Participatory Destigmatization Strategies among Palestinian Citizens of Israel, Ethiopian Jews and Mizrahi Jews

Nissim Mizrachi

and

Hanna Herzog

Abstract

This study examines how members of minority groups in Israel cope with stigmatization in everyday life. It focuses on working class members of three minority groups: Palestinian citizens of Israel, Mizrahim (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin) and Ethiopian Jews. It reveals the use of racial, ethnic and national markers in daily processes of social inclusion and exclusion in one socio-political context. Palestinians, a group with a fixed external identity and a limited sphere of participation, were found to use the language of race and racism when describing stigmatizing encounters. Ethiopian Jews, the most phenotypically marked group, strictly avoided this language. For their part, Mizrahi Jews perceived the very discussion of stigmatization as stigmatizing, while often using "contingent detachment" to distance themselves from negative group identities. Despite differences between the communities and the powerful role of the state in establishing symbolic and social boundaries, members of all three groups expressed their intention to achieve or retain avenues for participation in the larger society.

Positioned Identity in Context

As a body of literature, the research on race and racism, together with nationalism and ethnicity, has been fragmented along disciplinary, substantive as well as regional lines (Brubaker, 2009). The present study attempts to avoid this pitfall by examining these concepts in one socio-political context, that of the Israeli nation-state. By exploring how ordinary people belonging to three minority groups – Arabs, Ethiopian Jews and Mizrahi Jews – articulate their daily responses to stigmatization and exclusion, we show that the use of these notions is molded by a powerful state ideology and social structure. (We view state ideology here as part of the collective narrative used in daily sense-making, to shapes and reshapes people's moral experience; see Kleinman and Hall-Clifford, 2009).) Within the Israeli academic and public discourse, the three selected groups are perceived as variously stigmatized.

What we will show in this paper is that working class members of Israeli society differentially apply notions of nationality, race and ethnicity as rhetorical markers of social inclusion/exclusion. In the Israeli case, nationality is the primary key to participation in various social domains. Whereas phenotypical and ethnic markers are highly meaningful within the Jewish segment of society regarding the Ethiopians and the Mizrahim, they are eclipsed by Jewishness as the key to first-class citizenship. Jewishness functions as the primary socio-political marker dividing Arabs and Jews. Yet, it is nationality that creates the crucial symbolic and social boundaries separating communities in many spheres of social participation (e.g., education, residence, marriage and the family, language and naming). The paper describes how working class members of these three groups employ the available cultural repertoires to make sense of their situations and form effective destigmatization strategies while

1

retaining their dignity. As a prelude to the analysis, we provide brief descriptions of the three groups studied.

Arabs

The first group concerning us are Arabs (or Palestinian Arabs)[i] living within the borders of Israel. This group, comprising approximately 19 percent of Israel's population; the majority are Muslim, with a sizeable minority of Christians (Ghanem, 2001) and often identified with the enemy in the context of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.[ii] While formally included as citizens[iii], as non-Jews, Israeli Arabs are nonetheless socially excluded by powerful social and symbolic boundaries in the sites where daily life unfolds: residence, land ownership, labor market participation, housing and political representation (Ghanem, 2001; Shafir and Peled, 2002). The vast majority have been proletarianized (Rosenfeld, 1964); as a group, they occupy Israeli society's lowest strata (Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov, 1993).

Socio-political boundaries are strengthened by geographic segregation (Massey and Denton, 1993; Yiftachel, 1997). Researchers have begun of late to focus on social sites that do offer opportunities for mundane encounters between social groups. "Mixed cities" such as Haifa, where 10 percent of Israel's Arab citizens reside, are among those sites (Monterescu and Rabinowitz, 2007). Another is the university (Abu-Rabia-Queder, 2008; Erdreich, 2006; Herzog, 2004; Kaplan, Yonah, and Abu-Sa'ad, 2001; Weiner-Levi, 2003). However, only a relatively small segment of the Arab experience is examined in these studies, which dwell on middle-class individuals (less than 20 percent of their community). The third major site is the labor market. Extensive studies have brought to light the ethno-class and occupational divisions separating the two groups (Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov, 1993). For

2

working class Arabs, references to their collective identity often allude to some association with external enemies (Palestinians in the occupied territories, the radical political leaders, etc.)[iv].

Ethiopians

The Ethiopian case adds an overtly racial component to stigmatization in the Israeli arena. The group's entry into Israel was authorized in 1973, based on biblical references deemed to entitle them to admission as full-fledged Jewish immigrants. Approximately 110,000 Ethiopian Jews currently live in Israel.

Research on Ethiopian Jews has been growing since 1987 (Kaplan and Rosen, 1993, p 163), with scholars only recently turning to the community's experience of racially based discrimination (see for example Ben-Eliezer, 2004; Kimmerling, 2004; Shabtai and Kagen, 2005) as well as identity negotiation (Seeman, 2009). One especially sensitive site of discrimination is religion as some rabbinical institutions in Israel still contesting the authenticity of Ethiopian Judaism. Other studies have focused on how contacts with the larger society internal affect racialization (Goodman, 2008; Salmon, 2003) among other issues. Hence, whereas Ethiopians, as Jews, are officially part of the national/religious collectivity, their phenotype continues to function as a stigmatizing marker in their daily encounters with the Jewish population.

