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Abstracts

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Smooha:

The two mass immigrations to Israel are compared, demonstrating the failure of the Mizrahi immigrants of the 1950s versus the success of the Russian immigrants of the 1990s. Almost in every respect the Russian immigrants had advantages over the Mizrahi immigrants: they arrived with greater human resources, the state was more affluent and less discriminatory against them, the society was more culturally open and socially tolerant, and their proportion in the total population was much smaller and hence not threatening. Whereas the Mizrahim lost their culture and ended up in the lower strata of society, Russian immigrants are in the process of entering the middle class and in control of the pace and rate of their assimilation.

Leshem:

This article presents the results of a study conducted in 2006 among a representative sample of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, aged 18 and over, who arrived in Israel between 1990 and 2005. It examines the changes over time in their collective identity, focusing on the relative weight and meaning of the local, Israeli component of their identity, as compared to the Jewish and Russian components. Unlike studies conducted in other concentrations of Russian Jewish emigrés (in the United States, Canada, and Germany), which found that an increase in the intensity of the local component of their identity was held in check by the enduring strength of the Russian component, this study revealed that in Israel the local identity component grew much stronger while, correspondingly, the Russian component declined. In addition, significant similarities between the immigrants and the veteran population were found with regard to how they conceive of the Israeli narrative. These changes over time in the immigrants' identity, which were not observed in the first years of their integration into Israeli culture and society, require a reexamination of the generalizations that dominate the research literature and the professional relationship with this group, concerning its supposed social and cultural self-segregation and low potential for cultural change.

Cohen and Leon:

This article argues that in recent decades, following the political “turnaround” (*mahapakh*) in 1977, a distinct new group has appeared on the Israeli scene: the Mizrahi middle class. This social category no longer fits the traditional dichotomies that have steered academic and popular sociological debate in Israel. On the basis of the geographic-spatial changes and the changes in higher education that have taken place in Israel during the past two decades, the article suggests that the Mizrahi middle class is playing a prominent role in the transformations that Israeli society is undergoing, providing a possible source for renewed social integration on a national scale. Israeli sociology is thus called upon to give due consideration not only to the theoretical significance of this group but also to its empirical significance in shaping the collective identity and the ethno-class arena in Israeli society in the coming decades.

Friedman:

The decision to sever Trans-Jordan from the territory of the Jewish National Home was taken during the period when Winston Churchill, an avowed friend of the Zionists but not *au fait* with Middle Eastern problems, served as Colonial Secretary. It was T.E. Lawrence who persuaded him that Britain was indebted to Emir Faisal for his contribution to the Allied victory over the Turkish army and that therefore the territory of Trans-Jordan should be allotted to Sharifian control. Churchill disregarded the consensus among British ministers that the boundary between Palestine and the Arab state should run about ten miles east of the River Jordan, and thus caused a heavy disappointment to Chaim Weizmann and his colleagues. It was H. St. John Philby, Lawrence's successor in Trans-Jordan, who more than anyone else

was responsible for the final demarcation of the boundary along the River Jordan, bisecting the Dead Sea, in contradiction to what had been understood as the borders of the Jewish National Home at the time of the Balfour Declaration.