouses or first kin of citizens or permanent residents of Israel)

- Not included: foreign workers, students and refugees

Determinants of Immigration

- A large share of the Jewish immigration to Israel was dominated by **"push" factors** (national and religious persecutions and economic crises)

- **"Pull" factors** (religious and Zionistic ideology) have also played an important role, especially among immigrants from Western Europe and North America

- In some cases, immigration is dependent on political factors (post Soviet Union immigration)

Israel as a Melting Pot

<u>Immigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)=></u>

- **1948-1967**: Relations between Jews in the Soviet Union and the State of Israel were limited

- **Following the Six Day War** => Awakened Jewish consciousness among Soviet Jews + and increasing numbers sought Aliyah

- **1970**: The Soviet Union permitted significant number of Jews to leave (a quarter of a million Jews had left the Soviet Union, 140k immigrated to Israel)

Israel as a Melting Pot

Immigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)=>

- Late **1980s,** even more Soviet Jews were permitted to leave the Soviet Union (President Gorbachev's attempt to liberalize the country)

- **1989-1991**: The collapse of the Soviet Union further facilitated aliya

  - 1990: 190k immigrants, 1991: 150k

  - Afterwards the stabilization of conditions in the former Soviet Union + adjustment difficulties in Israel caused immigration to level off at approximately 70k per year

Israel as a Melting Pot

<u>Immigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)=></u>

- Push-and-pull factors were Russian discriminatory practices, and Jewish perceptions of Israel as "The Promised Land" and place of refuge

- Between 1989 and 2003, more than 950k Jews from the former Soviet Union had made their home in Israel

Unemployment Rates: Immigrants & Native Israelis

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Men								
Native Israelis	7.5%	7.1%	7.7%	6.7%	5.2%	4.8%	5.2%	5.8%
Russian immigrants	40.7%	28.5%	19.9%	15.0%	9.0%	7.1%	7.7%	7.0%
Women								
Native Israelis	11.0%	11.0%	11.5%	10.0%	9.1%	7.4%	6.8%	7.0%
Russian immigrants	52.9%	50.3%	38.4%	28.5%	21.5%	17.6%	11.8%	10.4%

Unemployment Rates: Immigrants & Native Israelis

- Immigrants' unemployment rate is significantly higher than of native Israelis

- Unemployment rate drops as the immigrants assimilate

- Decreases in unemployment rate among immigrants are not associated with an increase in unemployment rate for native Israelis

- The economy is expending in order to incorporate them

Immigration from FSU by Age

AGE GROUP	1998	1989-1998	% 1998	% 1989-1998
0-4	2,612	47,124	5.7%	5.7%
5-9	3,050	57,651	6.6%	7.5%
10-14	3,151	54,293	6.8%	7.1%
15-19	4,593	60,274	10.0%	7.8%
20-24	4,244	57,413	9.2%	7.5%
25-29	4,294	59,047	9.4%	7.7%
30-34	3,274	61,217	7.1%	8.0%
35-39	3,101	57,822	6.7%	7.5%
40-44	2,866	56,969	6.2%	7.4%
45-49	2,746	36,969	6.0%	4.7%
50-54	2,226	37,460	4.8%	4.8%
55-59	2,385	40,602	5.2%	5.3%
60-64	2,729	43,005	6.0%	5.6%
65-69	1,801	41,639	3.9%	5.4%
70-74	1,444	24,735	3.1%	3.2%
75+	1,515	34,175	3.3%	4.4%
TOTAL	46,021	769,842	100%	100%

Major occupations of FSU immigrants

OCCUPATION	1998	1998-1989	% 1998	%1989-1998
Engineers	4,100	82,250	9.1%	10.7%
Physicians & dentists	800	16,900	1.6%	2.2%
Artists & authors	750	16,450	1.8%	2.1%
Nurses & para-medicals	1,150	18,550	2.4%	2.4%
Teachers	2,400	38,700	4.9%	5.0%
TOTAL	46,000	769,850	100%	100%

