

Multiple Ethnic Identities among Israeli Immigrants in Europe

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Abstract

This paper describes and analyzes the multiple ethnic identities and identifications among first-generation Jewish Israeli immigrants in Europe, and specifically in London and Paris, by means of closed-end questionnaires (N=114) and in-depth semi-structured interviews (N=23).

Israelis who live in Europe are strongly attached to Israel and are proud to present themselves as Israelis. Despite their place of residence, these Israelis, particularly those residing in London and over the age of 35, manage to find ways to preserve their Israeli identity. They also perceive the need to expose their children to other Israelis as another means of preventing assimilation. On the other hand, those who are under the age of 35, and in particular those residing in Paris, have less opportunity or less need to maintain their Israeli identity in Europe. The older Israelis in London are also somewhat more integrated with the proximal host and have a stronger Jewish identity than do younger Israelis, particularly those residing in Paris. Living in Europe allows Israelis to flourish economically without having to identify with or belong to a cultural and social ethnic niche. The ethnic identity of first-generation Israeli immigrants in Europe is multifaceted. While it is primarily transnational, it is also dynamic and constantly changing through various interactions and is, of course, susceptible to current local and global political and economic events. For younger Israeli

immigrants, assimilation into the non-Jewish population appears to be a possible form of identity and identification. This assimilation may be moderated among young adults who build bridges with local Jewish communities in tandem with their transnational formal connections with Israel, a process that can benefit both sides. Such a process - the reconstruction of ethnic Israeli-Jewish identity and collaborative identification with local Jews - has the potential to strengthen and enhance the survivability of European Jewry at large.

Keywords: Israeli immigrants in the United Kingdom and France; assimilation; ethnic identity and identification; transnational theory

Introduction

This paper describes and analyzes the multiple ethnic identities and group identifications among first-generation Jewish Israeli immigrants in Europe, and specifically in London and Paris. The paper examines whether these immigrants identify with Israel, making them transnationals, or whether they tend to integrate into the local Jewish population or assimilate into the local non-Jewish society, giving them an ethnic identity primarily embedded in Europe.

An immigrant's ethnic identity is an inclusive conceptual matrix that the host society constructs through daily interaction that may assign the immigrant to a certain social group within the target society and induce changes in his/her own self-perception as an immigrant (Mittelberg and Waters, 1992; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Ethnic identity is reflected by several indicators: inner beliefs, emotions and feelings, identification as a member of the group, a sense of belonging and commitment to the group, a sense of shared attitudes and values, and specific dimensions of ethnicity such as language, behavior, and customs (Berry et al., in Tur-Kaspa Shimoni et al., 2004; DellaPergola, 2011). Used in this context, the term "ethnic identification" signifies expressed opinions and/or manifest actions that indicate an affiliation with a certain ethnic group, such as involvement in a specific community (DellaPergola, 2011; Rebhun, 2001).

The population of those who have emigrated from Israel characteristically comprises both Israeli-born and foreign-born individuals. Most of those born in Israel (84%) reside in four major English-speaking countries (United States-66%, Canada-9%, United Kingdom-6%, and Australia-3%). These countries, and particularly the

United States and Canada, have multicultural immigrant absorption policies. In addition, since the mid-1980s the local Jewish communities, particularly in North America, have been highly receptive to immigrants from Israel (Lev Ari, 2008a; Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010). Of the remaining Israeli-born immigrants, only 15% reside in continental Europe, with the largest single group in France (4%). The number of Israel-born immigrants residing in the United Kingdom is estimated at 10,260, compared to 6,601 living in France (Cohen, Y. 2011). These distributions correspond with the findings of other studies (for example: Lev Ari, 2006; Rebhun and Pupko, 2010). Furthermore, according to Cohen's estimates (2011), more than half (55%) of all Israeli immigrants were not born in Israel. Thus, the total number of Israelis in these two countries can be estimated at around 34,000.

Most Jews worldwide (76%) are concentrated in 15 metropolitan areas and major cities, which they find especially attractive due to the economic and cultural opportunities, high standard of living and transnational connections afforded by such locations (DellaPergola, 2013). Those who have emigrated from Israel tend to settle close to Jewish or Israeli populations (Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010). In addition, these Israelis share many social features with other contemporary skilled migrants, including settlement in large-scale cities in the West that offer them varied opportunities for upward mobility (Gold, 2002). Hence, this study focuses on a population sample from London and Paris, where large numbers of Israeli immigrants as well as local Jews reside. France has the world's third largest Jewish community (480,000 Jews), while the United Kingdom with 291,000 Jews is the second largest Jewish community in Europe. The Jews who live in Paris comprise 59% of France's total Jewish population (284,000), while those residing in London comprise 67% (195,000) of the Jews in the United Kingdom (DellaPergola, 2013).

Immigrants' ethnic identity and identification as well as the social meaning attached to these concepts depend largely on the importance attributed to them by the host society. As stated earlier, classical immigration countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia encourage immigrants to settle permanently and become citizens, thereby assimilating into the host society. Governments that recognize permanent settlement also tend to accept some degree of long-term cultural difference and, in turn, to grant minorities cultural and political rights, although since 9/11 many democracies have to some extent retreated from multiculturalism. Another group of host

countries, among them France and the United Kingdom, are erstwhile colonial powers that admit immigrants who are already citizens at the time of entry and are less receptive to immigrants from other, non-colonial, countries. In most cases, these host countries allow permanent immigration and family reunification. In France, the government demands individual cultural assimilation of immigrants who receive civil rights. Finally, some immigrants assimilate more easily than others due to abundant social capital and resemblance to the majority of the host population. Others tend to cluster in specific neighborhoods and maintain their original culture (Castle and Miller, 2009).