Mizrahi Jews

Until the 1980s, Mizrahi Jews (or Mizrahim) constituted almost 50% of Israel's Jewish population[v]. Their proportion declined due to intermarriage and the massive wave of Russian immigration in the 1990s. Critical sociologists have

elaborated the ideological, discursive and historical roots of ethnic inequality in Jewish Israel (Eyal, 2006; Herzog, 1984, 1985; Mizrachi, 2004; Shenhav, 2000, 2006; Shohat, 1989, 1999, 2001; Swirski, 1999; Yonah, 2005). Drawing on Shafir's (1996) notion of Zionism, Shenhav shows how Mizrahi identity has been powerfully fractured to ensure that "ethnic boundaries do not cross political boundaries" (Shenhav, 2006, p. 11). The gap between *Mizrahim* (Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin) and *Ashkenazim* (Jews of European origin) regarding access to Israel's structure of opportunities has likewise been extensively documented (Ayalon and Shavit, 2004; Cohen, Haberfeld and Kristal 2007; Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein, 2004).

Inequality and social boundaries between ethnic groups within Israel has also been intensely debated in terms of politics of recognition. In Israel, the multicultural debate has been couched in terms of the pitfalls of ethno-national statehood as well as the effect of Zionist nation-building policies on ethnic divisions in education, housing and the job market (Bernstein, 1981; Smooha, 1978)[vi]. This same literature has dwelled on how western conceptions of universalism, modernism, reason and progress have yielded a stratified cultural economy that identifies Mizrahi Jews with the "Orient" (Khazzoom, 2003, 2008; Shenhav, 2006).). In its critical engagement with definitions of ethnicity, much Israeli research has demonstrated that social inequality endures in the second, third and even fourth generation of Mizrahim (Ayalon and Shavit, 2004; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004[vii]; Cohen et al., 2007; Haberfeld and Cohen, 2007; Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein, 2004; Stier and Shavit, 2003; Swirski, 1999).

From the perspective of structure, Mizrahim are under-represented in elite positions in all major institutions, including non-sectoral political parties. Hence,

although Mizrahim are considered to be integral members of society, a strong correlation remains between country of origin and social class along the Mizrahi/Ashkenazi axis. Although historically, Mizrahi Jews were often derogatively referred to as "blacks" (*shchorim* in Hebrew, *shvartzes* in Yiddish), in terms of outward identification, ethnoracial markers are frequently amorphous and remain highly dependent on class and habitus (e.g., accent, "look", phenotype (among Yemenites), and names) The use of the term "black", when it did have some phenotypical corroboration, was used primarily as an ethnic epithet, conflated with orientalism.

The following tables summarize this brief review. Table 1 captures the differences in the structural positions of the three groups (see for example Mizrachi et al., 2007, Swidler, 1986, 2003). Table 2 lists several of the social and symbolic boundaries separating the groups described while Table 3 brings together information on the major social markers identified with these groups (see Brubaker, 2009).

Insert Tables 1, 2 and 3 here

Method

Our research compares accounts of stigmatization and destigmatization as reported by 90 interviewees, aged 20-260 of both genders; there were 30 respondents in each of the three ethno-national groups). These respondents belong to the lower-middle and working class, defined as employed in low-status white collar workers and blue collar works, and do not have a college degree. We draw on in-depth interviewing in order to access alternative understandings of selected concepts as used in everyday life (Emerson, 2001) Respondents were interviewed by in-group members in their native language, with few exceptions.. The sample was constructed through multi-entry snowballing. The interviews themselves were conducted in

locations chosen by the respondents. Confidentiality was ensured, and interviewed taped, transcribed and coded using Atlas.ti after receiving the interviewee's consent (see Herzog, 2005).

Findings

Palestinian Citizens of Israel (Arabs)

From our perspective, we repeat, the main challenge for Arab citizens of Israel is how to maintain their dignity while enlarging the scope of their participation in the public sphere as members of a stigmatized national minority. Central to the moral experience of Arabs and their destigmatization strategies is their unique positioned identity. This position is strongly demarcated by their definition as "Others" in the Zionist narrative and, as a result, by their marginal integration into larger Jewish society in every sphere of social life (Mizrachi, Drori and Anspach, 2007, Swidler, 1986, 2003). And so, their sense of collective identity is clearly distinguished from Jewish collective identity.[viii] When discriminated against by Jews, they readily link tensions to collective identity as opposed to personal attributes. As we will show, the Arabs' sense of dignity is therefore more secure because it is derived, by choice, from external sources of collective identity, i.e., the greater Arab nation. Thus, the rhetoric employed is often directed at the Jewish collective rather than individual stigmatizers. Hence, acts of stigmatization, so long as they are perceived as attacking their collective identity as Arabs, do not necessarily threaten their personal sense of worth as individuals. They therefore feel free to use strong terms such as "racist" to describe their experiences and identify their stigmatizers while drawing on a widely available global lexicon and transcend the local conflict. To use the term "anti-Arab" would do the opposite and localize the conflict. Consider Rima, 32, a divorced mother of two.

