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**In or Out – Migrant Workers in Israel: The
Citizenship Dilemma**

Robin_Harper

Behavioral_Science_Department

York_College_CUNY

robinharper@verizon.net

Hani_Zubida

Lauder_School_of_Government,_Diplomacy_and_Strategy

Interdisciplinary_Center_(IDC)_Herzliya

hzubida@idc.ac.il

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In or Out – Migrant Workers in Israel:

The Citizenship Dilemma

“Citizenship is one of the great Western definitions of what it is to be human.” J.G.A. Pocock.

‘Globalization’ and ‘global village’ have become common idioms in the social science literature. Nonetheless, the feeling of belonging is still at least as important as it was before the ‘global age’. One of the most important embodiments of belonging at this age of time is citizenship. The discourse about citizenship, rights, and obligations has long reaching ramifications on individuals as well as on society. Citizenship has been, and still is, used to include and exclude individuals as well as groups from a certain collective. In the Israeli case - due to the fragmented nature of Israeli society - the issue of belonging or remaining outside the gate carries huge importance. In this paper we will explore the citizenship discourse and engage it to understand the Israeli citizenship discourses and the complexity of the case of migrant workers in Israel. We illustrate these changes by analyzing the migrant worker experience based on data compared to other political and social examples from contemporary Israel.

Introduction

In a world that tends to categorize and classify people, citizenship has become one of the most powerful and important identities a person can hold. Since the nation-state is still the dominant form of government throughout the world and rights and obligations derive from possessing nation-state citizenship, citizenship is nothing less than “the right to have rights” (Arendt, 1951). However, in spite of its centrality, citizenship definition imposes many barriers. In most cases instead of a human rights oriented, inclusive definition, one finds a segregated one. As a result, in many cases, citizenship is used to separate and not incorporate. In this paper, we

argue that the Israeli case is no different. However, recent political and demographic processes in Israel have morphed local dominant definitions of citizenship from republican citizenship and shifted that dominant Israeli citizenship definition to be more aligned with the liberal definition. In this paper we will discuss the changes in the perception of citizenship in Israel and the processes that gave rise to these changes, additionally, we argue that this process is incomplete and does not include all groups in Israeli society, specifically Arabs and migrant workers do not enjoy this new trend of liberalization.

Whenever analyzing the concept of citizenship it seems that the question that immediately surfaces is, why is it that citizenship became so important to many individuals as well as many social identities? In order to explore the significance of this concept, we present some central ideas that are relevant to our analysis, and are presented in the current citizenship discourse. Then, we attempt to crystallize the liberal and republican definition of citizenship.

The concept of citizenship has been central to individuals, societies and social scientists since the French Revolution, which symbolized the transition from the monarchy era to the modern nation-state era. By setting *boundaries* and defining *nation-states*, which meant turning ‘the people’ into the source of the state authority and sovereignty instead of the monarchs, the nation and citizenship became, according to Jacobson “... all-encompassing expression of the common bond that unites all the basis of common citizenship. The state, within its domain... represents the one compulsory association.” (Jacobson 1996) As national citizenship became compulsory, each individual was assigned to a state and belonging to more than one or less than one state posed real problems for the legibility and management of the state. In order for the system to work, individuals were not just assigned attachment but needed to remember to which state he belonged, developing a citizen identity (Scott 1998). This identity became a tool of inclusion and/or exclusion for state activity and to provide resources and benefits (Kymlicka

1995; Stolcke 1997; Juteau 1997). The development of the citizen identity was expected to give rise mainly to egalitarian ideas. However, it did not, the reality was quite the contrary, citizenship was found to be a mechanism that cultivated social injustices (Marshall 1950, 1964; Waters 1989; Peled 1992; Kerber 1997; Castles 2000).

Citizenship became less a unifying mechanism and increasingly devolved into an excluding mechanism, that is to separate groups from the nation-state, to differentiate between groups within the nation state, and to use that differentiation as a rationale for rationing rights, benefits and services (Brubaker 1992; Marx 1996; Brubaker 1998; Davidson 2000). Many scholars explored the various ways in which citizenship as a mechanism produced inequality or the ways it was used to implement inequality. The major themes in the research of citizenship-generated inequalities, not necessarily by order of importance, are: gender (Kerber 1997; Shachar 2000), class and social inequalities (Waters 1989; Dahrendorf 1996; Marshall 1998) ethnic-national inequalities (Peled 1992; Jacobson, 1996; Kymlicka 1995; Castles 2000; Kymlicka and Norman 2000), immigrants (Pugliese 1997; Castles and Davidson 2000; Motomura 2007; Kanstroom 2008); and migrant workers (Neumann 1992; Hondagneu-Sotolo 2007; Constable 2007).