Most research on Israeli immigrants has been conducted in North America (see, for example, Gold, 2002; Lev Ari, 2008a; Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010). In contrast, very few studies have focused on Israeli immigrants in Europe. This study is important because it broadens the scope of studies on the ethnic identity and identification characteristics of first-generation Israeli immigrants in general, and among two age groups in particular. These characteristics may be transnational (combined with Israel) or local (associated with Jews or non-Jews). The study examines whether Israeli immigrants in the United Kingdom and France tend to assimilate into the local population, as is typical of skilled migrants who resemble the locals, or whether they have their own ethno-cultural niches. The study examines it considers how Israel fits into this ethnic identity and examines possible explanations for the reconstruction of ethnic identity and identification. Are these explanations based on socio-demographic factors, such as gender, age, marital status, age at emigration, socioeconomic class? Are different types of social networks a factor (local Jewish, local non-Jewish)? Based on questionnaires and in-depth interviews, I trace the variables that help explain multiple ethnic identities, thus lending support to theories on ethnic identity and identification, particularly transnationalism.

Ethnic identity among contemporary immigrants: Theoretical considerations

Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, the complexity of ethnic identity and identification has been extensively discussed in the academic literature. Given the limited scope of this paper, I describe selected theories that address this issue. Scholars differ in their explanations of the origin of ethnicity. Geertz, for example, sees ethnicity as a primordial attachment that results from being born into

a particular community and its cultural dimensions. According to this theory, ethnicity is *not* a matter of choice, but rather is pre-social (Geertz, 1963, quoted from Castles and Miller, 2009: 35–36). Others perceive ethnicity as a strategic option. Wallman (1986), for example, speaks of situational or instrumental ethnicity, arguing that ethnicity is invoked whenever members of a specific group decide that it is useful for them or maximizes their group power relative to the competition. Thus viewed, ethnicity is an emergent phenomenon that continues to develop as the positions of groups and individuals change within a dynamic social structure. As society changes, old forms of ethnic culture may die out but new forms may be generated (Yancey et al., 1976).

A third model of ethnicity stresses the fluid, situational, and dynamic character of ethnic identity, a property that emphasizes socially constructed aspects. Thus, particular ethnic boundaries are continuously negotiated and reconstructed by ethnic group members as well as by others (Nagel, 1994). One concept related to the reconstruction of ethno-cultural identity is the notion of “proximal host.” This concept refers to the group to which the absorbing society is likely to assign newly arrived immigrants in view of their appearance, national origin, and language, as well as to how immigrants perceive themselves within the ethnic concept and whether the group closest in its characteristics will accept the newcomers as suitable members (Mittelberg and Waters, 1992).

The ethnic revival theory views ethnicity as the manifestation of an individualism that aspires to enrich the individual’s life and promote self-fulfillment (Alba, 1990; Gans, 1994; Lieberman and Waters, 1988; Waters, 1990). This is principally a symbolic ethnicity of voluntarism and personal needs for identification, as opposed to specific cultural behaviors and group organization that had once been central and prominent (Gans, 1994). The symbols used by later generations of immigrants may be more overt and visible than the cultures and organizations of earlier immigrants, including the emphasis on ancestral origin in a certain country or geographical region. What is portrayed as an ethnic revival or a religious revival is, in fact, nothing but a new phase in the assimilation of ethnic and cultural groups into the general local society (Gans, 1994).

Other theories regarding social absorption and assimilation of immigrants have also changed. Early classical approaches claimed that the longer migrants stay in the new destination, the more they socially and economically resemble natives, even if their ethnic origin

continues to have a residual influence on their structural mobility. These approaches also claimed that both migrants and natives change with inter-group encounter (Alba and Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964). A subsequent approach, known as segmented assimilation, emphasized the integration of immigrants into the socioeconomic underclass and their convergence into cultural-behavior patterns of backward subgroups (Portes and Zhou, 1993).

Finally, the transnational approach proposes that immigrants' ethnic identity in the global era is anchored in various geographical spaces that transcend the familiar borders of the nation-state (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992). The mismatch between the geographical space (the destination country) and the social space in which most immigrants go about their daily lives (the origin and destination country) drives an identity-construction process that has its points of reference in different places. Consequently, this identity is constructed in a complex process in which immigrants must merge different and often contrasting elements that originate in different geo-cultural spaces (Vertovec, 1999). The transnational approach views migration as a dynamic process that accommodates variables at both the macro-social and the micro-social levels. Migration is coupled with ethnic, community and family networks and relationships, and economic relations with more than one country (Guarzino, 2003; Gold, 1997).

Today's immigrants, unlike those of the past, are seldom required to suppress specific dimensions of their identity to blend into the nonimmigrant group. Instead, thanks to the adoption of multicultural policies in most Western countries, these immigrants find ways to accommodate their range of identities concurrently by using each identity intelligently in different social contexts (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 2001). One possible component of this dynamic transnational identity is the *diasporic identity*, in which the values, social norms, and narratives of the homeland (the origin country) are maintained in the destination country. This drawing of cultural borders amid structural integration gives immigrants a sense of being "at home abroad." Central to the particular identity of members of a diaspora is the maintenance of relations with the origin country, as reflected at several different and complementary levels, among them familial, economic, social and religious (Shain, 1999; Sheffer, 2003).

Ethnic identity and identification among Israeli immigrants: Previous findings

As argued in the introduction, most immigrants from Israel reside in North America, primarily the United States. Therefore, most of the studies were conducted there. Here I present some main findings about first-generation Israeli immigrants in the United States and some scanty findings gleaned in Europe, mainly in London and Paris. I begin by describing ethnic identity and identification among Israelis in the United States and among those in Europe.

The main social and economic attributes of first-generation Israeli immigrants in the United States - high rates of labor-force participation, homeownership, and proficiency in English - definitely affect their sense of belonging and their self-identity, which become more and more American as time passes. Given their strong initial traits, they immerse themselves and integrate into the American social mainstream (Lev Ari, 2008a; Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010).