6

She is the manager of a local post office in Katzir, a Jewish community, a position she obtained through a formal competitive process:

> Of course I see myself as a [traditional] Arab woman! [ix] …Jewish society is, in my opinion, racist, not everyone, but most. They look down their noses at us …I can't see myself as ever being part of such a society….

Rima makes a clear distinction between the injuries she suffers as a member of a stigmatized group, and her own personal self-worth, which she maintains and values. She explains how in the past she had mobilized her Jewish social network at work to counter stigmatization in light of the official constraints placed upon her in her capacity as a state employee. Her coping strategy thus involved a conscious instrumental use of collective identity:

> As a state employee, you're not allowed to respond, even if they cursed you… even if you recognize the difference in treatment. I often heard insults and statements such as "Who do you think you are?! Get out and go back to the village you came from…." In Zichron Yaakov (another Jewish town), it was easier. I worked with two other [Jewish] postal clerks so that they provided the support I needed. There were many situations where they protected me because I was an Arab.

Because her occupation puts her in a position that bridges the Arab and Jewish world, Rima is particularly exposed to insults and discrimination.

In Israeli society, working-class Arabs often interact with Jews in situations that are characterized by rigid superior-subordinate relations – the workplace, public sites and transfer points such as airports. In such contexts, stigmatization is often anticipated given the long-lasting deep-seated inter-communal animosity. Like many

Arabs Rima responds with silence to avoid intensification of the confrontation, -- a response clearly related to having a structural position as subordinates.

Muahed, a 30-year-old male, lives in a village and works in a recycling plant. He describes how individual behavior may induce better treatment and functions on occasion as an effective destigmatization strategy:

> They treat me well but not because they want to be nice but because I force them to treat me well... You therefore have to look at the specific place, where they get to know the individual person. When you have a chance to show what kind of person you are, not just an Arab, people tend to treat you better.

Within this context, "forcing them" means confronting the stigmatizer with conduct complying with his own (i.e., the stigmatizer's) collective norms and moral standards of good behavior. Such conduct endows the stigmatized person with a form of "moral immunity". He becomes beyond reproach in terms of the other's collective values. Any act of stigmatization, of doing him harm, transforms him into a pure victim, an act that rebounds on the stigmatizer. Muahed explains that he consciously and strategically plans his actions through a careful reading of the core norms and values of his Jewish co-workers. His perception of their moral boundaries, together with his insistence on being treated as an individual, not just "an Arab", enables him to actively participate in the larger society while keeping his personal dignity intact.

Nasrin, 34, a married woman with children, owns and operates a small private day care facility. Her strategy is similar to that of Muahed, stresses the positive force of daily human encounters. These encounters soften collective stereotypes while functioning as a moral equalizer. They allow both sides to familiarize themselves with the other:

When I get to know you and your habits, it brings people closer together. We

teach each other about each other.

For Nasrin, familiarity with the daily behaviors and habits of non-Arab Israelis softens the effects of stereotyping and stigmatization. References to basic human nature become the pegs on which she hangs her destigmatization strategies.[x]

In all three examples, the persons involved maintained long-term participation in the workplace (again, one of the few sites of consistent Jewish-Arab encounters). Three destigmatization strategies, among others, were consequently identified: use of social networks as a shield (Rima), compliance with dominant norms (Muahed) and references to shared, universal human traits (Nasrin). When articulating their experiences as members of a national minority, these informants felt free to speak in the first person when adopting their destigmatization strategies. At the same time, they were ready to adopt the global rhetoric of race and racism when describing their collective stigmatization.

Ethiopian Jews

In contrast to Arabs, the identity of Ethiopian Jews is firmly positioned within the Jewish-Israeli national identity. Also contrary to Arabs, Ethiopian Jews fervently downplay their ethnoracial identity when experiencing racism and avoid the use of the first person in describing their experiences with discrimination. This strategy suggests that they wish to avoid describing themselves as objects of racial stigmatization.

To the outside observer, this group's most blatant feature is their phenotype, their blackness. Yet, most of our informants ignore this feature and prefer to frame their experiences of stigmatization explicitly within the Zionist narrative. They define themselves as Jewish immigrants to the Promised Land who, like other Jews

(Russians, Yemenites, etc.), will eventually be absorbed in a Jewish national and color-blind collectivity. Evidence of this approach is provided by several respondents.

First, consider Avi, a 30-year-old truck driver living in Tel Aviv, firmly places his experiences within Zionist nation-building:

> That's how it is when you bring lots of groups together, from all over the world. There'll always be tension. At first there were the Yemenites; now we've replaced the Yemenites… We have to stop all this [inter-ethnic] shit. We have to look at people like people [meaning other Jews-Authors].

