Immigrants into Citizens

(And Back Again): The Development of Israeli Identity in Jewish Immigrants to Israel

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Class of 2017

Right now, any Jew in the world with sufficient money and freedom of movement can get on a plane, fly to Israel, and become naturalized within six months. They can become legal citizens with all the responsibilities, rights, and benefits that entails: voting, serving in the army, receiving resources, paying taxes. But current research provides no definitive answers on whether they also become affective citizens in the process— that is, whether they identify as Israeli. And if this transformation does take place, does it happen as soon as they step off the plane and become immersed in their new country's culture? When they become naturalized and receive all the legal documentation to mark them as citizens? When they buy their first homes, or have their first children? Or does it happen even earlier, at the moment they decide to seek Israeli legal citizenship?

Answers in the current literature on citizenship conflict, but all value the importance of understanding the difference between legal and affective citizenship, between a documented connection to a state and an equally strong imagined connection to a nation (Joppke 2007). The very ideology underlying the nation-state seems to make this question unnecessary, positing that citizens are people with legal citizenship, and that they all naturally identify with their country. But there are many cases where these two identities do not match up, resulting in situations where people who identify with and participate in their home country have not been granted citizenship from above, or where people who on paper have all the attributes of a citizen share none of the expected loyalty or identity. In those situations, we can more clearly see the cracks between nation and state that lay bare the artificiality of the entire nation-state system.

This paper is an exploration of that fundamental question of the relationship between legal citizenship and affective citizenship through a quantitative examination of the identity patterns of Jewish immigrants to Israel in the 20th century. I use survey data from the 2001 and 2006 Israeli Election Study to explore whether foreign-born Jewish citizens of Israel are more or less likely than their native-born peers to identify as Israeli. Based on my findings, I argue that Israeli identity can be quickly developed, but that this identity is also easily discarded or subordinated based on changes in political context. These findings cast doubt on primordialist Zionist discourses of Israeli identity, highlight the importance of distinguishing between identity and assimilation within this field of study, and complicate the idea that national identity is a strong bond slowly built up over the course of one's time in a country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Joppke (2007) argues that characterizing the difference between affective citizenship and legal citizenship is essential to the field of citizenship studies. While legal citizenship describes an individual's relationship with the state, and its development can be directly observed through examination of documents, affective citizenship describes an individual's imagined relationship with the idea of the nation, and takes place on a much more personal level. Mismatches between national identity and legal citizenship abound, ranging from individuals who acquire second legal citizenships as a backup but do not fully consider themselves members of their new country, to long-time residents of a country who lack documentation of their citizenship because of a lack of state infrastructure for recording births (Spiro 2016, Sadiq 2009). Although the past 200 years have been characterized by states attempting to propagate ideas of nationhood and national identity in order to bolster their legitimacy and instill loyalty in their subjects, the asymmetrical experiences of people who have either legal citizenship or affective citizenship but not the other provide visible counterexamples to the idea that the nation-state is a natural and completely

functional form of political organization.

Given the importance of national identity in supporting or undermining the concept of the nation-state, the question of how to define and measure it has been the subject of much discussion. Dekker (2003) argues that national feeling, liking, pride, preference, superiority, and finally nationalism all constitute points along a spectrum measuring the strength of an individual's affective relationship with their nation. But other conceptualizations instead create a dichotomy of two distinct national sentiments: nationalism and constructive patriotism (Davidov 2011, Blank and Schmidt 2003). Still more authors have emphasized the importance of measuring national identity not through a forced multiple choice where national identity is pitted against other identities, which elides multiculturalism and liminal identities, but through questions that measure the strength of national identity (Jedwab 2009, Amit 2011).

These measurement schemes have been used, among other things, to characterize the national identity of immigrants and develop theories of what factors lead immigrants to identify with their host countries. Although these theories vary, the degree to which the immigrant is viewed as a member of the nation and the attitudes of the host nation emerge as major factors in determining whether an immigrant truly becomes an affective citizen (Smooha 2008).