Many scholars argue that the base of inequality is rooted within this ‘forced identity,’ since citizenship comes with the advantage of a rights package. The “accident” of citizenship can yield a disproportionate benefit that can even be transferred from parent to child, much like inheritance (Schachar 2009). And, while it may consist mostly of rights and almost no obligations, frequently the rights of citizenship may be accompanied by a ‘burden’ of obligations, that noncitizens may not have and therefore are not deemed entitled to many of the benefits afforded to citizens. The state uses these rights and obligations as an excluding mechanism in order to keep certain groups on the periphery of or outside society. Even in democracies this

'package' of rights is not divided equally among all the residents of the polity, both citizens and noncitizens and in our study, migrant-workers. In this paper, we aim to show that a change in the base of the definition of these rights and obligation might result in the change of membership and that by changing the central narrative of the society, some disenfranchised groups can become included in the society. Yet, we argue, if the change is not expansive enough to encompass all groups, citizenship will be the tool of choice to prevent some groups from entering the given socio-national borders,

In order to better understand this change we divided the paper into the following sections. The first will deal with the main premises of two traditions of citizenship, the liberal and republican, regarding the nature of citizenship. The next section will deal with the unique Israeli definition of citizenship. Then we will discuss the current situation in Israel and examine the trends and changes that we foresee in its future, concentrating on the impact of migrant workers and other disenfranchised groups. And finally we will finish with some concluding remarks.

Exploring the Nature of Citizenship

To analyze the nature of citizenship through two traditions, liberal and republican, might be considered somewhat of an oversimplification of the nature of citizenship. We believe, however, that the tension between these two traditions reveals a great deal about the nature of citizenship in Israel. In the following sections, we examine these two central traditions, the premises they hold and the interpretations given by various scholars in regard to the nature of citizenship. In the *liberal* tradition, in the most simplistic way, citizenship can be best described as a bundle of rights. This tradition mainly addresses the nature of citizenship as a concept of equal rights in which civil rights and the state-citizen relationship is paramount, largely dependent on the rights of the individual within the state. Heater describes liberal citizenship as,

“...much less demanding of the individual. It involves a loosely committed relationship to the state, a relationship held in place in the main by a set of civic rights, honored by the state, which otherwise interferes as little as possible in the citizen’s life” (Heater 1999:4)

The first time citizens were considered a central part of socio-political structure was at the eve of the French revolution. The civic rights that were given to these citizens are different from the set of natural rights which were introduced by Locke (1962). While natural rights are rights that each and every human possesses, such as the right “to preserve...his life, liberty, and estate”¹ civil rights are rights that the state took upon itself to assure. This distinction is central, it differentiates between a citizen of the state and other human beings that are not considered to be members of the state, even if they are resident in the state, i.e. non-citizens².

As a whole the liberal tradition views the main goal of civic rights to make sure all citizens are treated equally; race, religion or ethnic differences should be immaterial because it is the common citizenship that ensures equality. Marshall and Bottomore (1992) portray the civil rights as follows: “By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society.”³ Looking at the rights development historically we find that “...civil (in which he [Marshall] incorporates the economic right to work) – eighteenth century; political – nineteenth century; social (in which he [Marshall] incorporates the right to education) – twentieth century.”⁴ These rights are as Heater (1999:16) puts it: “Citizens’ rights are just that – rights; they are not matters for bargaining.”

¹ Locke, 1962, p. 87.

² In this case, this distinction is of major importance due to the status of the migrant workers and the attempts made to grant them citizenship rights, or at least to some of them.

³ Marshall and Bottomore, 1992, p. 8.

⁴ Heater, 1999, p. 13.

Moreover, just because certain rights have been extended does not preclude the addition of more rights within that category or of adding additional citizenship rights. For instance Heater (1999) argues that civil rights have the prospect of being expanded and observes that in addition to the civic, political, and economic rights that Marshall mentioned currently we must add environmental rights.⁵ The importance of this argument is embedded in that civil rights are a work in progress, which develop all the time, and as a result we should not attempt to finalize these rights and lock our understanding of citizenship to a certain time period, but rather, just keep track of any further development.

In the liberal tradition, the main purpose of the state is to protect the civic rights of its citizenry. The state has the obligation to protect its citizens from majorities passing illiberal laws,⁶ which might impinge the civic rights of minorities. Moreover, the state has the obligation to support its members to fulfill their development. This makes the role of the state very problematic, as the liberal tradition unequivocally views that role of state to be as minimal as possible (Spinner 1994; Dagger 1997; Heater 1999). Consequently, the role of the state is a source of theoretical as well as practical tensions and debates, mainly surrounding the issue of the limits of state involvement in its citizens' lives. The central questions raised in this matter are related to following issues: the magnitude of the state interference in its citizen's life, and the levels in which this interference makes the life of its citizens better or worse. The main problem is that the boundaries are very permeable, and the needs of the various citizen groups varies, which makes it possible for the state to become a more dominant player than was intended.

Civic virtues are constructed in order to prevent or overcome a situation in which the state becomes too dominant (Spinner 1994; Dagger 1997; Heater 1999). Civic virtues or liberal virtues

⁵ Heater, 1999, p. 29.