Israel as a Melting Pot

Immigration from the FSU =>

- Driven by **push factors –** demise of the USSR

- Other destination countries closing their doors

- High on human capital but low on Jewish identity

  - Most of the immigrants who arrived from the FSU were **urban** and **well-educated,** but communism + antisemitism did not allow for a developed Jewish identity

- High % of mixed families and non-Jews

Russian Jews bargaining for with a Bedouin in a market in Be'er Sheva

Israel as a Melting Pot

Immigration from the FSU=>

- Invaluable contributions to Israeli society (cultural, scientific, high-tech, medical, and sport):

  - One in four staff members at Israel's universities now are native Russian speakers, higher concentration in the sciences

- Many Russian-speaking Israelis choose to preserve their language and culture

  - Russian newspapers, television stations, schools, and social media outlets exist in Israel

- Multiple integration challenges

Israel as a Melting Pot

Immigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)=>

- Over a million citizens of the former Soviet Union have immigrated to Israel since the collapse of the Iron Curtain (1989)

- Immigrants from the FSU currently make up 15% of the Israeli population, and have greatly affected the Israeli society

- FSU immigrants forced Israel to ask difficult "Who is a Jew?" questions

Israel as a Melting Pot

Immigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)=>

- Under the Law of Return, Israel grants automatic citizenship to anyone who has a Jewish grandparent, including people who would not be considered Jewish according to the official Israeli rabbinate

- As many as a quarter of FSU immigrants are not considered Jewish by Israel's Orthodox rabbinate

- Makes it difficult, if not impossible, for many Russian-Israelis to be married/buried in Israel (domains exclusively controlled by the rabbinate)

- **How should Israel respond?**

Israel as a Melting Pot

Immigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)=>

- **How should Israel respond?**

  - Should the Law of Return be amended to only include those who are considered Jewish by Orthodox Jewish law?

  - Should non-Jewish immigrants be encouraged to convert (should the process be made easier and more inviting?

  - Maybe identifying as Jewish, having Jewish ancestry, wanting to live in Israel, and serving in the Israeli army is enough to be part of the Israeli society regardless of religion?

Israel as a Melting Pot

<u>Immigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)=></u>

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL
The Jewish world's fastest-growing news site

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Home > Jewish Times

Russian-speakers who want to make aliya could need DNA test

Prime Minister's Office says would-be immigrants from former Soviet Union may be asked to prove Jewish bloodline

By ASHER ZEIGER and TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF | July 29, 2013, 10:19 am | 💬 12

- Is Jewishness a cultural construct or a biological one?

Israel as a Melting Pot

Immigration from Ethiopia=>

- **1980's and 1990's:** Aliyah of the ancient Jewish community of Ethiopia

- **1984:** 7,000 Ethiopian Jews walked to Sudan (hundreds of miles), where a secret effort 'Operation Moses' brought them to Israel

- **1991:** Another 15,000 arrived in a dramatic airlift from Addis Ababa, 'Operation Solomon' (took 30h)

- Several supposedly "last" groups of Ethiopian Jews that have made aliyah to Israel, including a group of 450 who arrived in Israel in **2013**

Israel as a Melting Pot

<u>Immigration from Ethiopia</u>=>

- **2015:** The Israeli government approved the entry of the "last group" of Ethiopian Jews- app. 9,100 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