The Israeli case

Research on Jewish immigration to Israel has identified several distinct periods of immigration, each with their own characteristics and immigration patterns. Prior to 1947, Ashkenazi (European or Western) Jewish immigration to Palestine was minimal and largely ideologically motivated, with highly organized groups of Eastern European Jews seeking to build a new society. These immigrants successfully framed themselves as more loyal and committed than the Mizrachi (African or Asian) Jews who entered at the same time, establishing a pattern of ethnic discrimination persists to this day (Peled 2008). The establishment of the state of Israel as a legal entity in 1948 brought with it a wave of mass immigration of Mizrachi fleeing repression from their Middle Eastern home states and Ashkenazi Holocaust survivors seeking a new place to live (Smooha 2008). Most of this immigration happened before 1951; in total, over a million Jews are estimated to have migrated to Israel between 1947 and 1964. This influx

was heightened by the 1950 establishment of the so-called "Law of Return," which guaranteed entry and citizenship to all Jews and their close family members, expediting their immigration process compared to non-Jews (Peled 2008).

Jewish immigration to Israel remained at low levels with minor fluctuations until 1989, when reforms associated with perestroika (restructuring) opened the door to Jews and their families leaving the USSR in large numbers. Over the next decade, Israel absorbed as many as a million immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU) and 85,000 from Ethiopia (Amit 2011, Smooha 2008). As a result of a rule change in 1970 that had extended Law of Return rights to the grandchildren of Jews as well as their children, somewhere between a quarter to a third of these FSU immigrants were non-Jews who immigrated with their Jewish relatives (Shuval 1998, Elias and Kemp 2010). After 1999, immigration resumed a more stable low rate comparable to pre-1989 period (Cohen 2009).

Theories of Israeli immigrant identity

The political Zionism that forms the ideological basis for the state of Israel historically has provided one theoretical framework for understanding the phenomenon of Jewish immigration to Israel. It advances a theory of ingathering, where the establishment of Israel as a liberal nation-state would inevitably lead to world Jewry returning to within its borders to live in their homeland. More religiously-oriented strands added to this theory of historical determinism an explicit element of diasporic messianic thought, asserting that all Jews came from Israel and therefore would not be immigrating to a state, but returning to their homeland (Hertzberg 1971). Under these theories, newcomers to Israel are not immigrating so much as making aliyah—literally "going up" or embarking on a pilgrimage.

These ideologies are reflected in the official policies and statements of the modern state of Israel, which has also sought to advance specific narratives of immigration. They reinforce the narrative of returning to a homeland by framing the founding of the state as a renewal of the Jewish people after 2,000 years of diaspora, and assert in the controversial Law of Return that "Every Jew has the right to come to this country," symbolically laying claim to millions of citizens of other countries as their own citizens (IMFA 2016, Jewish Agency 2016). The Law of Return resembles,

in this sense, a sort of extreme version of jus sanguinis descent-based citizenship policy, where instead of applicants being expected to prove that their ancestors were citizens or residents of the state they are trying to immigrate to, they are required only to prove that their ancestors were Jews. Jewish ancestry is therefore equated to historical residency in Israel; being a Jew and being "from" Israel are constituted as one and the same (Shuval 1998). Therefore, the Law of Return does not just function as a material way to affect the demographics of the country, fill newly conquered land and increase its labor force, though the impact immigration has in those fields is certainly relevant—from 1948 to1995 over half of the Jewish population growth in Israel came from immigration (Peled 2008, Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 2003). The Law of Return also functions as rhetorical device promoting a specific theory of Israeli immigration (Shuval 1998).

Many modern scholars have rejected the historical determinism and explicit political agenda of the ideologies used by the state of Israel and its forefathers, but still treat migration to Israel as unique, unlike patterns in "standard" countries of immigration. They posit that Israel is not a regular immigration destination, but the epicenter of a returning diaspora, where "immigrants feel an affinity with the destination even prior to migration" (Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 2003). The assumption is that migrants to Israel, even if they come fleeing anti-Semitism rather than passionately seeking a homeland, already identify with Israel, and that Israeli society views Jewish immigrants as brethren to be welcomed in with open arms (Cohen 2009). This position is supported by the robust assistance Israel provides new immigrants to help them settle into the country, and of course, the rhetoric of the state itself, which praises Jewish immigration to Israel (Remennick 2009).