Culturally, the national identity of Israelis is based mainly on a subjective sense of Israeliness and Jewishness and includes characteristics of secular Judaism. Most American Israelis do not belong to synagogues or other local Jewish organizations and they do not conscientiously observe religious rituals (Mittelberg and Waters, 1992). The longer they stay in the United States, however, the more diligently they observe major Jewish holidays and ethnic and religious precepts. The definition of Israeli immigrants' identity is essentially ambivalent. On the one hand, they are eager to adopt a binational identity - Israeli *and* American - and thereby to benefit, depending on changing circumstances and personal needs, both from the opportunities and openness of American society and from the warmth and intimacy of the Israeli community (Gold, 1992).

During the 1970s and 1980s, the proximal host of the Israeli immigrants, the American Jews, did not welcome Israelis, who were defined as marginal in both American and Israeli society. Jewish Americans believed that the role of Israelis was to defend Israel and not to emigrate from it. This attitude has changed recently. The Israeli immigrant community has attained recognition and developed ties with the local Jewish community (Gold, 2002; Gold and Phillips, 1996). Today, instead of perceiving Israeli immigrants as a marginal and alienated group, the proximal host (American Jewry) accepts them as part of their community to a greater extent than before. Specifically, Jewish-American organizations have become aware of how beneficial

Israelis can be for the Jewish community, for example by helping to preserve the Jewish character of Jewish-American neighborhoods as other Jewish immigrants did in the past, by frequenting businesses in Jewish neighborhoods and renting and buying houses there, and by participating in synagogue and school activities (Gold, 1999; Gold and Phillips 1996). Consequently, these organizations have begun making a greater effort to absorb Israelis (Gold, 2002).

As time passes, the self-definition as "Israeli immigrant" has been losing ground to an American-Israeli or even simply an American identity. Still, most Israelis, even after being in the United States for a considerable length of time, identify themselves primarily and principally as Israelis. By so doing, they express characteristics of a transnational ethnic identity. Furthermore, even when their identification space is the United States, this is not necessarily an "American" space as such. Instead, it reflects the ethno-religious uniqueness of Israelis and their recourse to the well-developed institutional infrastructures of the veteran local Jewish community (Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010). When these immigrants become parents, they face a dilemma regarding their children's education. If they do nothing, their children may forget their Jewish-Israeli roots, but if they enroll them in exclusively Jewish schools they become subject to the identity construction difficulties of diaspora Jews. Transnational ties through frequent visits to Israel expose the children to their family and their roots. Thus, by developing formal and informal communal activities (including membership in Israeli youth movements) and by maintaining transnational ties, first-generation Israeli immigrants hope to preserve their children's Israeli-Jewish identity in the host society (Gold, 2002; Lev Ari, 2008b).

The few previous studies about Israelis in Europe yielded findings that resemble those for American Israelis in some ways but differ in others. The proximal hosts of Israelis in Europe, particularly in France and the United Kingdom, were not studied with regard to their attitudes towards Israeli immigrants in their countries. Yet some studies pointed to the vitality of the relationship with Israel and Jewish identity in these two Jewish communities. The Jewish population in France is slowly decreasing, primarily due to emigration, mainly to Israel. About 30% of all French Jews aged 15 and over visited Israel within the previous year (2004) and even more have been to Israel at some point. About 23% of French Jews expressed an intention to immigrate to Israel. These migration intentions are related to anti-Semitism in France but also point to a strong Jewish affiliation (DellaPergola, 2013). The Jews

in France express their Jewish identity and identification by presenting themselves as Jews, being affiliated with traditional Judaism (51%), and having strong attachments to Israel. Yet like Jews in other European countries, the Jews of France, particularly those who are young and highly educated (Cohen, E. H. 2006). Several surveys conducted in the United Kingdom pointed to a population that is steadily decreasing and less affiliated with the organized community as well as a decline in synagogue membership (DellaPergola, 2013). One previous study pointed to strong feelings of attachment to Israel among United Kingdom Jews (43%), 78% of whom have visited Israel at least once. This attachment with Israel can be partially explained by the fact that many Jews in the Kingdom Jews have relatives in Israel and also somewhat by their interactions with Israeli immigrants (Schmool and Cohen, 1998).

Rebhun and Pupko (2010) examined Jewish ethnic identification and found that Israelis in France identify as Jews more strongly than their counterparts in the Kingdom Jews when it comes to fasting on Yom Kippur, keeping kosher, and participating in the Passover Seder. About one-fifth attend synagogue services at least once a month. In both France and the Kingdom Jews, more than half of Jewish parents send their children to Jewish schools, either part-time or day schools.

Gold (2002) studied Israeli communities in Europe (London and Paris), the United States (New York and Los Angeles) and Australia (Sydney). She found that while most of the Israelis had been secular before immigration, after moving away they felt a need to be involved in Jewish communities and to send their children to Jewish schools to strengthen their Jewish and Israeli ethnic identity. First-generation Israeli immigrants consider their Israeli national identity as central to their ethnic identity as immigrants. This Israeli identity includes their experiences in the Israeli army, the Israeli climate, the Hebrew language, history, ceremonies, food, and social interaction, among other dimensions of identity reconstruction.

Hart (2004) examined Israeli immigrants in London. He found that these immigrants were hardly involved with locals of any sort, Jewish or non-Jewish, and that they followed a gradual pattern of cultural reconstruction. Older first-generation Israelis preserve an outdated image of the Israeli culture they remember from before they left. Amid their adjustment to the host society, they construct a culture in transition that preserves some Israeli elements and adopts some new aspects of the local culture. Israelis who maintain transnational ties with

Israel and recent immigrants are more predisposed to return to Israel than veteran immigrants from Israel, who tends to have businesses in London that are mainly local.