- This aliyah gained strength after the Six Day War, with the awakening feelings of Jewish identity among Diaspora Jewry
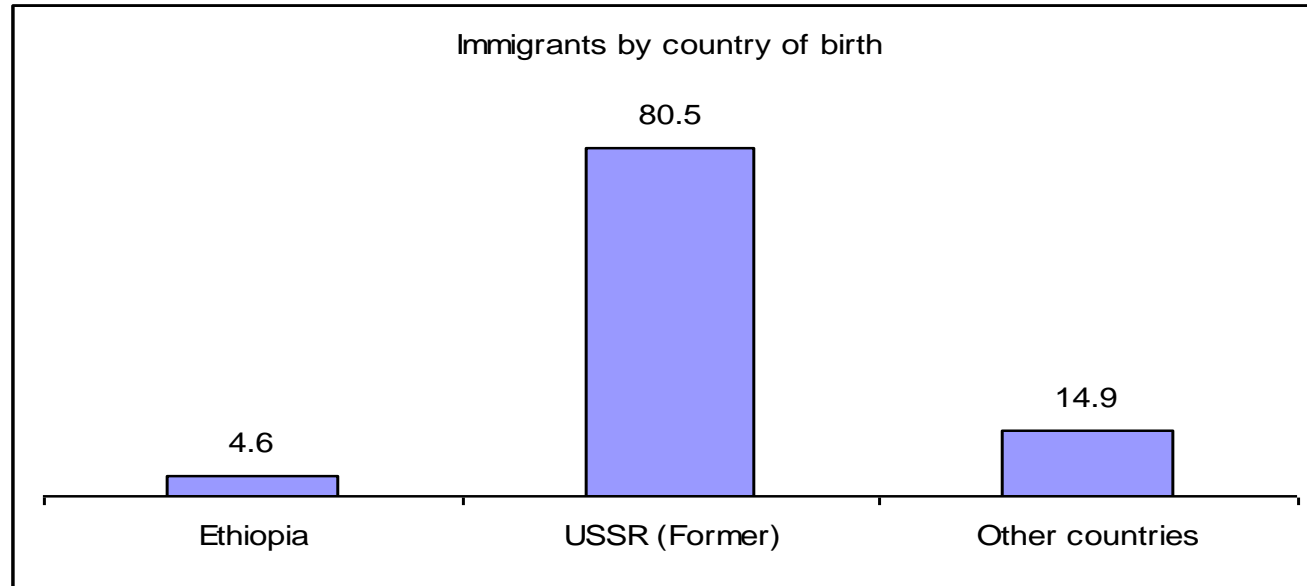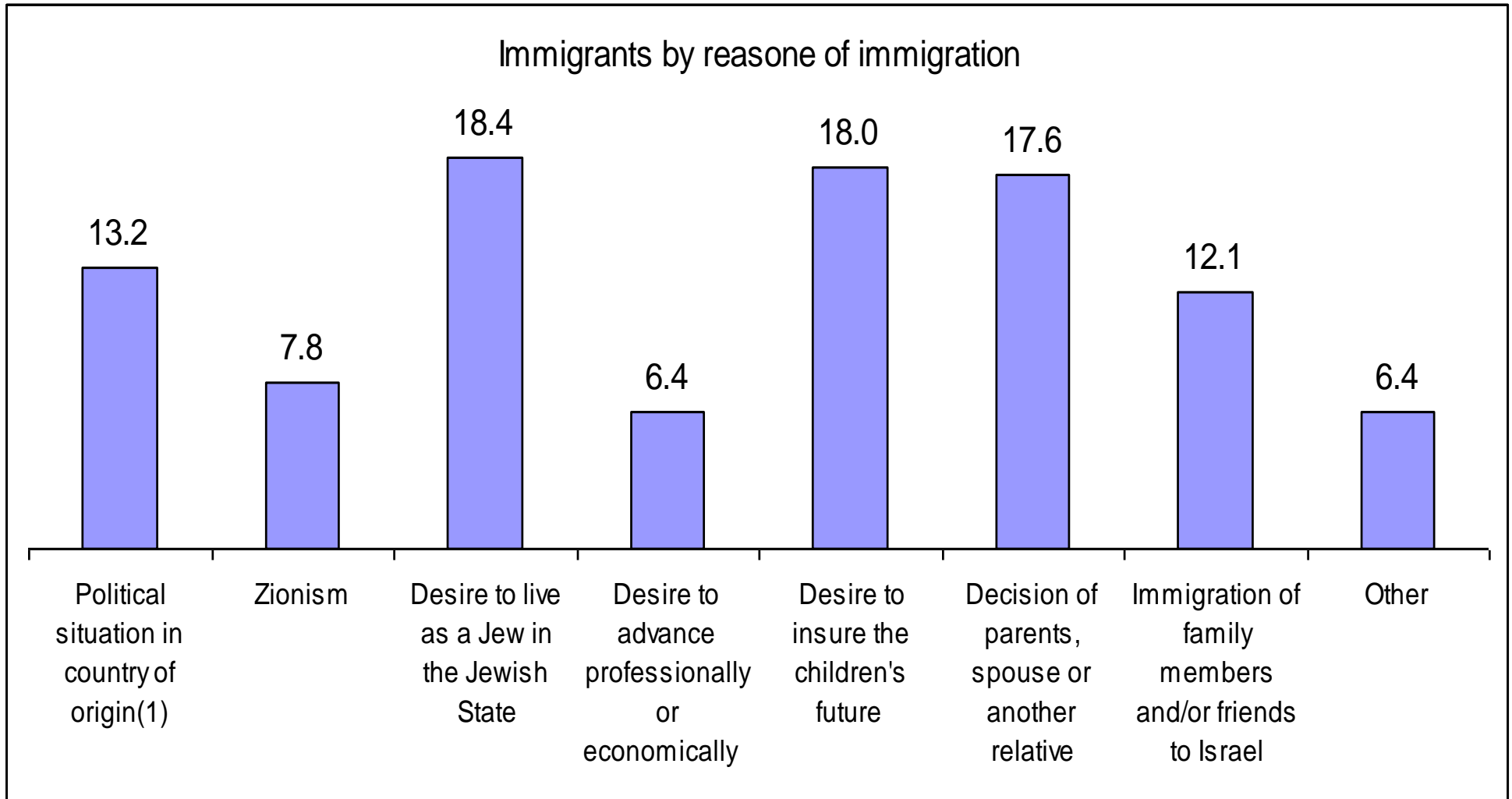
- Survey population: immigrants who arrived in Israel during 1990-2007 and were ages 26 – 74 in 2010