Other authors are more attuned to the similarities between Israel and other receiving states. Increasing numbers of non-Jewish labor migrants disrupts the narrative of Jewish return—with non-Jewish migrant workers making up 11% of the Israeli private sector, Israel is as reliant on migrant workers as many other developed economies (Elias and Kemp 2010). There's also convincing evidence that Jewish immigrants to Israel are motivated by economic push factors as well as or instead of personal pull factor connections to the state of Israel. The fluctuations in the migration rate between 1951 and 1989 largely

mirrored economic upturns and downturns, and while Israeli immigrants from North America indicated in interviews that while their primary motivations for making aliyah were largely religious or spiritual, their economic prospects in Israel also factored into their decision (Shuval 1998, Amit and Riss 2007). As economic situations improved in Russia and Ukraine, immigration from the FSU tapered off, and archival evidence shows that as many as 90% of FSU Jews in 1987 would have preferred to resettle in America rather than Israel (Remennick 2009, Lazin 2006).

Nor has Israel been exempt from anti-immigrant sentiment. Non-Jewish migrant workers are viewed by some segments of the native Israeli population as a threat to the state of Israel's identity (Elias and Kemp 2010) Even Jewish immigrants have seen discrimination or nativism. As immigrants from the FSU, many of whom had high levels of education and human capital, poured into the country in the 90s, many veteran Israelis viewed them as oversaturating the job market and creating economic burdens. Ethiopian Jewish immigrants in the same period were stigmatized as poor and uneducated, and marked as racially other despite their Jewishness (Remmeick 2009). Government monetary assistance for immigrants during a time when the Israeli economy was still small also drew resentment from veteran Israelis (Shuval 1998).

Given all these contradictions, it is clear that Zionist narratives cannot be relied upon to fully provide an answer to the question of what it means to be Israeli. Yoav Peled offers one alternate schema, arguing that Israeli citizenship is actually characterized by three simultaneous competing discourses: republicanism, liberalism, and ethnonationalism. Liberalism defines an Israeli as a documented member of the state who receives the rights of citizenship; ethnonationalism's vision of an Israeli is a Jew living in a Jewish state. And under republicanism, which was strongest during the pre-state period, an Israeli was someone committed to the work of building Israel, a definition which cast Ashkenazi Jews who immigrated out of ideological commitment to the idea of a socialist self-governing Jewish community as more authentically Israeli than Mizrahi Jews, who were they were able to frame as more opportunistic and apolitical (Peled 2008). In contemporary times, this republican hierarchy manifests through Israel's "universal" conscription law: Jewish men, who serve longer tours of duty, are glorified, while Muslims, who are barred from service, are distrusted,

and conscientious objectors with political motives are derided for their disloyalty (Orson-Levy 2008, Peled 1992, Weiss 2012).

Empirical research on Israeli immigrant identity

The conflict about how Israeli identity and citizenship should be conceptualized is further complicated by an accompanying paucity of descriptive research on identity patterns among Israelis. For immigrants, research has largely focused instead on assimilation, and which groups are more likely to accomplish it. Smooha (2008) argues that greater human capital, ethnic similarity to the ruling class, and the decreased need for national homogeneity as Israel became a more established state all made it easier for Ashkenazi FSU immigrants to assimilate or succeed in Israel compared with the Mizrahi immigrants of the 1950s, who became enshrined as a disadvantaged ethnic group instead. However, the research on whether FSU immigrants truly have assimilated is mixed. FSU immigrants have created institutions and spaces within Israel to preserve Russian culture and heritage (Remmenick 2003). Since the 1992 elections, they have also tended to vote in a block that comprises around 11% of the electorate—the same size as the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community and the Israeli Arab community (Al-Haj 2002). They have been instrumental in power shifts between the left-wing Labor party and the right-wing Likud, and from 1996 onward have often voted for explicitly Russian (FSU) political parties, possibly indicating that they still consider themselves a distinct subset of the population who share traits with each other and can obtain better collective outcomes through ethnic mobilization (Philippov and Knafelman 2011, Al-Haj 2002, Khanin 2000).