⁶ Spinner, 1994, p. 5.

are the portion of obligations that must be carried out by citizens according to the liberal tradition. As stated, civic rights ought to be granted to every citizen without any bargaining or any consideration of race ethnicity or religion. However, even though the liberal theory does not stress it, citizens must undertake some basic obligations in order to remain bound to the “invisible community,” and more importantly to maintain their rights to their civic rights. The entire discussion over civic virtues is very problematic, mainly due to the fact that the liberal theory stresses the importance of rights and hardly leaves any room for obligations. However, in recent years civic virtues became a central issue in the liberal tradition discourse as Heater (1999:29) puts it: “Obligations, duties, loyalties – in short, civic virtues – must be part of the vocabulary.” Dagger explores the concept of virtues further and argues that being a virtuous person is being a skilful social performer, which leads him to argue that in order to be virtuous citizen one has to “...perform well a socially necessary or important role.”⁷ Renshon (2005) caustically comments that the entire citizenship discourse has become one of rights and devoid of discussion of obligations.

The liberal tradition, to conclude, concentrates on the individual citizen, his relationship with the nation-state and his civil rights, as Waters (1989:160) puts it: “a set of normative expectations specifying the relationship between the nation-state and its individual members which procedurally establish the rights and obligations of members and a set of practices by which these expectations are realized.” It nurtures the notion of a minimalist state, and equal citizens. Recently, more scholars are introducing the notion of virtues to the liberal debate on citizenship (Waters 1989; Dagger 1997; Heater 1999). However, most of them still find the role of virtues to be marginal, while others who disagree try to formulate a new framework for the nature of citizenship, for example: the ‘republican liberalism’ by Dagger (1994).

⁷ Dagger, 1994, p. 15.

Though currently the liberal tradition is dominant in the modern conception of citizenship, the republican tradition played, and still plays, an important role in how citizenship is lived. Most of the liberal scholars drew ideas from the first republican scholars, like Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli, Rousseau and others.

If the liberal tradition of citizenship is chiefly concerned with *rights*, its opposite is the *republican* tradition and its main concept of *active-citizenship*. When analyzing the nature of citizenship through the prism of the republican tradition one must first and foremost relate to citizenship identity as an active one, which carries within it many duties. The main objective of this active nature of citizenship is in order to strengthen its basis (Oldfield 1990; Peled 1992; Heater 1999).

The focus of the republican perspective is in the shared moral purpose, which originates a notion of civic virtue and criteria for membership in the community. As opposed to the liberal tradition, the republican tradition emphasizes an active practice of citizenship, which determines, protects and promotes the common good. The condition of citizenship is mediated by the will and capacity of participation and constitutes her or his civic virtue. While in the liberal discourse the notion of virtues is quite a marginal and recent development (Oldfield 1990; Spinner 1994; Dagger 1997; Heater 1999), in the republican tradition this aspect is fundamental and the most important premise of the citizenship nature. This understanding can be traced back to the first republican thinkers like: Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli, Rousseau and others.

In this view, civic virtue is a central component of citizenship. The first question is then how can an individual become more virtuous? According to Aristotle, virtuous (good) citizens were those who acted and committed themselves to the common good, mainly through political participation. Cicero, on the other hand argues that by participating in public work and not withdrawing into the private a person fulfills his virtuous action, which means that the individual

must be a part of the community and the state actively. These two definitions of what virtues are, capture the essence of the republican notion of virtues. While some might argue that an individual must extend his activities range to the maximum of his ability in order to be more virtuous, others argue that a limited scope of actions contribution to the common good is enough. The focus here is not the quantity, and some might even argue the quality, of action it is the action itself. Simply by acting as a citizen you become more virtuous, which is essential in order to sustain the state in the republican form of government (Oldfield 1990; Heater 1999).

This leads us to another important difference between the republican and liberal tradition. While the liberal tradition views its citizens first and foremost as individuals, the central tenet of the republican citizenship tradition is the community. The republican tradition views the republic itself as a community, in which every individual must contribute to the common good. This community may be organic or it may be created and imposed, but regardless of its genesis, the community needs a binding identity that connects the individual to the whole and through that connection weaves the individual to the community of citizens (Schnapper 1992) or the Andersonian “invisible community” and provides an identity as a member of that community. This identity is usually a major component of the civic religion and more than once it is the bases on which other groups within a given society are being excluded. In Heater’s words “The republican style of political thinking places great emphasis above all on the necessity for the state and its citizens to be a community, an organic society, not merely a collection of individuals.” (p. 55). In belonging to the collective, the very identity of the individual is altered. Anthropologist Anthony Cohen (1996:802) observed that “The ‘nation’ is a grand generalization that does not discriminate among, and says nothing specific about, its individual members. By contrast, the individual is highly specific and is distinguished from other individuals in innumerable and very particular ways. Why, then do individuals elect to identify themselves (to themselves as well as

to others) in terms of the nation?” Heater observes this functional aspect of citizenship, and argues that according to the republican tradition “The purpose of citizenship is to connect the individual and the state in a symbiotic relationship so that a just and stable republican polity can be created and sustained and the individual citizen can enjoy freedom” (p. 53). The grand picture becomes clearer within the collective of the state, *Le Republic*, if they are strong and stable then the individual rights and freedom are insured. However, individual rights and freedom, according to the republican tradition, should never precede the good of the community and/or the state.⁸