In a study of 501 former Israeli immigrants who returned to Israel (56% from North America, 28% from Europe, and the rest from elsewhere), Lev Ari (2006) found that those who returned from Europe, as opposed to from North America or elsewhere, returned to Israel due to non-instrumental motives such as familial ones. A large portion of those who returned to Israel from Europe were not born in Israel, while those who returned from North America were mostly Israel-born. Returnees from Europe noted that their places of residence in Europe had organized Jewish or Israeli communities. Yet they were more likely than those from North America to report having weak attachments to these communities and hardly having felt at home there.

The Study

Research Questions

This study describes and analyzes multiple ethnic identities and identification among first-generation Jewish Israeli immigrants in Europe, particularly in London and Paris, in two age groups (younger [≤ 34] and older [≥ 35]). The following research questions were analyzed using quantitative analysis:

- 1) What are the dimensions of ethnic identity, and which dimension is the strongest? Do Israelis in Europe identify with Israel (transnationals) and are they predisposed to return there, or do they tend to integrate with local Jews or assimilate into the local non-Jewish society, leaving their ethnic identity primarily embedded in Europe?
- 2) What variables explain each component of ethnic identity and identification? Are these socio-demographic factors (higher education attainment, marital status, residential ownership), migration characteristics (age at migration, length of stay in Europe, migration motives), connection with local Jewish community, or affiliation with specific social networks? Finally, what correlations exist among the multiple dimensions of ethnic identity and identification within each age group?

In the in-depth interviews I examine the following questions using qualitative analysis: How do Israelis describe and explain their multiple relationships with the local Jewish community, local non-Jews and other Israelis? How do position Israel in their ethnic identity reconstruction?

Methods

The quantitative method used here is based on a correlational design applied through completion of Likert-type questionnaires. In Paris the questionnaires were mainly administered online, most (80%) through Israeli House, the Israeli Consulate section in charge of maintaining social and cultural ties with Israeli immigrants in greater Paris. The remaining questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents by the researcher. In London, more than half of the questionnaires were distributed online by *Alondon*, a Hebrew-language magazine for Israeli immigrants in greater London. The rest were distributed by the researcher. The questionnaires were written in Hebrew.

The data were collected during 2006. The mixed and non-random samplings may affect the findings because they do not represent the population of Israeli immigrants in Paris and London. Still, the data may serve to expand the body of research among Israeli immigrants in Europe regarding their socio-demographic backgrounds and multiple dimensions of ethnic identity, since this group has hardly been studied before. For verification, I also compared some of my data with larger-scale studies (e.g., Rebhun and Pupko, 2010).

Statistical data processing included descriptive analysis (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) to describe the research population and the multiple ethnic identities and identification. I used T-test analysis and cross-tabulation to compare two age groups, as detailed in the next section. I employed factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha to trace dimensions of identity and internal reliability among each factor/index. Finally, a summary table includes Pearson and Chi² correlations among the independent variables, the identity dimensions, and the intention to return to Israel among each age group.

To further investigate ethnic identity and identification among Israeli immigrants in Europe, I used a qualitative method: in-depth semi-structured interviews in Hebrew, conducted in October 2006 with twenty-three Israelis in London and Paris. The contents of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed by grouping main themes into common topics that were meaningful for the research questions (Shkedi, 2003).

Participants

The quantitative research population comprised 114 respondents, of whom 56% were women. Most respondents (76%) *were born in Israel*

(similar to the findings in Rebhun and Pupko, 2010, regarding Israelis in the United Kingdom and France), 18% in Europe, and the rest (6%) in other countries.

The respondents' *average age* was 39 (range 17–76, standard deviation 13 years). This variable was recoded into two age groups: *younger*: 17–34 (52% of respondents) and *older*: 35 and older (48%). Age group served as a control variable in the summary model because it divided the sample into different groups with regard to both the independent and the dependent variables, allowing me to describe two profiles of Israelis in Europe.

About half of the respondents resided in London (54%); the rest lived in Paris (46%).

As for their *marital status*, two-thirds (64%) of the respondents were currently married, 27% were never married, and the rest (9%) were either divorced or widowed. When they left Israel, only 40% were married, 54% had never been married, and the rest (6%) had some other marital status.

Several significant differences were found between the age groups. Israelis who reside in London are older, with 61% of the younger group (aged 17–34) residing in France, compared to 31% in London. As for current marital status, 44% of members of the young group had never been married, while only 8% of those in the old group (35 or older) had this status. When they left Israel, 66% of the younger group and 41% of the older group were single (never married), and after arriving in Europe 24% of the younger group and 33% of the older group got married.

Almost all respondents (88%) work in their country of residence, 52% as wage earners and 36% as self-employed. More than two-thirds own a residence. Nearly 80% have academic degrees - bachelor's (37%), master's, (36%), or Ph.D. (5%) - and one-fifth have no degree. These findings correspond with others and point to the high socioeconomic status of Israelis who reside abroad, both in the United States (see, for example, Gold, 2002; Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010) and in Europe (Rebhun and Pupko, 2010). The younger group is more prone to unemployment than the older group (18% versus 6%, respectively) and much less inclined to be self-employed (26% vs. 50%, respectively).

Dependent variables

Of the eighteen variables (Table 1) measured on the Likert scale (**1=not** at all; **5=to a very large extent**), three dimensions of ethnic identity

were traced through factor analysis: Jewish, Israeli (transnational) and local (non-Jewish). These three indices comprise the following variables: 1) The Jewish identity index included the extent to which the respondent feels Jewish, presents him/herself as Jewish, has a clear sense of his/her Jewishness, feels it is important to have friends who share the experience of being a Jew, and is proud to be Jewish. 2) The Israeli identity (transnational) index includes emotional attachment to Israel, feeling Israeli, feeling at home in Israel, and presenting oneself as Israeli. 3) The local identity (non-Jewish) index includes emotional attachment to local country of residence (United Kingdom/France), feeling at home in the country of residence, and feeling English/French. Table 1 describes the findings regarding these three indexes. All three identity indexes demonstrate high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.75.