Analysis of FSU university students who came to Israel between the ages of 11 and 18 finds that in this elite subset, women, Hebrew-proficient immigrants, immigrants who had been younger when they entered the country, immigrants from rural rather than urban areas, and immigrants whose parents had found employment in Israel were more likely to assimilate or more assimilated (Remennick 2003). A study of FSU soldiers found that prior identification as Israeli increased the possibility that the socializing structures of the army would help them in their adaptation, but those who were already marginalized or separated from the Israeli mainstream didn't experience the adaptation boost the military brought for other immigrant soldiers

(Ben Shalom and Horenczyk 2004). Research into the material experiences of immigrants finds that all groups of immigrants were economically disadvantaged when entering the country compared to veteran Israelis, but that they all reached parity with native-born Israelis within twenty years (Semyonov and Lewis-Epstein 2003). Ethiopian Jews who immigrated in the 80s and 90s were perceived by Israeli society to be higher-risk, and therefore given a specific kind of state resettlement assistance that has left them one of the poorest groups in Israel today, and segregated from the rest of Israeli society by housing location (Elias and Kemp 2010). Altogether, visible differences or lack of language skills and human capital are some of the main predictors for lack of assimilation, indicating that even in a state like Israel where all Jews are supposed to be part of the same "nation," assimilation may be less a matter of will or inclination to fit in and more a matter of acceptance by the host population.

However, there is very little research on the identity of Jewish immigrants to Israel. Remennick argues based on historical context and interviews that the small wave of Soviet Jews entering Israel in the 1960s and 70s was more ideologically oriented and Zionist than their countrymen who flooded out of the USSR starting in 1989, and therefore were far more likely to identify as Israeli than the "opportunistic" later FSU immigrants (2009). Interviews with North American immigrants to Israel show that this specific subset is largely religiously motivated and immigrated after years of deliberation, making them more likely to wholeheartedly identify with Israel than immigrants motivated by push factors rather than pull factors (Amit and Riss 2007). An analysis of attitudes towards non-Jewish immigrants found that 90% of Israelis considered feeling Israeli to be a major factor in who is Israeli, providing more context into what Israelis think Israeli identity looks like (Rajiman and Hochman 2009). And one mixed-methods study looked at whether recent immigrants from the FSU, Ethiopia, and North America primarily identified as Israeli, Jewish, or by their former nationality, and found that the latter two groups largely identified as Jewish, but the FSU immigrants were evenly split between the three choices (Amit 2011)

At this time, there have been no empirical analyses of the longer-term process of how Jewish immigrants become Israelis after migration, and no analyses that compare these immigrants with their native-born peers. In this paper, I remedy that gap by

using repeated cross-sectional survey data to examine how both native-born Israelis and immigrants from multiple time periods ranked their national, religious, and ethnic identities in 2001 and 2006. This research allows us to gain a more natural, long-term perspective of whether immigrants are coming to identify as Israeli compared to their native-born peers, rather than relying only on their responses soon after immigration.

METHODS

To explore the question of how immigrants to Israel identify, I conducted a quantitative analysis using data from the 2001 and 2006 Israeli Election Study (IES). Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews conducted either in Russian or in Hebrew, and respondents were selected through a stratified random sample, found by the researchers to be representative of the Israeli population. The data was accessed through the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and was analyzed in SPSS 24.