The nature of republican citizenship within the Israeli case study must include two major elements: the civic religion and sense of patriotism and military service. These aspects of republican-based citizenship are tied to each other, and are intrinsically related to the idea of Israel as the home not just for the Jews but home for the “new Jew.” The founders of the state of Israel had in mind a republican form of citizenship which would, through civic action and participation construct what was lacking in the ghettos of Europe, a self-assured, “single identified” Jewish citizen who knew that the state was his permanent home. This connection was expected to inspire a love of country, patriotism, and would be fostered and inculcated through military service. The republican tradition is intrinsically related to the nation-state, as the state is perceived of as an organic home for the nation. The sense of identification with the nation-state, patriotism, is considered to be one of the four forms of goodness that were introduced by the Greeks.⁹ According to Heater, any man who displays ‘martial patriotic devotion’ possesses the needed set of civic virtues, and this is a common argument by all the republican scholars,

⁸ A central feature of the neo-republicanism comes as a reaction to criticism on the weak sense of community that the liberal tradition led to.

⁹ The four forms of goodness that were introduced by the Greeks according to Heater were: temperance, Justice, courage and wisdom. However, he found the interpretation of courage to be very similar to patriotism (Heater, 1999).

Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli and Rousseau (Heater 1999).¹⁰ Of course, this image of citizen-soldier has been used to limit women's full citizenship (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Berkovitch 1997; Kerber 1998). However, the patriotic definition does not limit itself to the military meaning, it also carries a civic one. Citizens who work to insure a strong state and good policies are implementing political judgment, this according to Heater is to the citizen-civilian exactly as courage is to the citizen-soldier. Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) note that beyond the traditional scope of citizen soldier, the woman contributes to the protection and propagation of the nation (and of the state) among other ways through their birthing and through their keeping of tradition and inculcating future generations in what it is to be a member of that society. In the Israeli case study analysis this spectrum of citizen behavior as part of the republican ideal will be a focal point.

Religion plays an important role in the republican tradition. Though, here, the arguments are not as homogeneous. Machiavelli for instance, believed that religion is a must in keeping up the patriotic spirit. While Rousseau argued that civic religion is an essential part of the educational system. The civil religion helped the socialization process of the state, by cultivating a positive commitment to the state within the citizens. This became an important layer in the republican tradition. However, there were arguments as to the nature of this civil religion, while Machiavelli and Rousseau were in favor of civil religion with no religious influences, Tocqueville, found the best base for the civil religion in Christianity. Nonetheless, they all attributed the same role to the civil religion, educating citizens, strengthening the bond between citizens and the state, and making individuals better citizens.

¹⁰ This however leads us to an important fact that had vast implication on the nature of the citizenship nature according to the republic tradition, the fact that the republican tradition is anchored in mail dominant cultures. I will further explore the influences of this fact during the case study analysis.

In order to conclude this section of the two traditions, we would like to introduce the most significant differences between the two. In thinking about the fundamental difference between the two, we return to the foundation of the two traditions: the liberal tradition emerges from the *Natural Rights* thesis of Locke, while the republican tradition leans on the *General Will* theory of Rousseau. These two traditions represent two ends of a continuity of citizenship perception. While we might find various examples of states that tend toward one or another end, we find that within societies various groups and organizations use their socio-political-cultural assets to pull the definition into various directions. Hence, the definition of citizenship is a continuous state-society discourse.

In the next section of the paper we will introduce the Israeli case study, and try to further explore the nature of the Israeli citizenship definition and developments in its context.

Citizenship Status in Israel

The Israeli case poses a unique case-study. On the one hand if we analyze the inner Jewish perspective in light of these two definitions, we find various scholars who argued that the republican tradition is more appropriate prism for analysis, more specifically, the Israeli-Zionist-Jewish-Ashkenazi¹¹ citizenship definition (Cohen 1989; Peled 1992, Shafir and Peled 1998; Kook 2000). This approach creates what Smooha (1997) has termed “an ethnic democracy” in which all Jews are privileged members with full access to rights (and responsibilities and thus earning citizenship rights through performance of their obligations) and all others may hold formal citizenship but are disadvantaged within the state. Even within this paradigm, there is a privileged place for the Ashkenazi due to their history as the founders of the modern state. This Israeli-Zionist-Jewish-Ashkenazi citizenship paradigm has been the dominant citizenship discourse since the founding of the state of Israel (and even predating its founding.) By adopting

this definition as the central understanding of Israeli citizenship, there is tremendous tension within Israel between different stakeholder groups. The most disenfranchised group holding formal citizenship rights are the Arabs, this minority has had to carve out a place for itself within the dominant definition of citizenship and find a niche within the parameters of the republican tradition.