Predisposition to return to Israel was measured as follows: "If you intend to return to Israel, will it be within 1) one year; 2) two years; 3) five years; 4) in the future, do not know when; or 5) never?" This variable was recoded into a dummy variable: 0=will return some time in the future or never, and 1=will return within one to five years. Table 1 shows the frequencies of this variable.

Independent variables

In addition to the socio-demographic variables described above, several other independent variables were included in the summary model.

Push–pull factors were defined as follows: "What prompted you to emigrate from Israel to your current country of residence?" 1) spouse wanted to; 2) higher education; 3) work; 4) professional mobility; 5) standard of living; 6) emissary posting; 7) other motives. The various motives were recoded into three sub-groups: 1) professional (work, higher education, and professional mobility); 2) standard of living; 3) other motives (spouse, emissary posting and other).

Citizenship in Europe was measured as: 1) temporary residency (including student); 2) permanent residency; 3) citizenship; 4) other.

Jewishness of spouse was defined as: 1) born Jewish; 2) partly Jewish (one non-Jewish parent); and 3) non-Jewish. *Attitude toward having a Jewish spouse* was defined by the Likert scale (1=not at all; 5=to a very large extent). *Religiosity* was defined as 1) orthodox; 2) religious; 3) traditionally inclined; 4) secular; and 5) other.

Social networks were investigated by three items (on a scale from 1=none to 5=all of them): How many of your close friends in Europe are local Jews? Israelis? non-Jews?

Jewish community involvement was defined as follows: To what extent do you belong to and are active in the Jewish community in your place of residence? 1) do not belong and am not active; 2) belong but am not active; 3) belong and am active to a moderate extent; 4) belong and am very active.

Ties with Israel were measured through the strength of *relations of any kind with the Israeli consulate* in the participant's place of residence: (1=not at all; 5=to a very large extent) and *number of visits to Israel* during h/her stay in Europe: 1) none; 2) at least one; 3) two; 4) three or more.

Findings

Descriptive Overview

Emigration to Europe

Most respondents (81%) left Israel between the ages of 19 and 35, i.e., as young adults (average age: 28). This immigration age range resembles that of newly arrived immigrants in general (Lev Ari, 2008a) and of Israelis in the United Kingdom and France in particular (Rebhun and Pupko, 2010). Almost all the Israeli immigrants in this study are first-generation. Their average length of stay in Europe is 11 years (standard deviation: 11 years).

Only 40% hold European citizenship, 23% are permanent residents, and 37% are temporary residents (including students). Those in the older group have higher rates of citizenship than those in the younger group, but the differences are not significant (42% and 36%, respectively), even though those in the older group have been in Europe much longer (17.6 years versus 4.6 years, respectively).

The main immigration push–pull factors were standard of living (24%); work (16%); higher education (14%); emissary posting (13%); professional mobility (11%); spouse wanted to emigrate (7%); and other motives (15%). As noted in the description of variables above, these seven migration motives were recoded into three. Younger Israelis emigrated primarily to improve their standard of living (36%), for professional motives (35%), and for other motives (29%). Older Israelis emigrated from Israel to achieve professional mobility (46%) and for other motives (42%); only 12% did so to improve their standard of living as well.

Israelis immigrated to Europe primarily due to pull factors such as improving their socioeconomic status. However, while older Israelis immigrated mainly to fulfill various professional aspirations, younger Israelis did so to improve their standard of living.

Jewishness of spouse and religiosity

Almost all the participants have Jewish parents (97%). Among those who had a spouse at the time the data were collected (75% of the respondents), 78% claimed that the spouse was Jewish, 12% partly Jewish (having one non-Jewish parent), and 10% non-Jewish. No age difference was found here. However, when asked about their attitude toward the importance of having a Jewish spouse, only 18% considered it important to a large or very large extent, and on average those in the older group considered this more important than those in the younger group (2.76 and 2.05, respectively).

Seventy-four percent of the respondents define themselves as secular, 24% as traditional, and the rest (2%) as religious or other. These findings closely resemble those of Rebhun and Pupko (2010) with respect to Israelis in the United Kingdom and France and of other studies of Israeli-born groups in North America (Lev Ari, 2008a).

Notably, participants in the younger group perceived themselves as secular to a greater extent than did those in the older group (83% and 67%, respectively), in addition to their more liberal attitude toward having a non-Jewish spouse.

Social networks and local Jewish community involvement

The respondents were asked whether their closest friends are local Jews, Israelis, or non-Jews. Fewer than half (46%) indicated that their closest friends are Israelis (to a large or very large extent), 17% claimed to have close friends among local Jews, and only 12% claimed to have close friends among local non-Jews. Those in the older group have stronger relations with local Jews than those in the younger group (2.61 and 2.20, respectively), while younger participants tend to associate more with local non-Jews (2.48 and 2.14, respectively).

Most respondents (86%) reported that their place of residence has an organized Jewish community. Yet only one-third belong to this community and are active within it to a moderate or a large extent, and those in the older group are more inclined to have such relations than those in the young group (2.15 versus 1.69, respectively).

Israelis in Europe tend to associate primarily with Israelis who are

also immigrants (i.e., maintain a diasporic social network) and have barely integrated with local Jews or assimilated with local non-Jews. However, the tendency to integrate with local Jews is higher among the group of older Israelis, while the tendency to assimilate with local non-Jews is higher among young Israelis. In addition, although most Israelis reported the existence of an organized Jewish community in their place of residence, the majority, particularly those in the younger group, do not belong to and are not active in this community.