Based on existing research in the field, I expected to find the following relationships and trends in both years of data:

a)   Immigrants would be less likely to identify as Israeli than non-immigrants

b)   An immigrant's chance of identifying as Israeli would increase as the number of years they have spent in the country increases

c)   Immigrants who migrated during the major waves of the 50s and 90s would be less likely to identify as Israeli than those who immigrated during periods with lower immigration rates

As past research had indicated that direct questions about identity rather than indirect tests of loyalty are the best way to measure national identity, I selected responses to the question "Which of the following concepts best defines your identity" as my response variable for all these hypotheses (Dekker 2003). In 2001, the options given to Jewish respondents for this question were "Israeli", "Jewish", "Ashkenazi/Sephardic", and "Religious/Secular", and Arabs were asked another, different question about identity. In 2006, the options were changed slightly so that the same question could be used for both Jewish and Arab respondents: "Jewish" was replaced with "Jewish/Palestinian" and "Ashkenazi/Sephardic" with "Ethnic Group/Arab." The researchers also offered "Russian" as an identity option in 2006. However, only three respondents identified as Russian, and this differences in how the questions were asked was largely cosmetic. I believe, therefore, that any difference I later found between respondents in the different years was due to changing demographics and political context, not to inconsistency in the response variable.

Other scholars have criticized forced choice identity questions like my chosen response variable for artificially separating identities that do not actually conflict (Jedwab 2009) These concerns are valid, but due to limited access to data, the forced choice identity question was the best available measure of identity, despite its flaws. In addition, other analysis has argued that the two largest categories for this question, Israeli and Jewish, actually are in conflict (Ram 2000). Since a respondent's response to this question could indicate whether they conceptualize Israeli citizenship as liberal or ethnonationalist, I tentatively proceeded using the forced choice identity question (Peled 2008).

In order to more clearly measure the relationships I was interested in, I created several new variables from the existing data in both years. I collapsed the four options for identity into just two options: Israeli and Other. I similarly collapsed the many labels for countries of origin into just two categories, Israel and Other, so that I could directly compare the responses of respondents born in Israel and respondents who were born elsewhere and immigrated to Israel.

I used the Year of immigration variable to compute a new scale variable, Years since immigration, measuring the number of years an immigrant respondent had spent in the country, and used both Year of immigration and Age to compute another scale variable, Age at immigration, estimating within one year the age at which the immigrant had probably entered Israel. I also created several categorical variables, summarized in Figure 1, to group immigrants based on when they immigrated. Finally, I selected a series of demographic explanatory variables to further help me understand the characteristics of the immigrant subpopulations.

Figure 1: New variables for immigration-specific information

Variable Name	Period of Immigration	Immigrated during wave?	Immigration Wave
Variable Values	1946 or earlier 1947-1951 1952-1988 1989-2000 2000* or later	Yes No	First wave (1947-1951) Second wave (1989-1999) No wave (all other years)

I performed two kinds of tests to examine identity patterns among different immigrant groups. For categorical explanatory variables, I used cross-tabulations to generate observed and expected counts for how many people in each group identified as Israeli or Other and evaluated the significance of the relationship with a chi-squared test of independence. For tests where my explanatory variable was numerical, I used a binary logistic regression to estimate the degree to which my explanatory variable could predict whether a respondent answered the identity question with Israeli or Other. I used an alpha level of .05 to evaluate significance for all tests.

RESULTS
2001

For the 2001 dataset (n = 1234), I found no significant relationship between country of birth and identity. 37.8% of immigrants identified as Israeli, compared with 39.2% percent of native-born Israelis. Among immigrants (n = 608), I found no significant relationship between identity and the following demographic variables: continent of birth, sex, income (self-reported and measured on an ordinal scale), years since immigration, age at arrival, period of immigration, and wave of immigration. Immigrants who were identified as coming from the FSU after 1989 or as having immigrated during a mass immigration wave were also not significantly more or less likely to identify as Israeli. There was, however, a statistically significant relationship within the immigrant subset of the data between identity and ethnicity, religious observance, and religious identity. Being Ashkenazi and secular were associated with identifying as Israeli, while being Sephardic, observing "all" religious obligations, or identifying as religious or Haredi were all associated with identifying as one of the other options. Results for

these tests and their significance be found in Figure 2. Comparisons between these significant groups within the immigrant subset and the general population can be found in Figure 3.