The major tension lies in the definition of the Israeli state as "Jewish and Democratic."¹² The founding Zionist vision for the state of Israel was to create a Jewish state that would serve as "an ingathering of the Diaspora." In everyday life, in almost every context, the Jewish aspect triumphs over the democratic, hence defining the core group of the Israeli society as Jewish. Moreover, the Israeli elite is composed of the Israeli-Zionist-Jewish-Ashkenazi (Kimmerling 2004 & 2001; Shapiro 1984). This group is the entitled group and is able to engage their "bundle of rights" through their social capital and advocate the republican perception of citizenship as it strengthens their status as the elite group. The inherent advantage that this group possesses directly stems from the fact that it is able to mobilize the Jewish identity trope and sets the Israeli society common identity, which, in a state with so many different ethnicities present is the exclusive linkage between them and their reason for coming to Israel. This identity is used by the state to define the common identity and the civic religion of the collective. As a result, many groups can be marginalized and these marginalized groups endeavor to broaden the citizenship meaning and set a different citizenship discourse. Arabs, and in some cases Mizrachim,¹³ attempt to shift the citizenship discourse to a liberal discourse that is based on rights and less on community, community needs and group cohesion.

¹¹ Ashkenazim are Jews who either them or their parents were born in European-American countries.

¹² For the definition of Israel and "Jewish and Democratic" look at the [Israeli declaration of independence](#), as well as its basic laws: [The Knesset - 1958](#), [Human Dignity and Liberty](#) and [Freedom of Occupation](#).

¹³ Mizrachim are Jews who either them or their parents were born in Asian-African countries.

While this friction between the two types of citizenship definitions still exists in Israel, there was a shift in the socio-political composition of the groups that support and exercise the two different definitions of citizenship. We argue that due to the various socio-demographic-political processes Israel has undergone in the recent past, larger portions in the Israeli society, especially marginal Jewish sub-groups like Mizrachim and ‘new’ immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU)¹⁴ Jews and non-Jews, are favoring the utilization of the liberal perspective of citizenship – and challenging the elite Israeli-Zionist-Jewish-Ashkenazi dominance on the citizenship definition and discourse.

This argument will be best served by illustration of the socio-demographic-political changes that took place in the Israeli society in the last few decades. These changes effected the demographic, social and political composition of Israeli society as well as the perception of degrees of citizenship of various groups in Israel. In order to clarify our argument let us set forth the various processes that the Israeli society has undergone, and thereafter discuss the ramification of these processes over the citizenship perception in Israel:

1. Mass immigration from Former Soviet Union.
 - 1.2 This immigration exacerbated the tension between Jewish secular and religious groups, mainly over the “who is a Jew?” debate
2. The demographic as well as growth in visibility of migrant workers in Israel.

Between the late eighties and late nineties over 1 million new immigrants arrived to Israel from the FSU (Lissak and Leshem 2001). At that time, the new group comprised about one sixth of the entire Israeli population. This new wave of immigration varied significantly from the one

¹⁴ This definition of ‘New’ immigrants from the former Soviet Union (FSU), relates to the last wave of immigrants that came to Israel from the FSU. This immigrant’s wave started at the beginning of the nineties and eventually totaled about 800,000 new immigrants. However, the composition of this group is very problematic, according to estimates about half of the new immigrants are not Jewish (see Lustick, 1999). This fact ill carry a lot of weight later in the analysis.

that arrived during the seventies from Russia and all the other waves of immigration that came to the state of Israel.¹⁵ Unlike the previous waves, a sizeable portion of the latest wave is considered to be non-Jewish (see Lustick 1999) and yet, nonetheless, entitled to formal citizenship under the '[law of return](#)'¹⁶ and partial citizenship rights.¹⁷ This law (which was enacted in 1950, and was amended in 1970), is the formal Israeli nationality law, it guarantees immediate right of entry to every Jew who comes to Israel and expresses the will to settle in Israel. The nationality law grants every person admitted under the law of return Israeli citizenship from the day of arrival in the country including all socio-political rights available to all Israel citizens. As a mechanism for protection of the Jewish people and of non-Jewish family members outside of the state of Israel, the law extends these rights to family members of Jews who are not Jewish themselves. Until recently, the numbers of non-Jews seeking Israeli citizenship based on their relationship to Jewish has been not significant in the citizenship discussion. This law is a central layer in the liberal-republican dual nature of the Israeli citizenship.

Various scholars that have studied this FSU group argued that it demonstrated new and very unique characteristics that had significant impact over the Israeli socio-political realm. The most significant characteristics are: the size of this immigration, in absolute numbers as well as relative portion of the existing population (Lissak and Leshem 2001). Another important aspect is the political organization as well as the political efficacy, it took this wave of immigration less than a decade to form a party and compete at the national level with impressive success, the 1996 national campaign marked the entry point and since 'Russian' based party is a permanent fixture of the Israeli political system, and during the last campaign it became one of the top three parties

¹⁵ Here we would like to stress the importance of the differences between waves of immigration during the pre-state era and the post-state era 1948 and on.