- Survey sample: Sub-Sample of 2008 census sample

- The sample frame included about 84,000 immigrants. The survey sample included about 5,100 immigrants

- About 4000 immigrants (80%) responded to the questionnaire

- 3 methods of data collecting: regular mail, Internet and CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing)

- MEDSTAT III - 1-5 July 2013
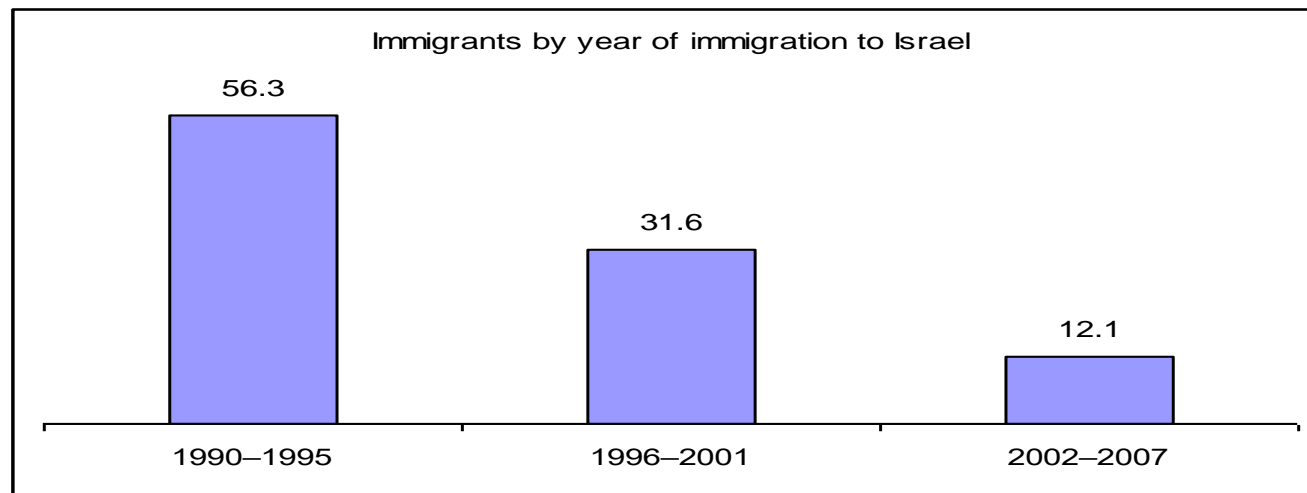
Immigrants by country of birth