Figure 2: Summary of explanatory variables for 2001 dataset

Explanatory Variable	p-value	Population	Significantly more Israli-defined groups	Significantly less Israeli-defined groups
Country of birth	.611	All respondents		
Continent of birth	.093	Immigrants		
Ethnicity	.043	Immigrants	Aschkenazim	Sephardim
Sex	.299	Immigrants		
Level of religious observance	.014	Immigrants		
Religious identity	.000	Immigrants	Secular	Religious, Haredi
Immigrant from FSU since 1988	.160	Immigrants		
Income	.323	Immigrants		
Years since immigration	.160	Immigrants		
Age at arrival	.702	Immigrants		
Period of immigration	.402	Immigrants		
Immigrated during wave?	.268	Immigrants		
Wave of Immigration	.268	Immigrants		

Figure 3: Significant patterns among immigrants compared with the same groups from the general 2001 population

Group	% Israeli among immigrants	% Israeli among population
Aschkenazim	41.6%	41.6%
Sephardim	32.5%	31.9%
Secular	45.6%	49.5%
Religious	23.2%	15.5%
Haredi	13%	3.7%
Observe "all of it"	20%	9.0%

2006

In the 2006 dataset (n = 1608), I found no

significant relationship between country of birth and identity. 42.1% of immigrants identified as Israeli, compared with 41.8% percent of native-born Israelis. Among immigrants (n = 680), I found no significant relationship between identity and continent of birth, years of schooling, and whether an immigrant came to Israel during a wave of mass immigration. However, as the number of years since a respondent had migrated increased and as their age of arrival decreased, the chances that they identified as Israeli increased. Respondents who identified themselves as secular, reported low religious observance, were not immigrants from the FSU after 1989, identified themselves as having a "high" social class, took the survey in Hebrew rather than Russian, and immigrated during the 1947-1951 period were all significantly more likely to identify as Israeli. These results are summarized in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Summary of explanatory variables for the 2006 dataset

Explanatory Variable	p-value	Population	Significantly more Israeli-identified groups	Significantly less Israeli-identified groups
Country of birth	.913	All respondents		
Continent of birth	.945	Immigrants		
Sex	.773	Immigrants		
Level of religious observance	.000	Immigrants	Not at all	A lot
Religious identity	.000	Immigrants	Secular	Religious, Haredi
Immigrant from FSU since 1989	.016	Immigrants	No	Yes
Social class	.015	Immigrants		Low
Years since immigration	.003	Immigrants	[greater]	[lower]
Age at arrival	.000	Immigrants	[lower]	[greater]
Language of inteview	.003	Immigrants	Hebrew	Russian
Period of immigration	.014	Immigrants	1947-1951	1989-1999
Immigrated during wave?	.626	Immigrants		
Wave of immigration	.003	Immigrants	First wave	Second wave

I further examined trends among groups who identified primarily as non-Israeli by disaggregating the non-Israeli identities and performing additional cross-tabulation and chi-squared analysis of the relationship between those significant demographic categorical variables and identity. I found that the more religiously identified respondents were more likely to identify as Jewish instead of Israeli, but that respondents who described themselves as being of "low" social class, FSU immigrants, and respondents who had immigrated between 1989 and 1999 were more likely to identify themselves as "Secular/Religious." Additionally, the latter two groups tended to identify as "Ashkenazi/Sephardic." In Figure 5, these strong positive relationships (adjusted residuals greater than 2.0) between groups and identities are marked with an X when they occur. Additional strong negative relationships (adjusted residuals lower than -2.0) are marked with O.

Figure 5

Variable	Value	Valid % of the population	Jewish	Aschkenazi / Sephardic	Religious/ Secular
Immigration wave	Second wave	52.1%		X	X
Social class (Self-identified)	Low	17.7%			X
FSU immigrant after 1989	Yes	45.7%	O	X	X
Religious self-definition	Religious	6.5%	X		
Religious self-definition	Haredi	3%	X		
Religious observance	A lot	13.3%	X		O
Religious observance	All of it	4.1%	X		
Language of the interview	Russian	46.4%	O	X	X

DISCUSSION

Prior to analyzing the data, I had expected that the results would confirm a view of identity as something that Israeli immigrants slowly acquire over the course of their time in Israel, until they reach a level of identification similar to that of veteran Israelis. Since my two years of analysis were somewhat removed from the years of highest immigration volume, I had expected that this process would already have begun by 2001, and

would be more pronounced by 2006.