Transnational connections with Israel

When asked about visiting Israel while living in Europe, 90% of respondents reported having visited three times or more. Older Israelis (who've been in Europe for a longer period of time) visited slightly more often on average than members of the younger group (4.00 visits versus 3.70, respectively). Transnational connections with Israel via regular visits are high in both age groups but the Israeli consulate is rarely used, particularly by younger Israelis.

Ethnic identity and identification

Table 1 shows three dimensions of ethnic identity and identification: Jewish, Israeli (transnational), and local (non-Jewish). Israeli identity and identification seems to be the strongest of the three. The respondents are attached to Israel, feel and present themselves as Israeli, and, of course, feel at home in their homeland. The standard deviation of Israeli identity is also the lowest, indicating that the respondents are homogeneous in their Israeli identity and identification. This homogeneity is also reflected in the insignificant differences found between the age groups, i.e., both younger and older Israelis have a strong Israeli identity.

Jewish identity is the next strongest ethnic identity, although it is much weaker than Israeli identity. Jewish identity is expressed particularly in being proud of Jewishness, a clear sense of the meaning of being Jewish, and feeling Jewish. The respondents present themselves less as Jewish than as Israeli and consider it moderately important to have friends who share the Jewish experience. The responses regarding Jewish identity were more heterogeneous than those relating to Israeli identity and age differences were found: older Israelis had a much stronger Jewish identity than younger Israelis (4.13 versus 3.63, respectively).

Local identity and identification were much weaker than Israeli or Jewish identity and identification. The respondents feel moderately at

home in and emotionally attached to the United Kingdom or France. They also feel English or French to a small extent. The local non-Jewish identity is more heterogeneous than the other ethnic identities (Israeli and Jewish). Even so, no significant age differences were found (although younger Israelis were slightly more identified with non-Jews than older Israelis, 2.47 versus 2.42, respectively).

When asked about their willingness to return to Israel, fewer than half (48%) of the respondents said they would be willing to return within 1–5 years, 45% stated their intent to return at some indefinite time in the future, and only 7% said they would never return. The predisposition to return to Israel was twice as high among younger Israelis than among those in the older group (63% and 29%, respectively).

Although the respondents' Israeli identity proved very strong (see also Rebhun and Pupko, 2010), fewer than half indicated an intention to return to Israel within a specified period of time. While strong Israeli identity is common among both the younger and the older groups, the young are much more predisposed to return to Israel within a specified period. Jewish identity is weaker than Israeli identity, particularly among younger Israelis. Finally, while assimilation into the local non-Jewish population is hardly characteristic of Israelis in Europe, almost one-third of the younger group already identifies strongly with the locals (compared to less than one-fourth of the older group).

In the next section, I present a summary model that includes the various variables that explain the multiple ethnic identities and identification. Who are those who identify as Israelis, Jews, English, or French? And who are those who will return to Israel? Additionally, what characterizes each age group regarding the multiple identities and their explanatory factors?

Variables that explain ethnic identity and intention to return to Israel

A comparison of the two age groups of Israelis revealed several variables correlated with multiple dimensions of ethnic identity and identification, but in a different pattern. As noted above, Table 2 includes only those variables that were correlated with *at least two* dependent variables at the level of .20 or higher.

Jewish identity is explained very similarly by two variables in each age group. Those who consider having a Jewish spouse to be important and are also active in the local Jewish community have a strong Jewish identity. Aside from these two variables, each age group has a unique set of variables that are correlated with Jewish identity.

Table 1. Ethnic identity and identification among Israelis in Europe (means and standard deviation, 1=not at all; 5=to a large extent) and predisposition to return to Israel (0=sometime in the future or never; 1=within one to five years)

Ethnic identity component	Mean	Standard Deviation
Jewish identity		
Feel Jewish	4.00	1.07
Present yourself as Jewish	3.82	1.32
Have a clear sense of your Jewishness	4.03	1.01
It is important to have friends who share the experience of being a Jew	3.19	1.31
Proud to be Jewish	4.31	0.96
Jewish identity index	3.86	0.88
Israeli identity (transnational)		
Emotionally attached to Israel	4.70	0.54
Feel Israeli	4.52	0.82
Feel at home in Israel	4.37	0.92
Present yourself as Israeli	4.39	0.90
Israeli (transnational) identity index	4.50	0.61
Local (non-Jewish) identity		
Emotionally attached to local country of residence (United Kingdom/France)	2.53	1.08
Feel at home in local country of residence	2.92	1.08
Feel English/French	1.87	1.11
Local (non-Jewish) identity index	2.46	0.90
Predisposition to return to Israel	Sometime in the future/never	Within 1 to 5 years
	55%	45%

Among younger Israelis (age 34 or less), those who own residences and left Israel when they were older have a weaker Jewish identity. Nevertheless, having close friends among local Jews is positively correlated with Jewish identity.

Among the older group, those born in countries other than Israel, were married at the time of the research, and lived longer in Europe are those with the stronger Jewish identity. In addition, as educational attainment increases, Jewish identity decreases among the older group.

Some theoretical explanations from a study of Israelis in the United States (Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010) can reinforce some of the above findings. Israelis in the United States who were born outside of Israel primarily tend to keep kosher, observe the Sabbath and join Jewish communal organizations, while those born in Israel tend to observe Jewish holidays and attend synagogue. These differences express, at least partially, patterns of behavior that were experienced differently by Israeli immigrants, as being part of the majority (in Israel) or part of the minority (by being born and raised in other countries). Living in Jewish neighborhoods, being active in the Jewish community and having a Jewish spouse and Jewish friends encourage both younger and older Israelis to be identified as Jews. Similar to the findings for the United States, Jewish identity is more pronounced among Israelis in Europe who have lived there longer and are married (Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010). But contrary to Israelis in the United States, who tended to be more educated and have a stronger Jewish identity, older Israelis in Europe express different patterns, to be further discussed in the next section.