Avi's places all ethnic groups on an equal footing within the time line of the national narrative, centered on immigration.

Alternatively, consider Gidi, a young man (26) who works as both a guard and a DJ, who expresses his hopes that this process will be realized: "They brought us here because we're Jews and need to be here. So they have to accept us as we are…." Whereas Gidi remains on the level of wishful thinking, Tamar, who at 30 is employed in a factory while continuing to work as a youth counselor, faces reality. She, too, frames her own immediate experiences of discrimination within the melting pot vision but finds the means to maintain her self-motivation and self-worth:

> Discrimination … encourages you to …continue and fight and prove yourself, that you are capable. It's sometimes a good thing… I let them know what an Ethiopian worker is capable of.…

Tamar thus reverses the negative implications of her experience by using discrimination as a catalyst for meritocratic demonstrations of personal worth.

Among our Ethiopian Jewish respondents, none mentioned their blackness. This may be because it threatens to undermine the value of their Jewishness as the key

characteristic determining entry into the larger Israeli society.[xi] Hence, when forced to choose between race and religion as identifiers, the majority of interviewees privileged religion.

Mizrahi Jews

As the least visible of Israel's minorities, Mizrahim benefit from more flexibility in choosing their identity than do Arabs and Ethiopian Jews. They also have better prospects for full integration and participation (see Tables 1-3).[xii] A common reaction to questions on personal experiences of stigmatization is a vehement denial of their occurrence. In distancing themselves from such experiences and from the notion that they may be confronted with discrimination, the vast majority of our Mizrahi interviewees, like Ethiopian Jews, avoided using the first person. Instead, most of our Mizrahi informants preferred to narrate such events as experienced by friends and family.

Liron, 35, born in Lod (a poor, integrated Arab and Jewish city), works as a bank teller and lives in Tel Aviv. Like the others, she refuses to admit that she ever directly experienced stigmatization. Despite her denial, her account strikingly attests to an emotionally loaded experience:

I never felt discriminated against, but when they ask me about my ethnicity [during conversations-Authors], it gets a response….Ah, Moroccan, that's why you're nervous. …I always felt that there are people that the moment that I tell them my ethnicity, it inspires them. They see it as a reason for feeling superior…I've been feeling that way only recently. I feel that there are people who, if you just tell them your origins, they'll treat it as a joke. It drives me up a wall. …

Due to her fair skin, brown hair and green eyes – that is, the absence of distinguishing markers – Liron can seemingly cross ethnic boundaries. Married to an Ashkenazi, this Mizrahi Israeli lives in an integrated environment. Her story nevertheless hints at a continued source of anxiety. According to Liron, people want to expose her ethnic origins. Why?

> I think they're very curious; that's something you don't see on me. People have a tendency to categorize others. You meet someone and the first thing he asks is where you were born. The question of where I was born is a sore point for me because I was raised in Lod,[xiii] which is considered the pits, with so many stigmas. So, the moment they ask me where I was born, I immediately shrink into myself… You're always facing some stigma. You're 30+, live in Tel Aviv at least 12 years, and you're constantly forced to go back. People want to send you back, to wonder about your origins [i.e., ethnicity]. I have no way of changing how someone thinks.

Liron avoids openly articulating her experience in terms of collective discrimination. When asked to define herself, she favors references to universal human traits (e.g., curiosity). Like many Mizrahim, she often chooses not to respond directly to stigmatization events, especially if transitory, and continues to downplay her Mizrahi group identity (see Shenhav, 2006). When talking about ethnic markers, Liron and other Mizrahim adopt a strategy of "contingent detachment", that is, separation of the individual participant from his or her ethnic group in order to cope with the collective stigma (see Lamont, Morning and Mooney 2002).

In like manner, Yarden, a 35-year-old woman born in Bat Yam (another city dominated by a working-class Mizrahi population) but now living in Tel Aviv, has constructed her own definition of the word *ars* (pl. *arsim*), a term coming from the

Arabic and meaning "pimp"; it is stereotypically applied to Mizrahim, especially of Moroccan origin. In Hebrew slang, it refers to males displaying bad manners, vulgarity, flashy dress and contempt for social norms:

> [When I go home to Bat Yam, a city with a large Mizrahi population], I don't see many *ars*. *Arsim* aren't necessarily Mizrahim. *Arsim* are those who push you, talk to you with contempt, who throw things on the floor rather than in the wastebasket right next to them; they're machos who have primitive ideas about men being men and women being women. Being an *ars* means being uncouth; it's not your ethnic origin. …There's a stigma that *arsim* are Mizrahim, but there are more *arsim* than are Mizrahim….80% of Israel are *arsim*.

As this quotation illustrates, Yarden, like other Mizrahim, consciously detaches ethnicity from her personal experience. She does the same with respect to residential location, another indirect marker of ethnicity. When asked to elaborate on her comment that she doesn't look like a (Mizrahi) resident of Bat Yam, Yarden replies:

> I feel awful. What does it mean that I don't look like I come from Bat Yam?! How am I supposed to look?