Instead, the data shows a very different story. Notably, immigrants in the aggregate did not significantly differ from veteran Israelis in terms of their identity—in both years, immigrants and non-immigrants identified as Israeli in almost identical proportions. Three theories could explain this particular negative finding. Israel could have extremely robust assimilative structures that have a high rate of success in instilling Israeli identity in immigrants. Israel's immigrants could just be uniquely similar to the native-born population even immediately after the entered the country, lending credence to primordialist Zionist theories that Israeli Jews and diasporic Jews share a national identity. Or the label of immigrants could be obscuring massive variations within the immigrant subset of the population, with some groups identifying as significantly more Israeli than the general population and some identifying significantly less. Further examination of the immigrant subsets of the population in 2001 and in 2006 provided two very different answers to explain these negative results.

In 2001, the only demographic variables that were found to be significant were ethnicity and two measures of religiosity, and none of the immigration-related demographic variables, such as continent of origin or year of immigration, seemed to be correlated with identifying as Israeli. As an immigrant's period of immigration or number of years they had spent in the country had no relationship with identity, the hypothesis that Israel was extremely successful in assimilating its immigrants seemed suspect—even if this process were happening rapidly, the data should have shown some indication that more recent immigrants were less Israeli-identified. The group discrepancy theory was also unsupported by the data, as the three variables that most strongly stratified the immigrant community were also strong determinants of Israeli identity in the general population. As the immigrant population was no more stratified by any of these demographic variables than Israelis as a whole, it seemed unlikely that examining ethnicity and religiosity would uncover evidence of strong differences between some groups of immigrants and native-born Israelis more generally. Therefore, the 2001 immigrant data would seem to provide support for the Zionist theory that Israel's immigrants strongly resemble their native-born population and require little socialization to develop the same levels of identity as the native-born population.

The 2006 data tells a completely different story. In this year, in addition to the same religiosity patterns observed in 2001, multiple immigration-related variables emerged as strong predictors of Israeli identity—more recent immigrants from the FSU, or immigrants from the latest wave of immigration, were less likely to identify as Israeli than their peers from previous periods. Poor and Russian-speaking immigrants were also more likely to be among this group of "non-Israelis." The assimilation hypothesis therefore has more credence here, as long-time immigrants from the first migration wave emerged as the more Israeli-identifying group, compared with more recent immigrants, who were much less likely to identify as Israeli. The Zionist hypothesis, on the other hand, does not fit this data—the tendency of immigrants from the 1989-1999 wave to identify as Israeli in far lower proportions than the rest of the immigrant community or the general population seems at odds with the idea that immigrants to Israel are members of the same imagined community as their native-born peers. The aggregation hypothesis seems far more relevant to the 2006 data. Although immigrants on the whole identified as Israeli in similar numbers to native-born Israelis, this average masks deep divisions: in reality, immigrants who came to Israel during periods of low immigration identify similarly to the native-born population. However, immigrants from the 90s wave are far less Israeli-identified, while immigrants from the 50s are far more.

When the two years are considered together, though, none of the three hypotheses can hold up to the combined data. If Israeli immigrants develop their Israeli identity over time, why did they not appear to be doing so in 2001, and why were Israeli identification rates among some groups actually lower five years later? If Israeli immigrants are really just like the native-born population, why did immigrants from the 90s wave and the FSU have such disproportionately low numbers of Israeli identities in 2006? And if the surface similarity between native-born Israelis and immigrants as a whole is hiding deep divisions and discrepancies within the immigrant population, then where were those discrepancies in 2001? No single theory of how assimilation happens or how identity works can explain completely different patterns only five years apart. Therefore, I argue instead that identity is conceptualized and formed differently in different sociopolitical contexts and throughout historical periods.