Transnational identity is very strong among members of both age groups, but is differently correlated within each group. Among younger Israelis, those who have lived longer in Europe, do not own a residence, have a Jewish spouse and consider it important to have a Jewish spouse exhibit a stronger Israeli or transnational identity. Among older Israelis, in contrast, strong transnational identity correlates with being married and belonging to and being active in the local Jewish community. These findings also correspond with other studies regarding Israelis in the United States (Lev Ari, 2008a; Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010), with the exception of longer stay in Europe, which was found to be negatively correlated with transnational identity. In the United States not owning a house and having Jewish social networks were highly correlated with transnational identity and a lower tendency to settle in the US.

Both younger and older Israelis who were born in Israel and never married are more predisposed to return to Israel. As for unique patterns

within the age groups, younger Israelis who are predisposed to return are those who have lesser educational attainments, non-Jewish spouses and non-Jewish close friends. Among older Israelis, those with higher education, short length of stay in Europe, older age at immigration, no close friends among local Jews and who live in a place that has no organized Jewish community are more predisposed to return to Israel.

It seems that in both groups of Israelis, their predisposition to return to Israel is embedded in the relatively limited social and professional achievements obtained by their immigration (see also Lev Ari, 2008a, regarding Israelis in the United States). In particular, those in the older group living in Europe in non-Jewish communities develop even greater feelings of alienation than do younger Israelis, since they lived in Israel longer, were more exposed to Israeli culture, and thus more pulled to return to their family and friends back home.

With respect to local (assimilative) ethnic identity, younger Israelis who are more educated, were relatively young at migration, resided longer in Europe, had a non-Jewish spouse, and had close friends in the local community (particularly non-Jews) have a stronger local identity. Conversely, living in neighborhoods with an organized Jewish community somewhat discourages younger Israelis to assimilate into the local non-Jewish population.

Among the group of older Israelis, those who never married, were born in Israel, own their own homes, immigrated as young adults, were in Europe for an extended period time, and have a non-Jewish spouse and non-Jewish close friends are also predisposed to assimilate.

Finally, multiple ethnic identity and identification are inter-correlated. Those with a strong Jewish identity also have a strong Israeli identity, and vice versa. Israeli identity is negatively correlated with local identity, but only among older Israelis. Israeli identity is also positively correlated with predisposition to return to Israel, but only among younger Israelis.

The following factors are highly correlated with the tendency to assimilate: age, unmarried status, residence outside of Jewish communities, a non-Jewish spouse, leaving for many years in Europe, higher educational attainment, low Jewish identity and identification, and being born in Israel. Residing far from the Jewish community while being highly attached to Israel may predict a predisposition to assimilate in the future as a choice of ethnic identity and identification, as discussed further in the next section.

Table 2. Variables that explain identity dimensions and tendency to return to Israel by age groups (Pearson correlations)

	Jewish identity			Israeli identity (transnational)			Local identity			Return to Israel (0=no; 2=yes)		
	34-	35+	35+	34-	34-	35+	34-	34-	35+	34-	34-	35+
Birthplace: 1=Israel; 2=Europe; 3-8=other countries		.21										
Marital status: 0=never married; 1=married		.22				.26*						
Home ownership: 0=no 1=yes		-.26*				-.21						.31*
Higher education: 1=high school; 6-7 graduate Ph.D.		-.20				-.21				.28*		-.25*
Length of stay in Europe		.24				.24*				.24*		.21
Age at migration (years)		-.25*				-.33*				-.28*		-.26*
Jewishness of spouse: 1=Jewish; 2-3 partly/non-Jewish						-.33*				.20		.24
Important to have Jewish spouse: 1=not at all; 5=to a very large extent		.33**				.45**				.22		-.39**
Close friends are Jewish: 1=not at all; 5=to a very large extent		.33*				.33*				.25*		.24
Close friends are not Jewish: 1=not at all; 5=to a very large extent										.25*		.24
Organized Jewish community: 1=not at all; 5=to a very large extent										-.23*		-.22
Belong to and active in Jewish community: 1=no; 4=active and belong		.45**				.27*				.20		
Jewish identity		--				--				.30*		.32*
Israeli identity (transnational)		.30*				.32*				--		--
Local identity										-.31*		-.31*
Return to Israel										.28*		--

* $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$

Summary and Conclusions

This paper described and analyzed multiple identities and identification among first-generation Jewish Israeli immigrants in Europe, specifically in London and Paris. It examined whether these immigrants identify with Israel, making them transnationals, or whether they tend to integrate into the local Jewish population or assimilate into the local non-Jewish society, granting them an ethnic identity primarily embedded in Europe. To further understand this unique group of first-generation immigrants, the paper then analyzed multiple dimensions of ethnicity using quantitative and qualitative analyses across two age groups. Israelis in Europe are similar to those who reside in North America regarding some of their ethnic identities. Yet as noted earlier in this paper, the United Kingdom and France differ from the United States in their policies towards immigrants (Castle and Miller, 2009). Hence, some differences were found among Israeli immigrants when the various countries were compared. I discuss these differences as well as those found within Israelis in Europe by comparing two age groups.

Like their counterparts in the United States, Israelis in Europe, both young and old, possess human capital that enables them to integrate successfully into the host society, at least from the economic standpoint. They also belong to the group of contemporary immigrants who react primarily to pull variables in Western countries rather than to push variables from Israel. Hence, it could be argued that Israelis in Europe, specifically the United Kingdom and France, are privileged minorities and probably do not need to develop an instrumental ethnicity and strive for political or other goals by belonging to an Israeli ethnic group, as do unprivileged minorities. Immigrants from Israel have more options from which to choose their ethnic identity, and like their counterparts in the United States, they can indeed opt to become European-Israelis. Thus, ethnic identity and identification among Israelis in Europe may be characterized as symbolic (Gans, 1994) because it is voluntary, individual, and a matter of choice. Israeli immigrants can choose to become part of an Israeli or Jewish community and experience some ethnic or religious revival or to assimilate into the non-Jewish population.