A related strategy is used by Rami, a 30-year-old male, also from Bat Yam, is studying acting:

> Some *arsim* don't know how to behave. [But] Mizrahim are closer to [Jewish] tradition than Ashkenazim are. They're more attached to Zionist values...They are more connected to Israel.

Rami's use of contingent detachment goes in another, equally frequent direction. He does associate *arsim* with Mizrahim, but describes this as a type of behavior rather than a synonym for a specific ethnic group. However, the fact that he

makes such an observation distances him from the stigmatic identity associated with *arsim*. At the same time, he closely links Mizrahim/ to the state and state ideology. By doing so he claims his moral worth as a loyal member of the Zionist collective, an argument that counters Ashkenazi discrimination.

All the Mizrahi Jews interviewed displayed contingent detachment from their ethnicity as a strategy to maintain their participation in the larger society. This may indicate that any acknowledgment of stigmatization can be viewed as an admission of inferiority. Their strategies for dealing with stigmatization thus tended to be indirect, as exemplified by their common use of the third person when describing such events. They were also adamant about viewing their lower social and economic status as a temporary state, which would improve with time, and to frame their experiences as consistent with the Zionist melting pot experience.

The core tension faced by Mizrahi Jews thus rests on the gap between their structural and cultural inequality and their recognized participation in the Zionist project as Jewish citizens. The structural options for integration available to them on the one hand, and the absence of a meaningful and viable alternative separate from their national identity on the other, prevent them from formulating a destigmatization strategy explicitly based on the affirmation of their collective identity. Social movements aimed at countering this situation currently exist (for example, the Israeli Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow[xiv]) but attract predominantly highly educated and liberal Mizrahi activists. They therefore remain at the margins of the general Mizrahi experience.

Discussion

Before discussing the coping strategies available to these groups, we summarize the social position and relevant repertoires for each (see Table 4).

14

Insert Table 4 about here

Working-class Arab citizens of Israel as well as Ethiopian Jews have clear external sources of identity when seeking recognition of their worth (a separate national identity in the case of Arabs and a global racial identity as blacks, in the case of Ethiopians). For the Arabs, their structural position in Israeli society (see Tables 1-3) limits the scope of their participation in Jewish collective life to instrumental relations. Within this context, as our citation of Rima illustrated, the use of the terms "race" and "racism" helps them recruit universal standards of justice while it elevates them above the local political conflicts. This approach enables them to form what they believe to be effective destigmatization strategies.

For our study populations, references to phenotype or use of the word "racism" can ask as rhetorical markers in their relationship with out groups. For Israeli Arabs, a group having an alternative collective identity, the language of race does not pose a threat to their own personal sense of worth and dignity; simultaneously it frames the situation in global terms that discredit the Jewish stigmatizer. For Ethiopians, use of the language of race and racism, while connecting them to a global collectivity (Mizrachi and Zawdu, this issue), downplays their membership in the national Jewish community and sets them apart as outsiders. They therefore often avoid destigmatization strategies based on an affirmation of their distinctive ethnoracial identity or the use identity politics[xv] (Anspach, 1979; Bernstein, 2005) and transnational racial ideologies.[xvi] For Mizrahi Jews, raising the issue of ethnicity may often be stigmatizing in itself as it implies that their group identity is socially and politically inferior. Their belief in their ethnic transparency

15

leaves them "unmarked", denuded of all traces of ethnic stigma. Involvement with destigmatization revives ethnic stigmatization, and recalls their inferior ethnic position. In the absence of a distinctive, clearly defined collective ethnic identity, references to stigmatization and discrimination feed into a sense of inferiority that the individual may have (cf. Mizrachi, Goodman and Feniger, 2009).

Our examination of nationality, race and ethnicity in one political space has therefore revealed their rhetorical variability as markers of social inclusion and exclusion. In the present case, given the power of the national narrative, our Ethiopian and Mizrachi Jewish respondents subordinate their ethnoracial identities to their national Jewish identity

The language of identity politics was absent from all of our interviews. This implies that race and ethnicity are not uniformly viewed as resources available for use in cultural repertoires during destigmatization. This observation provides us with a point of departure for future studies. Rather than treating Western middle-class identity politics as the gold standard against which other destigmatization strategies are measured, this study invites researchers to explore alternative strategies on their own terms and recognize their importance.

References

ABU-RABIA-QUEDER, SARAB 2008 *Excluded and Loved: Educated Bedouin Women's Life Stories*, Jerusalem: Eshkolot and Magnes Publisher (Hebrew).

ANSPACH, RENEE 1979 "From Stigma to Identity Politics: Political Activism among the Physically Disabled and Former Mental Patients", *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 13a, pp. 765-773.

AYALON, HANNA & YOSSI SHAVIT 2004 "Educational Reforms and Inequalities in Israel: The MMI Hypothesis Revisited", *Sociology of Education,* vol. 77, no.2, pp. 103-120.

BEN-ELIEZER, URI 2004 "Becoming a Black Jew: Cultural Racism and Anti-racism in Contemporary Israel", *Social Identities,* vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 245-266.