No research has specifically analyzed changes in

immigrants' identity during the 2001 and 2006 periods, but I can draw some tentative conclusions based on a cursory examination of Israeli history. The 2001 data was gathered during the Second Intifada, when Israel was at war with Palestinians residing in its borders or within the Occupied Territories—a time when Israelis could be united against a common enemy, but when Sephardic or Mizrahi Jews who appeared ethnically similar to Palestinians may have been under greater suspicion from the Ashkenazi mainstream. This could explain both the tendency of Sephardic Jews in the 2001 dataset to identify as Jewish in smaller numbers than their Ashkenazi peers, and the general unimportance of country of origin in determining identity during this period. During a time of national crisis, it would seem that immigrants who were visibly members of the nation tended to behave similar to other Israelis and were more likely to identify with the country, while the immigrants who lacked this visible marker of membership and could be associated with the "enemy" had identity patterns that more closely matched their native-born non-Ashkenazi peers than their Ashkenazi fellow immigrants.

The data from 2006 was gathered while Israel was at peace but certain immigrant identities were highly mobilized. The 2006 elections saw the rise of Yisrael Beitenu, a political party whose supporters, leadership, and candidates were largely immigrants from the former Soviet Union, and which was largely understood by the public to represent the interests of those immigrants. Although I did not investigate political preferences of the FSU immigrants who did not identify as Israeli in this period, my data did indicate that those immigrants were much more likely to identify themselves by their ethnicities (largely Ashkenazi) and their level of religiosity (largely secular) than they were to identify as Jews—an identity that seems consistent with Yisrael Beitenu's secularist, far-right, anti-Arab platform. Taken together, these findings indicate that Israeli national identity is not, in fact, something that is built up over time and largely stable once established. Instead, they suggest that identity can be quickly obtained, but also quickly discarded, and that whether an individual places their Israeli identity ahead of their other identities depends heavily on the political context and which of their identities is being mobilized at the time. Demographic characteristics play a role in who is more likely to identify as Israeli, but the specific relationships between groups and identities can be subject to change:

for example, high religious observance consistently correlated with non-Israeli identity, but in 2001, Sephardim were less likely to identify as Israeli, while in 2006, it was recent Ashkenazi immigrants who spurned the Israeli identity.

CONCLUSION

Previous theorizing on Israeli identity had presented multiple ideas of how and when Israeli identity formed, from ethnonationalist Zionist narratives that posit identity as inborn and inherent in all Jews, to liberal discourses of citizenship that tie Israeliness to legal status and rights. My quantitative data analysis suggests that, at least for Jewish immigrants, Israeli identity is something far more mercurial and contextual. Using cross-sectional data from 2001 and 2006, I find that Israeli identity in 2001 had almost nothing to do with whether someone was an immigrant, but that in 2006 FSU immigrants were far less likely to identify as Israeli than all other immigrant groups. Taken together, these findings indicate that Israeli identity can be easily obtained, especially for Jews who don't visibly appear to be immigrants or "other," but that it can also be easily discarded as other identities are mobilized and assigned greater importance.

Further research into this conception of Israeli citizenship could expand its scope to other years, and employ more nuanced measures of identity that don't suffer from the methodological flaws of forced multiple choice identity questions. It could also hopefully remedy provide more research into the effects of ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status, which I was unable to fully explore because of data limitations and inconsistencies. Finally, comparative research analyzing immigration patterns in other countries could be instructive in investigating the degree to which this finding confirms or contradicts the idea that Israel has unique patterns of migration.

This research indicates that, despite the efforts of nation-states to instill a sense of belonging to an imagined national community in their legal citizens, national identity and state-granted citizenship are still very different concepts. Even among people who have been granted legal Israeli citizenship and told that their religion makes them inherently part of the Israeli community, national identity still takes root in uneven, incomplete, and impermanent ways, demonstrating that despite the nation-state's current status as the dominant form of political organization, the process of wedding

the nation to the state in the minds of its subjects is far from complete.

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