It seems that Israelis in Europe can also be seen as experiencing a dynamic ethnicity reconstruction (Nagel, 1994). The in-depth interviews made it clear that their identity is fluid and dynamic and that they become endowed with a different ethnic identity through their interactions with local Jews and non-Jews. Part of the dynamic reconstruction of ethnic identity among immigrants is the relationship they form with their

proximal host (Mittelberg and Waters, 1992). Israelis in Europe perceive their relations with their proximal host, the local Jews, as very distant and alienated. They consider local Jews to be different from themselves, and they share very few connections. Although the Israelis perceive local Jewish communities in both the United Kingdom and France to be highly organized, they feel, in particular those who are younger and those in France, that these communities have only limited relevance to them. A 26-year-old woman student in Paris described these relations: “The Jews are organized around synagogues and Hebrew studies . . . as well as daily activities such as circumcision ceremonies and bar and bath mitzvahs The Israelis in our age group do everything to avoid this [Jewish] community. It threatens us a lot since it confronts us with Jewish symptoms that are diasporic and sometimes even outrageous.”

The older Israelis in London are somewhat more integrated with the proximal host and have a stronger Jewish identity than do younger Israelis. Some of these older Israelis enroll their children in Jewish schools so the children will not lose their Jewish roots completely. A few also have close friends among local Jews. However, for most first-generation Israelis, even those who reside in London and are older, the Jewish community seems to be a distant and irrelevant proximal group. For example, a 56-year-old woman describes a similar state of alienation between local Jews and Israelis: “The Jewish community is organized around the synagogue; I do not know that much [about them]. For young Jews, all encounters are after school in the synagogue. Israelis don’t like that; they don’t go to synagogues. When I wanted to have a bar mitzvah for my son, they told me ‘You’re not a member.’ But then we said ‘We’re not members but we’re Jewish. If you won’t allow us, he won’t have a bar mitzvah,’ and then they agreed immediately.”

Of all the multiple ethnic identities and identification, it is obvious that transnational identity is dominant among both younger and older Israelis. Transnational identity is characteristic of Israelis in Europe because it takes into account both structural and personal motives of migration and because it perceives migration as impermanent, allowing the possibility of return or remigration in the future (Dinnerstein et al., 1990; Guarnizo, 2003). Israelis in Europe are strongly attached to Israel. Both in Paris and in London, Israelis are proud to present themselves as such. In Paris, however, some said they refrain from doing this for security reasons: “I’m afraid; there are a lot of Arabs. I even considered wearing a wooden cross” (a 58-year-old woman). In London, most Israelis present themselves as Israeli but not as Jewish. A 58-year-old

woman said, "I always say I'm Israeli when asked; I wear a *hamsa*"

My findings resemble those found among first-generation Israeli immigrants in North America (see, for example, Gold, 2002; Lev Ari, 2008a; Rebhun and Lev Ari, 2010; Shokeid, 1991). Although Israelis in North America retain a strong Israeli identity, those in Europe can visit Israel more readily because the travel distance is shorter. About half the Israelis in the present study keep to themselves, and if they do have diasporic social connections with other Israelis, these ties are scattered and unorganized, particularly among the young. Older Israelis have more opportunities to meet since most are married with children and have been in Europe longer. During their stay in Europe (particularly those residing in London), they manage to find ways to preserve their Israeli identity (e.g., the Israeli Business Club or *Alondon*). They also perceive the need to expose their children to other Israelis as another barrier to assimilation. Younger Israelis, on the other hand, particularly those who reside in Paris and already have non-Jewish spouses, have less opportunity or need to maintain their Israeli identity in Europe.

Assimilation into the local non-Jewish population proved to be significant, primarily among young single Israelis. Although assimilation is not common among most Israelis in Europe, some indicators may be detected, particularly among younger Israeli residents of Paris. Those in this group tend to have non-Jewish spouses (more than one-fifth), most feel detached from the local Jewish community, and some spend their leisure time with non-Jews. Despite these positive feelings toward the host community, especially evident among the young, one 30-year-old Israeli man stated that "French society is not an easy one to be absorbed in Paris is a quiet, closed society and they'll make you feel like a stranger more than other places."

Western countries are more predisposed than in the past to allow immigrants to choose their ethnic identity and identification (Levitt and Glick-Schiller, 2004). Israelis in Europe and the United States are very similar in their socio-demographic characteristics, but their interactions with the proximal hosts - local Jews as well as local non-Jews - are different. Thus, the dynamic reconstruction of their ethnic identity and identification differs as well. Israelis in Europe resemble Israelis in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s in their detachment from local Jewish communities, especially among the young. Yet since Israel is closer Europe than to the United States, it is easier for Israelis in Europe to maintain ongoing relations with their homeland. These relations absolve them from having to create new social networks in Europe, particularly among young and single Israelis.

Living in Europe allows Israelis to flourish economically without having to identify with or belong to a cultural and social ethnic niche. For first-generation Israeli immigrants in Europe, ethnic identity is multiple: primarily transnational but also dynamic and constantly changing through various interactions and, of course, susceptible to local and global political and economic current events. For younger Israeli immigrants, however, assimilation into the non-Jewish population appears to be a possible form of identity and identification. This assimilation process may be slowed or moderated by young adults who build bridges with local Jewish communities by teaching Hebrew at JCCs or being otherwise active in the Jewish communities, in tandem with their transnational formal connections with Israel. Both sides may benefit from this process of reconstructing ethnic Israeli-Jewish identity and collaborative identification with local Jews, a process that may contribute to strengthening and revitalizing European Jewry at large.

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