BERNSTEIN, DEBORAH S. 1981 "Immigrant Transit Camps: The Formation of Dependent Relations in Israeli Society", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 4, no.1, pp. 26-43.

BERNSTEIN, MARY 2005 "Identity Politics", *Annual Review of Sociology,* vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 47-74.

BRUBAKER, ROGERS 2009 "Ethnicity, Race and Nationalism", *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 35, pp. 21-42.

BRUBAKER, ROGERS, FEISCHMIDT, MARGIT, FOX, JON & GRANCEA, LIANA. 2006 *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2004, accessed 1 April 2010, at http://www.cbs.gov.il/hodaot2004/01_04_202.htm.

COHEN, YINON, YITCHAK HABERFELD & TALI KRISTAL 2007 "Ethnicity and Mixed Ethnicity: Educational Gaps among Israeli-born Jews", *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* vol. 30, no.5, pp. 896-917.

EMERSON, ROBERT. M. 2001 *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations* (2nd Edition), Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

ERDREICH, LAUREN 2006 "Instructive Ritual: The Arab Student Union and the Communitas of the Palestinian Israeli Educated", *Social Analysis*, vol. 50, no.3, pp. 127-45.

EYAL, GIL 2006 *The Disenchantment of the Orient: Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

GHANEM, AS'AD 2001 *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948-2000*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

GOODMAN, YEHUDA 2008 "Citizenship, Modernity and Faith in the Nation-state: Racialization and De-racialization in the Conversion of Russians and Ethiopians in Israel", in Y. Shenhav and Y. Yonah (Eds.), *Racism in Israel*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad (Hebrew).

GOODMAN, YEHUDA & MIZRACHI NISSIM 2008 "The Holocaust Does Not Belong to European Jews Alone: The Differential Use of Memory Techniques in Israeli High Schools", *American Ethnologist*, vol. 35, no.1, pp. 95-114.

HABERFELD, YITZCHAK & YINON COHEN 2007 "Gender, Ethnic, and National Earnings Gaps in Israel: The Role of Rising Inequality", *Social Science Research*, vol. 36, pp. 654-672.

HAIDAR, AZIZ 2005 *Arab Society in Israel: Populations, Society, Economy, vol. 1*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad (Hebrew)

HERZOG, HANNA 1984 "Ethnicity as a Product of Political Negotiation: The Case of Israel", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 517-33.

HERZOG, HANNA 1985 "The Social Construction of Reality in Ethnic Terms: The Case of Political Ethnicity in Israel", *International Review of Modern Sociology*, vol. 15, no.1, pp. 45-62.

HERZOG, HANNA 2004 "'Both an Arab and a Woman': Gendered Racialized Experiences of Female Palestinian Citizens of Israel", *Social Identities*, vol. 10, pp. 53-82.

HERZOG, HANNA 2005 "On Home Turf: Interview Location and Its Social Meaning", *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 28, no.1, pp. 25-47.

KAPLAN, STEVEN 1997. "Everyday Resistance and the Study of Ethiopian Jews." *Theory and Criticism: An Israeli Forum* vol.10, pp. 163-167 (Hebrew).

KAPLAN, AVI, YONAH, YOSSI & ABU-SA'AD, ISMAEL 2001 "Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel: Perceptions, Emotions, and Attitudes of University Students of Education", *Intercultural Education*, vol. 12, no.3, pp. 289-307.

KHAZZOOM, AZIZA 2003 "The Great Chain of Orientalism: Jewish Identity, Stigma Management and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 68, no.4, pp. 481-511.

KHAZZOOM, AZIZA 2008 *Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequality in Israel: or, How the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

KIMMERLING, BARUCH 2004 *Immigrants, Settlers, Natives: The Israeli State and Society between Cultural Pluralism and Cultural Wars*, Tel Aviv: Am Oved (Hebrew).

KLEINMAN, ARTHUR & RACHEL HALL-CLIFFORD 2009 "Stigma: A Social, Cultural and Moral Process" *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, vol. 63 , pp. 418-41.

LAMONT, MICHÈLE 2000 *The Dignity of Working Men*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

LAMONT, MICHELE & BAIL, CHRISTOPHER. 2005 'Sur les frontièrs de la rconnaissance. Les catégories internes et externes de l'identité collective', *Revue Europenne des Migrations Internationales,* vol. 21, no. 2, p. 6190.

LAMONT, MICHÈLE & CRYSTAL FLEMING 2005 "Everyday Antiracism: Competence and Religion in the Cultural Repertoire of the African American Elite", *W.E.B. DuBois Review*, vol. 2, no.1, pp. 29-43.

LAMONT, MICHELE, MORNING, ANN & MOONEY, MARGARITA 2002 "Particular Universalisms: North African Immigrants respond to French racism", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 390–414.

LEWIN-EPSTEIN, NOAH, & MOSHE SEMYONOV 1993 *The Arab Minority in Israel's Economy—Patterns of Ethnic Inequality*, Boulder: Westview.