Ethiopia	4.6
USSR (Former)	80.5
Other countries	14.9

Immigrants by year of immigration to Israel

1990–1995	56.3
1996–2001	31.6
2002–2007	12.1

Immigrants by reasone of immigration

| Reason	Value
Political situation in country of origin(1)	13.2
Zionism	7.8
Desire to live as a Jew in the Jewish State	18.4
Desire to advance professionally or economically	6.4
Desire to insure the children's future	18.0
Decision of parents, spouse or another relative	17.6
Immigration of family members and/or friends to Israel	12.1
Other	6.4
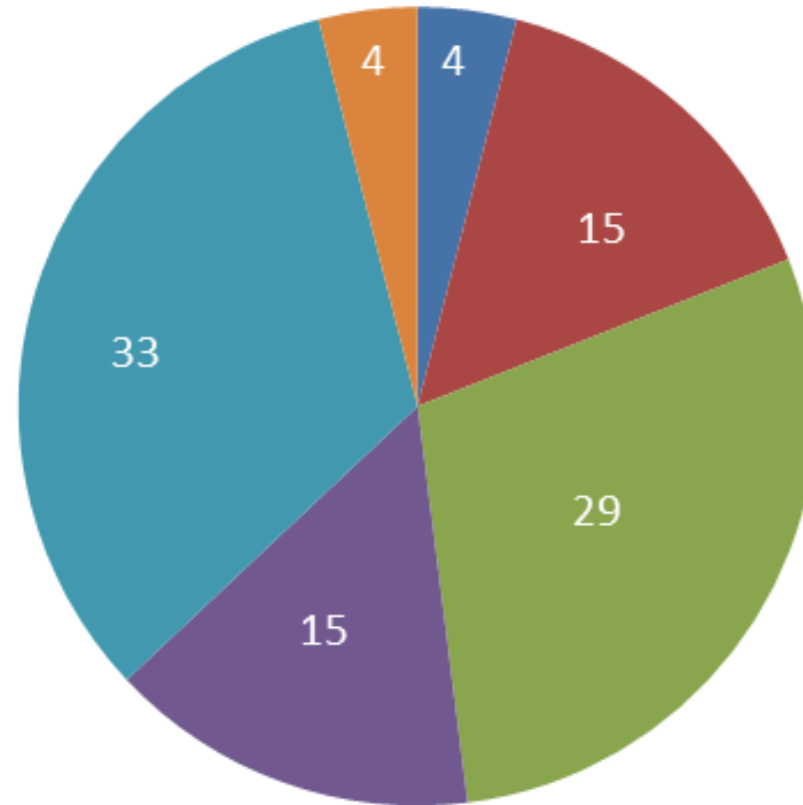
Legend:
- Never worked in israel after immigration
- Working or worked in Israel after immigration
- Working or worked in the same profession they had abroad
- Working or worked in a different profession than the one they had abroad
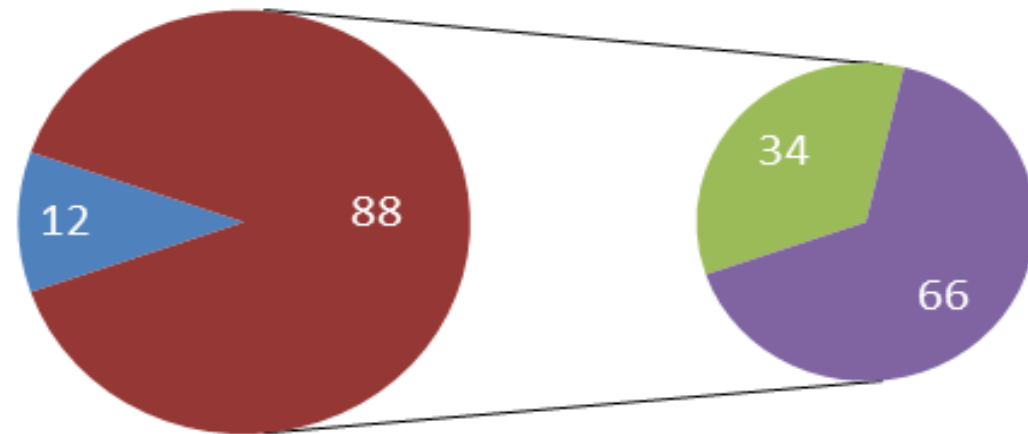
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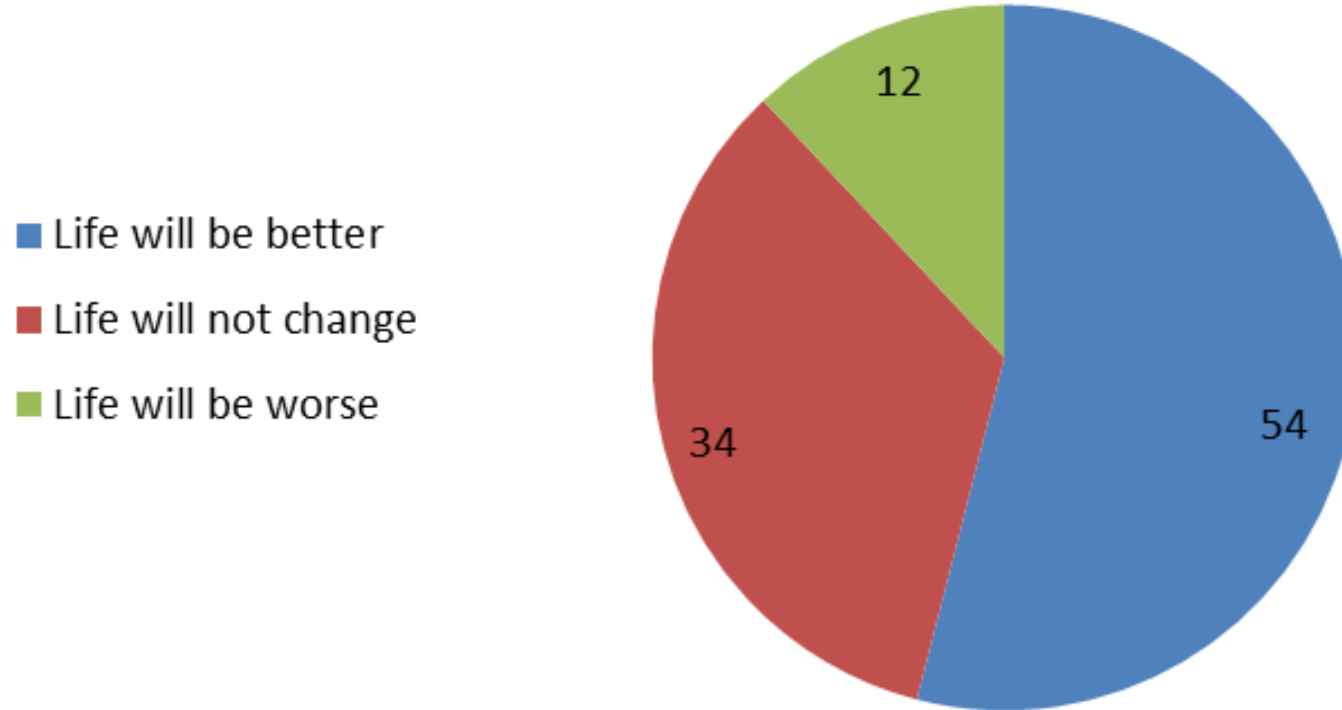
Contemporary Immigration

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 national 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 27,000 immigrants made aliyah to Israel, a significant decrease compared with 2015