¹⁶ For the complete "law of return" including the 1970 amendment please see: http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/1950_1959/Law%20of%20Return%205710-1950

(see table 1). The impact is so profound that scholars refer to it as the "Russian" revolution in Israeli politics (Gitelman and Goldstein 2002) while others concentrated on the impact this new voting pattern had on Israeli socio-political spheres (Horowitz Tamar 2001; Goldstein and Gitelman 2002 and 2004).

Table 1
Russian immigrants Based parties in Israeli National Elections
(Zubida and Harper 2010)

Election Year	Party (rank of party size compared to all other parties)	Total number of Votes	Percent of total Vote share	Number of parliamentary seats
1996	Israel Be-Aliya (6/11)	174,944	5.8%	7
1999	Israel Be-Aliya (5/15)	171,705	5.1%	6
	Yisrael Beiteinu ¹⁸ (13/15)	86,153	2.6%	4
2003¹⁹	Israel Be-Aliya (12/13)	67,719	2.2%	2
2006²⁰	Yisrael Beiteinu (5/12)	281,880	9.0%	11

¹⁷ It is considered as partial mainly due to several services that are denied from this group by the ultra orthodox religious institutions that are state sponsored, to mention some: marital, burial and children registration.

¹⁸ The name translates to 'Israel our Home'

¹⁹ The party Israel our Home joined a national front and did not run individually in this campaign.

2009	Yisrael Beiteinu (3/12)	394,577	11.7%	15
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Politically as well as socially and from the citizenship stand this group presented ambiguous positions, on the one hand it headed the secular standpoint against the religious definition of citizenship, that is it strove to a more liberal citizenship status (Leshem 2001), on the other, during the 2009 national electoral campaign Yisrael Beiteinu campaign slogan was "[Responsible Citizenship](#)"²¹ in which every citizen would have to pledge allegiance to the state of Israel as a Jewish state.

"In my adoption of an unapologetic *stance on the duties of citizenship*, I had strong role models from around the world. For example, Britain's Home Office has recently drawn up new laws making responsible citizenship a requirement for those wishing to become UK nationals. Candidates will receive a probation period in which they must prove that they can *contribute to the community*. In the U.S., those requesting a Green Card must take an oath that they will fulfill the rights and duties of citizenship.

Some journalists have emphasized that I am proposing criteria for citizenship that other countries apply only to naturalized citizens and not to those native-born. To these critics *I respond that it is an irrelevant distinction to make when discussing responsible citizenship*. For did not native-born British men carry out the 2005 London bombings? *A commitment to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship should apply to all, irrespective of place of birth.*" (Source: <http://www.beytenu.org/119/3161/article.html>; the emphasis in the text is ours)

In Lieberman's own words, he is proposing to turn the national aspect of the citizenship into a republican one, one that deals with responsibilities and not rights. However, if we turn to the secular-religious cleavage, which defines one of the most important aspects of Israeli

²⁰ Before this campaign Israel Be-Aliya joined forces with Israel Beitenu.

citizenship "who is a Jew?," the new FSU migrants were one of the most adamant groups against this Jewish-based definition of citizenship, mainly due to the questionable Jewishness²² of a large portion within this group (Lissak and Leshem 2001). As a result they gravitated to a definition of citizenship that was based more on being Israeliness, deriving from their rights within the Jewish state, rather than from their status as members of the Jewish community. The selected definition stemmed from the civic religion (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983) which was a midpoint between the Jewish religion and the new Israeli context. The bases of this definition of citizenship were rooted in the liberal approach, the discourse was of rights and not responsibilities, yet, it had a Jewish aspect to it.

This change in the discourse and the fact that it was very new and ambiguous had a profound impact on the Israeli society and perception of citizenship. This duality was a ray of hope to some in the attempt to break the hegemonic religious-Jewish discourse, and create a new discourse civic-Israeli one.

For migrant workers, however, this shift or opening in the citizenship discourse did not have a palpable effect on their status in Israel. The purpose for the establishment of the Israeli state was to be a permanent home for Jews. By definition, the migrant workers (known in Hebrew as "Ovedim Zarim" or "foreign workers") are transient and not Jews and thus do not fit into the citizenship discourse easily. If they were truly migrant and in Israel for short stays, there would be little problem. But, as throughout the world, short term workers tend to have long term to permanent tenures. Migrant workers were brought to Israel due to the civic uprising of the Palestinians population in the occupied territories - the *Intifada*. First groups arrived during the late 1980s, to replace Palestinian workers shut out of Israel itself due to security concerns. The

²¹ For further details look at the party's web-site: <http://www.beytenu.org/119/3161/article.html>

initial concern from construction companies was the need for labor to perform the formerly Palestinian jobs, including building housing for the 1 million immigrants from the FSU. Since those early days, foreign workers have been imported from all over the world,²³ especially to work in agriculture, caregiving, construction and other triple D work (dirty, dangerous and demeaning/dull.) By now according to official numbers there are 115,000 migrant workers with a work visa, these are referred to as 'legal' -- for group composition see table 2 -- and about the same number of migrant workers, many who are in Israel on a tourist visa and others who simply leave their employment which is tied to their residency permit, are referred to as 'illegal'. This group totals about 250,000 members.