MASSEY, DOUGLAS & DENTON, NANCY 1993 *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

MIZRACHI, NISSIM 2004 "'From Badness to Sickness': The Role of Ethnopsychology in Shaping Ethnic Hierarchies in Israel", *Social Identities*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 219-243.

MIZRACHI, NISSIM, ISRAEL DRORI & RENE ANSPACH 2007 "Repertoires of Trust: The Practice of Trust in a Multinational Organization under Political Conflict", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 72, no.1, pp. 143-165.

MIZRACHI, NISSIM, YEHUDA, GOODMAN & YARIV, FENIGER 2009 "'I Don't Want to See It': Decoupling Ethnicity and Class from Social Structure in Jewish Israeli High Schools", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 32, no. 7, pp. 1203-1225.

MIZRACHI, NISSIM & ADANE ZAWDU Forthcoming "Between Global Racial and Bounded Identity: Choice of Destigmatization Strategies among Ethiopian Jews in Israel", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

MONTERESCU, DANIEL & DAN RABINOWITZ (eds.) 2007 *Mixed Towns, Trapped Communities: Historical Narratives, Spatial Dynamics, Gender Relations and Cultural Encounters in Palestinian-Israeli Towns*, Hampshire, UK and Burlington, MA: Ashgate.

ROSENFELD, HENRY 1964 "From Peasantry to Wage Labor and Residual Peasantry: The Transformation of an Arab Village", in R. A. Manners (ed.), *Process and Patterns in Culture*, Chicago, IL: Aldine.

SALMON, HAGAR 2003 "Blackness in Transition: Decoding Racial Constructs through Stories of Ethiopian Jews", *Journal of Folklore Research,* vol. 4, no.1, pp. 3-32.

SEEMAN, DON 2009. *One People, One Blood: Ethiopian-Israelis and the Return to Judaism. Piscataway*, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

SEMYONOV, MOSHE & NOAH LEWIN-EPSTEIN (Eds.) 2004 *Stratification in Israel: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender*, London: Transaction.

SHAFIR, GERSHON 1996 *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

SHAFIR, GERSHON & YOAV PELED 2002 *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SHENHAV, YEHOUDA 2000 "What do Palestinians and Jews from Arab Lands Have in Common? Nationalism and Ethnicity Examined through the Compensation Question". *Hagar: An International Social Science Review*, vol. 1, no.1, pp. 71-110.

SHENHAV, YEHOUDA 2006 *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

SHOHAT, ELLA 1989 *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

SHOHAT, ELLA 1999 "The Invention of the Mizrahim", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 29. no.1, pp. 5-20.

SHOHAT, ELLA 2001 *Forbidden Memories*, Tel Aviv: Bimat Kedem (Hebrew)

SMOOHA, SAMMY 1978 *Israel: Pluralism and Conflict*, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

STIER, HAYA & SHAVIT, YOSSI 2003 "Two Decades of Educational Intermarriage in Israel", in H.-P. Blossfeld and A. Timm (eds), *Educational Systems as Marriage Markets in Modern Societies*, Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 315-330.

SWIRSKI, SHLOMO 1999 *Politics and Education in Israel: Comparisons with the United States*, New York: Falmer Press.

WALZER, MICHAEL 1997 *On Toleration*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

WEINER-LEVI, NAOMI 2003 *Life Stories of Educated Druze Women*, Jerusalem: Hebrew University.

YAAR, EPHRAIM 2005 "Continuity and Change in Israeli Society: The Test of the Melting Pot", *Israel Studies*, vol.10, no.2, pp. 91-128.

YONAH, YOSSI 2005 *In Virtue of Difference: The Multiculturalism Project in Israel*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad.

ZIMMERMAN, BENNETT, SEID, ROBERTA & WISE, MICHAEL L. 2006 *The Million Person Gap: The Arab Population in the West Bank and Gaza*, Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar Ilan University.

Table 1: Structural Positions (2008)

Group[1]	% of Total Population[1]	SES[2]	Residential Segregation	Schooling	Immigrant/ Non-immigrant
Arabs	19	Lower	Almost total [3]	Separate but within the national system	Native-born
Ethiopians	1.8	Lower	Almost total	Partially integrated[4]	Primarily immigrants
Mizrahim	26.5	Unevenly represented in all clusters	Partial	Integrated[4]	Immigrants or native born by generation

Notes:
[1] In 2008, ethnic group distribution was as follows: Native-born Israelis, including children of inter-ethnic marriages: 35.9%; Mizrahim (classified according to both parents and all grandparents): 26.5%; Ashkenazim (classified according to both parents and all grandparents): 18.6%; Russian: 17%; Ethiopians: 1.8%. Israel Central Bureau of Statistics does not keep track of ethnic affiliation of native-born Jewish Israelis. Hence, we cannot clearly distinguish who among the 36.5% identify with their Mizrahi origins.
[2] A few interviewees, although coming from the lower and working class, could be identified with the middle class in terms of their current occupational training. [3] Several cities (e.g., Haifa, Jaffa, Nazareth, Ramle and Lod) have mixed Jewish and Arab populations. However, residential neighborhoods in these cities remain segregated. [4] By level of religious observance.