- 2017 => 37,000 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 in Israel

- Priority areas today for "Aliyah of Rescue" are countries where living a Jewish life is dangerous (countries that are openly hostile to Israel)
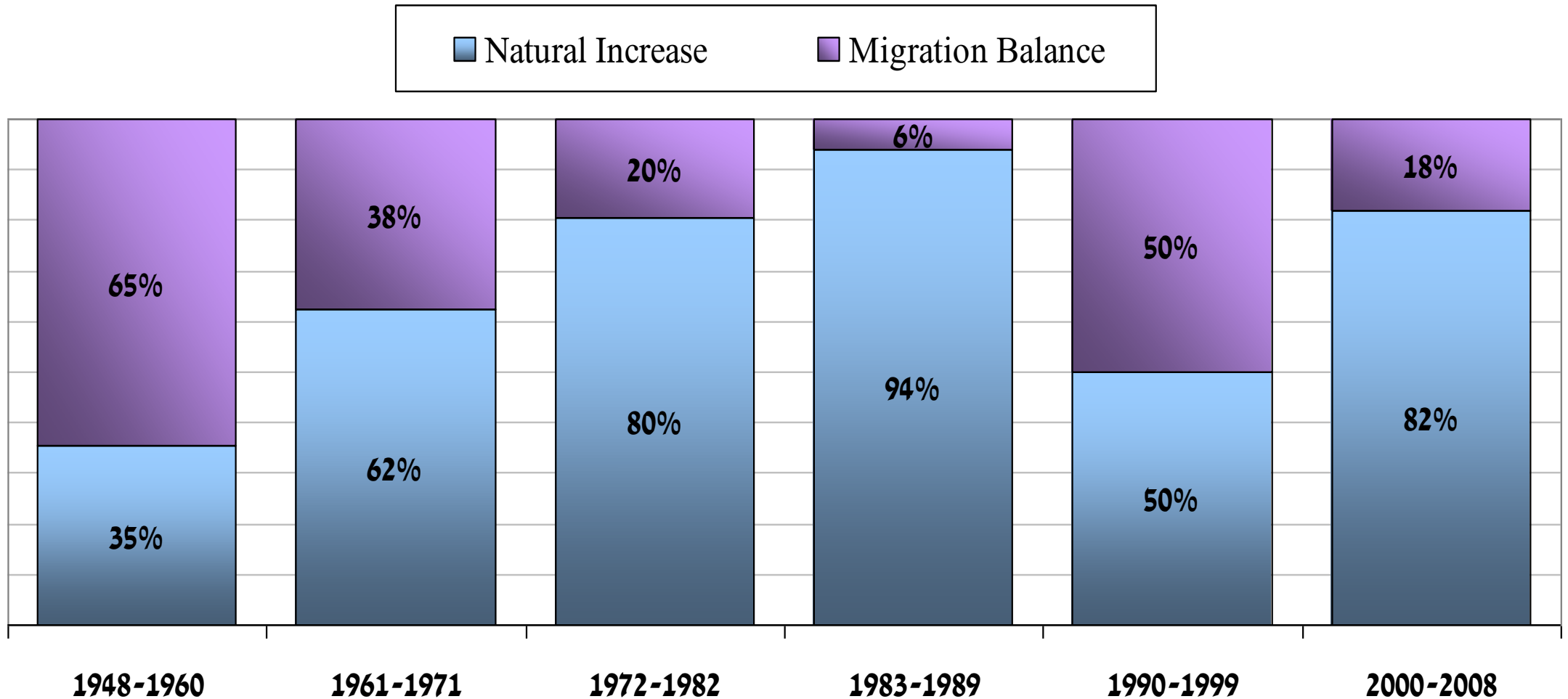

Operation Magic Carpet Airlifts
Yemenite Jews to Israel, 1949

Migration Share of Total Population Growth

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 entitles 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 123k, 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

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)

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 Jihhad (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

Arab Israelis

Arab Community Life =>

- Compulsory education + participation in Israel's democratic process 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 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

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 =>

- 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 =>

- Despite a fairly high degree of social cleavage, economic disparities and heated political life, the 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

Next Session...

- Minorities in Israel

- Arab Israelis

Thank You For Your Attention!

Questions???