CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Israel, as a nation of immigrants, has grown in the first five decades of its independence from less than 800,000 inhabitants in 1948 to about six million in the recent years, mostly by Jewish immigration from the countries from all over the world. The term "absorption of immigrants" was used by the pioneering fathers to denote the process by which the immigrants in the post-1948 period would be settled and integrated into Israeli society through specific state policies and programmes. The "fusion of exiles" would involve different stages from providing housing, employment, expanding health services, organising education and would integrate the immigrants through a melting of cultures to produce an enriched Jewish national culture which would create a society free from inequality and injustice.

Israel's socialist/Zionist ideology preached an active, vigorous governmental policy to achieve the true integration of the Jewish communities in Israel. Such integration was desirable and seen as national necessity of high priority. However, as the analysis in the first three chapters reveals, the Oriental-Ashkenazi dichotomy still persists in various spheres of life. This chapter attempts to examine, in the light of the previous chapters, the socio-cultural, economic, educational and political integration, or the lack of it, of Oriental communities, into "mainstream" Israeli society. The chapter will by and large draw from the previous chapters. We shall begin with the initial planning and policy
of absorption of immigrants which had a lasting effect of social integration of Oriental Jewish community.

**ABSORPTION POLICIES AND INTEGRATION**

Israel's problems of poverty and its struggles with agonising issues of "communal integration" have figured quite prominently in Jewish welfare literature for the last five decades. After the mass immigration, the state devised and implemented different absorption policies. The absorption was conceived not merely in specific technical terms -- i.e., as assistance to the immigrants to perform basic occupational, civic, educational or cultural roles; rather it was conceived in broader ideological terms, as a complete re-education and re-socialisation of the immigrants.¹

Policy for absorption was jointly developed by the government and the Jewish agency. The government was the sovereign authority, but the Jewish Agency had vast financial resources at its disposal. Therefore, it seems that the Jewish Agency could exercise significant influence over governmental decisions.² The absorption policy reached was directed by essentially the same imperatives applied to the 1948-1951 immigration. That is, the principles were population spread, settlement of sparsely populated lands for security reasons, and development of economic potentials in terms of both agriculture and industry.

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However, unlike 1948-1951, the availability of time and resources and the expectation of relatively modest future aliyah allowed for a fuller actualisation of the ideal of the rational comprehensive decision-making model. The model denotes a process which includes the following stages: identification of the problem, development of alternate policies to alleviate the problem, evaluation of the relative costs and benefits of the various alternatives, and selection and implementation of the policy deemed most suitable according to the criteria established. Shortcomings of the plans eventually selected stem in large part from an inability to correctly gauge the nature of the problems involved.\textsuperscript{3} The policy arrived at and implemented a number of plans which were linked to other national policies aimed at development and integration of immigrants.

The creation of "development towns," small urban settlements located mostly in outlying areas of the country and established in 1950s and 60s, was one of the major plans of the state which aimed at absorbing immigrants. However, "development towns" became a sociological category to understand ethnic interactions and relations in Israel. As discussed in earlier chapters, development towns and neighbourhoods came to be identified with the underprivileged Oriental masses coming from Asian and African countries. Both geographically and socio-economically, they constitute a peripheral segment of Israeli society.

Frontier regions, which are located at the geographical, political, socio-economic, or cultural margins of the collective, play a central role in the construction of national.

\textsuperscript{3} Avraham Shama and Mark Iris, op., cit., p. 62-64.
ethnic, and state identities. Frontiers denote the (material or metaphoric "twilight zones" at the edge of a collective's control; they delineate directions for expansion and growth, and provide basic symbols, legends, challenges, and myths used for the construction of national identity. In frontier regions, the collective sharpens its identity by interacting with "others" and by protecting the ethno-national centers, which are made self evident by the existence of frontier developments.⁴

Jewish settlement in Israel has formed a central pillar in the construction of a new Zionist national collective identity. It performed the two classical functions of frontier settlement: providing the collective with both territorial and spiritual foundations to consolidate the new identity. It also provided a unifying cause for Jews from different backgrounds, fostered and enhanced altruistic values such as pioneering, personal sacrifice, remoteness, and danger, created sources for the establishment of (non-economic) new settlements, and presented a focus for world Jewry identification, essential for the financial viability of the state.⁵