Table 2: Social and Symbolic Boundaries[1] in the Context of the Jewish State

Group	Permeability of Social Boundaries	Jewishness	Spoken Language	Intra-group Social Reproduction
Arabs	Impermeable	Irrelevant	Arabic & Hebrew	Total
Ethiopians	Rigid but not impermeable	Contested[2]	Amharit & Hebrew by generation	Almost total
Mizrahim	Permeable	Accepted	Arabic[3] & Hebrew[3]	Partial[3]

Notes: [1] This follows Lamont and Bail (2005). [2]Contested by the Orthodox rabbinical authorities.
[3]Correlated with generation. Arabic was a mother tongue for most first-generation Mizrahi immigrants.

Table 3: Markers

Group	Overt Identifiability	Phenotype	Language and Accent[1]	Self-Identification as Ethnic/Racial Group
Arabs	Variable	Primarily evident	Arabic and Hebrew	Unambiguous
Ethiopians	Evident	Evident	Amharit and Hebrew	Variable
Mizrahim	Flexible and/or unrecognizable	Sometimes evident	Hebrew	Minimal[2]

Notes: [1] Varies by class and/or generation. [2] The majority of Mizrahim do not define themselves as belonging to a distinct ethnic group. Shas, a major political party, emerged from a social movement whose goal is to reinstate cultural pride among Mizrahim and to strengthen ultra-Orthodox observance. Some self-designate as "Sephardi" (a Jew expelled from Renaissance Spain) is a term that has softer and more positive connotations, and which refer to Jewish cultural and historical traditions. The term "Mizrahi" is more recent and associated with establishment of the State. It is more stigmatizing and political in nature, and is primarily used to designate Jews born in Arab countries.

Table 4: Positioned Identity and Destigmatization Experiences

Group	Site of Experience	Rhetoric Used When Describing Experiences of Stigmatization or Discrimination	Responses to Stigmatization
Palestinian citizens of Israel[1]	Workplace; transfer points (e.g., airports); public places; job interviews	1st person direct	Depolitization; avoidance; expansion of common bases of action (e.g., human, professional); use of local participatory social networks; use of the language of race and racism
Ethiopian Jews	Institutions (e.g., military, schools); public places	Primarily 3rd person; indirect	Avoidance; positioned identity; expansion of common bases of action (e.g., human, professional); avoidance of the language of race and racism; referring to other groups as equalizers (e.g., immigration; contingent detachment
Mizrahi Jews	Family; community workplace; job interviews; the media	3rd person; indirect	Contingent detachment; avoidance; use of alternative symbols

Notes: [1] This category relates to Palestinian-Arabs who are *citizens* of Israel according to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. For challenging definitions of this definition see Haidar (2005), Zimmerman, Seid, and Wise (2006).

NISSIM MIZRACHI is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, and head of the Institute for Social Research, also at Tel Aviv University.

ADDRESS: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel.

HANNA HERZOG is a professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University

ADDRESS: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel.

---

[i] Palestinian Arab is the political self-definition adopted by some Arab Israelis. This is the term commonly used in research in Israel.

[ii] This figure relates to Palestinian-Arabs who are *citizens* of Israel according to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. For challenging definitions of this statistic see Haidar (2005), Zimmerman, Seid, and Wise (2006).

[iii] We are speaking here of formal citizenship. Differences in substantive citizenship are apparent.

[iv] In this paper we deal with boundaries between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel exclusively.

[v] Among third and fourth generation native Israelis, about 20% of the population is ethnically mixed (Cohen et al., 2007).

[vi] For more ambivalent evaluations see Lissak (1999) and Yaar (2005).

[vii] http://www.cbs.gov.il/hodaot2004/01_04_202.htm, accessed 3 November, 2008.

viii In the Israeli context, for instance, it would be inconceivable for Arabs to change their names to Jewish names, unlike Arabs in other countries; see Bursell, this issue.

ix The fact Rima is divorced and holds a managerial position in a Jewish town distinguishes her from most Arab women.

x Similar findings were reported by Lamont and Good (2000) and Lamont, Morning and Mooney (2002).

xi This contention is further explained in Mizrachi and Zawdu, this issue.

xii Khazzoom (2003), Shenhav (2000, 2006), Shohat (1989, 1999, 2001) and others.

xiii A city characterized by its predominantly poor and working-class Mizrahi residents.

xiv See: http://wn.com/Mizrahi_Democratic_Rainbow_Coalition.

xv As aptly formulated by Taylor's (1994), identity politics requires the recognition of difference as a source for dignity and as a cultural resource for claims of social equality. This discourse, frequently privileged by critical sociologists, is nonetheless confined to the bounded world of highly educated same finding in Dignity of working men.

xvi The use by Ethiopians of the language of race during instances of organized protest has been reported in the literature; see for example Ben Eliezer (2004).