²² Further information about Jewishness and Israeliness discourse can be found in Pele, Shwieid and the roundtable discussion at the Palestine-Israel Journal Vol. 8(4) 2001 and Vol. 9(1) 2002; and in Shafir and Peled, 2002.

²³ During the early period, early 1908's, most of the construction employed migrant workers came from eastern Europe, while the agriculture and caregivers came for Asian countries.

Table 2

Distribution of 'Legal' Migrant workers Population in Israel 2008²⁴

Country of Origin	Total Number (in thousands)	Percent Male
Total	114.7	54%
Asia²⁵ Total	89.2	57
India	4.6	46
Turkey	2.6	99
Nepal	6.9	18
China	12.2	97
Seri Lanka	2.2	20
Philippines	29.3	14
Thailand	29.7	93
Other	1.7	20
Africa Total	0.4	59
Europe Total	23.7	45
Bulgaria	1.7	47
FSU ²⁶	9.8	21
Germany	0.1	77
United Kingdom	0.1	75
Romania	10.9	66
Other	1.1	53
America Oceania Total	1.0	52
USA	0.4	72
Others	0.6	40
Unknown	0.2	71

Various characteristics of the members of this group are 'problematic' and marked the boundaries between them and the local society. First, most of group members are non-white. This puts them in a disadvantage in the Israeli context, as in the Jewish-Israeli society, most of the

²⁴ The source of the data is the Central Bureau of Statistics: http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa_template.html?hodaa=200920161

²⁵ Includes Asian republics of FSU

population is white, with the exception of the Ethiopian immigrants²⁷ who compose only two to three percent of the entire population. As a result, the level of tolerance for difference and acceptance levels toward this group are low. Secondly, and maybe even more significant in terms of impact over their social status, most of the members of this group are non-Jewish, and a large portion of them are practicing Christians. Moreover, for many, their devotion to Christianity was an important reason for them to choose Israel, the Holy Land, as their workplace. In interviews with migrant workers from more than 10 countries we discovered a dominant theme was looking for holiness and holy people in Israel. Echoing many of the interviews, a Filipino caregiver explained when asked what she expected to find in Israel:

“I was thinking really, because I am a Christian. I am a Christian and Israel is a holy place. So what I did expect is that I will find people who will be as good as what I have read from the Bible because of our religion. To be kind, to be always, to be God fearing and to be working like or doing good things, every good things they can do.”

Much of the frustration that the migrants experienced was due to the dissonance between their expectations for holiness and their reality of interaction with real – and obviously imperfect - Israelis.

These reasons positioned the migrant workers in a problematic situation, due to the non-Jewish nature of the migrant-workers and even their intense non-Jewish religiosity, they remain outside the borders of the collective. They can neither join the secular Israelis in the search for liberal citizenship nor can they join the religious with a circumscribed sense of republican, ethno-

²⁶ Includes only European republics of FSU

Jewish citizenship. They are unlike the FSU migrants who according to the law of return are entitled to formal citizenship regardless of the question of their Jewishness. And, subsequently, the FSU migrants are entitled to most of the formal rights that are associated with the Israeli citizenship and are therefore able to bridge the difference between Israeliness and Jewishness in a way that simply is unavailable to the migrant workers. For the FSU immigrants, they can create a new identity and experience their Israeliness.

Hence we argue that while there are two core identities competing for hegemony in the Israeli society, Israeliness and Jewishness and while some groups possess both and some possess the one and not the other, the migrant workers do not possess any, and as a result are unable to penetrate the Israeli societal boundaries. Whereas it is clear that the Jewishness aspect is closed to the migrant workers,²⁸ they are not the only group in Israel that is marginalized because of their non-Jewish religion. Arabs, Ethiopians especially those members of the Falash Mura (Ethiopians of Jewish descent who converted to Christianity but maintained their separateness from the Christian community) and non-Jewish FSU migrants are also on the periphery of Israeli society as well. This combined with the fact that some of the FSU migrants are practicing Christians, however, they became a part of the Israeli society, marginal but a part of it, paved the way for a new argument in an attempt to incorporate the migrant workers into the Israeli society. This argument is based on the notion of Israeliness, which is serving as more inclusive category than Jewishness, and can be utilized to open the boundaries of the Israeli society.

Some of the migrant workers who came to Israel more than a decade ago, and had children in Israel argue that their children, regardless of their actual immigration and or citizenship status, should be considered Israelis. There are several thousand children born to

²⁷ The question of the Ethiopian migrants Jewishness has been a source of major debate since they were airlifted to Israel twenty-five years ago and is still not settled to date.

foreign workers in Israel. Many are educated in Israeli schools and speak no other language but Hebrew and some children come from countries where *ius soli* is practiced or where births must be registered in the country itself, and remain stateless. For example the organization [Israeli Children](#)²⁹ understood the new competing construction of Israeli identity and decided to use this identity construction in their campaign against the attempt to deport migrant workers (see picture 1) and migrant workers children. For examples please look at the two video clips [clip 1](#)³⁰ and [clip 2](#)³¹ and the organization site and facebook page.

Hence, if we consider the abovementioned processes and the migrant workers' presence and attitudes toward Israel and Israeli society, we argue that the usage of Israeliness in this manner is an attempt to redefine the borders of Israeli society. The way these migrant-workers perceive their own and their parents' or children's identities, prospects for incorporation and permanence as well as inter-generational construction and shift of identities, pose a new challenge to both their own identity as well as to the 'new' boundaries in Israeli society, these that are now torn between the Israeliness and Jewishness aspects of the Israeli society.

Picture 1

In the cover page of Ha-Ir (the city), a local Tel Aviv-Yaffo newspaper had the following picture with this question: “*Where were you during the municipal cleaning operation?*” The picture portrays one of the Tel Aviv-Yaffo municipal inspectors (violently) arresting an African migrant worker. The "operation" was entitled "clean streets" by the authorities. (Feb. 19th 2010).

²⁸ Yet, not only to them, it blocks the way for many groups.

²⁹ <http://israeli-children.org.il/> and <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Israeli-Children/139798801913>

³⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kq8PhSsHyco&feature=related>

³¹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RXIfH5l63Y&feature=related



גיליון 32
9.2.2018
כל עיר והעיר שלה
לא להחזרה

איפה אתה היית במבצע הניקיון העירוני?



לאחר מגפת גיליון זה היה צפוי להתחיל מבצע 'עיר של הרים' - מבצע משותף למשטרה, ליחידת עיר, לעיריית תל אביב ולכמה משרדי ממשלה, שנועד להתקיים במתחם התחנות המרכזיות. מטרתו הייתה העמקה של המבצע, המקורמת בפועל דרך אמצעי התקשורת באגרסיביות מכוערת. זה כמה חודשים, היא להפיל כל אספקט בחייהם של הורים בתל אביב לסמן את שהתם כאן כבלתי חוקית וכי סיכון רמורפי, מוסרי ובטיחותי, את בחייהם כאיום תורסי, את עסקיהם כנטולי רישיונות, את מאבי ליהם הייחודיים כסכנות בריאותיות, את עצם גרפיהם ככלים להעברת מחלות ומגפות.

זהו מבצע שחוטא בכל במקום להכיר במצוקה הכבדה של קהילות הורים, שעליה מתריעים ארגוני הסיכון וה' שנים, ולספק אוכל לרעבים, ריח מריח ול בטוח לחסרי הבית, ממגרות לנוערי המשטחה, טיפול הפואי לחולים, טיפול פסיכולוגי לפלטיים שחורב עליהם עלולם - חרפת המרינה ער חורמה את חצות השותיהם במקום לתגבר את פקחי משי רד ותמית המעטים ולחוק את סמכויות האכיפה שלהם, כך שראנו שכל אדם עובד בישראל יועי סק לפי חוק ובתנאים נאותים - נערכים לגוול את כבשת הרש. וכמוכן, במקום לדין ברצינות כסכי גות מרבינות הדלת המסוכנות, שממשלה זו אחראית לה יותר מכל קודמותיה, ובדוחים המופקים מהיבוא המסיבי של עובדים - מטילים את האשמה על הנסחרים, מעמר העברים החדש.

המבצע הזה רוצה לחסל את תל אביב כמו שאר נתנו מבררים אותה, עיר צבעונית ומגוונת. אבל עיר לבנה היא עיר משעממת. היא עיר תפלה בימים אלה, שבהם שלילת חירויותיהם של אזרחים מחלחלת מהיחס לפלסטינים אל לב החבר וההמרינה מפעילה ריכוי מתגבר נגד כל סימן מזאזה והתנגדות, כל מי ששוויון, צדק חברתי ודימוקרטיה יקרים ללבו חייב לראות במבצע הזה, המתקיים כאן בתוך עירנו, הכרות מלהמה. יחזי אנתנו צריכים לעמוד בחובות, יד ביד מול סחודי האדם, הבידורקטים ובריוני המשטרה, ולומר: לא תעברו. זה נגמר כאן ועכשיו.

חגי מטר

בתמונה: שישי שעבר, צ'לנוביטסלמה ברשות האוכלוסין טוענים ש-50 אזרחים אמריקאים נהגו באלימות נגד הפקחים. זאת התוצאה

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