However, the process of settlement and spatial policy in the country mainly entailed the dispersal of Mizrahi Jews (Orientals) to development towns and moshavim at the country's northern and (particularly) southern peripheries, and the subsequent preservation of socio-economic gaps, by development and housing policies which assisted the centre "at the expense of the periphery." Nearly all development towns have

⁵ Oren Yiftachel and Avinoam Meir, op., cit., p. 8.
suffered long periods of negative internal migration due to their distance from Israel's core areas, their poor economies, and their weak socio-economic and ethnic image.⁶

The wide scope of absorption plans necessitated the cooperation and coordination of activities by various participants. The major actors included the government of Israel and the Jewish Agency; the greatest responsibility devolved upon the Ministry of Labour, whose housing division was a primary factor in construction apartments, and the Ministry of Agriculture, which was extensively involved in the agricultural settlement plans.⁷

Agricultural settlement planning involved a high degree of contact between the government and the Jewish Agency.

Human resources in the various absorption activities were considerable. Large numbers of economists and statisticians were involved on the planning staffs, including some foreign experts, mainly Americans. The development plans of the 1950s must be seen as further actualisations of the dominant Zionist ideals developed several decades earlier. Return to the land and the virtue of agriculture were still viewed as inherent principles. While early Zionists made land purchases strategically, the post-independence era furthered this policy through intensive settlement of strategic regions. An indication of that is the discussion of immigration and land settlement in the Knesset. Many members of the Knesset are from the Second and Third Aliyot and shared these principles. Consequently, there existed a strong consensus on these policies. What little opposition existed was unable to influence the outcome. Government policy-makers also

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⁶ Oren Yiftachel and Avinoam Meir, op., cit., p. 9.
⁷ Avraham Shama and Mark Iris, op., cit., p. 68.
enjoyed the strong support of the media which was to its credit of great importance in aiding the absorption process.

The constraints faced by the absorption authorities and the resulting policies were not the only factors that influenced the immigrants position in the stratification structure or on the centre-periphery axis. Factors of no less importance were the specific characteristics that the immigrants brought from their countries of origin and their ability to use these resources to facilitate their social, cultural, occupational, and political integration. The first aspect included demographic characteristics as age, family size, vocational training, and formal education. The second aspect included cultural orientations usually connected to the concept of "modernity," a sense of enterprise and the ability to delay gratification of material needs while working toward personal goals for the future. The third aspect refers to personal qualities or resources facilitating easy access to the Israeli establishment -- which might be common spoken language, shared forms of behaviour, or personal connections through social networks based on country of origin.  

The absorption plans developed by the government and Jewish agency became increasingly significant as immigration increased to large proportions in the 50s which witnessed significant growth in population spread. Aside from population spread, the absorption of immigrants in these years was also partially successful in terms of planning agricultural development. In the coordination of immigrant absorption was the economic

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growth of agriculture, while as a part national economic plan, industry was expanded which provided job opportunities for the residents while the industrial growth deemed beneficial to the country at large. However, these plans were partially successful in achieving their declared goals. The agriculture and industry of the country were expanded and diversified, immigrants were rapidly settled but these compliments were not without their pitfalls.

The cultural differences between the immigrants from Oriental countries and those from Europe and Israeli society forced both the immigrants and the veterans to confront the dilemma between a "melting pot" approach to absorption and an approach of cultural preservation and pluralism. Also a similar dilemma existed during the Yishuv, but then, since aliyah had been a matter of personal ideological choice for most immigrants, the expectation that the newcomers would seek to adapt to the emerging culture of the Yishuv was taken for granted. Furthermore, the immigrants themselves sought to take an active part in shaping the society and ways of life in the Yishuv.9

Along with their partial successes, the absorption plans of the mid-1950s had serious shortcomings, most of which stemmed from an inordinately high rationality on the part of the planners, and a disregard for the preferences of the immigrants who constituted the object of these plans.10 These plans which aimed at emphasising placing the new immigrants in as normal an environment as quickly as possible, carried with them the potential for future problems. While the authorities had solved the immediate

9 Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, op. cit., p. 74.
10 Avraham Shama and Mark Iris, op., cit., p 77.
and most pressing problems of sheltering people, they had inadvertently made serious miscalculations.

First, they had not taken into account the preferences of the immigrants. Second, the dispersion of the new immigrant population to the north and south created barriers to interaction between immigrants and others and third, government incentive policies intended to aid the immigrants were not sufficiently restrictive and thereby enabled the veteran population to better itself. Fourth, separate educational systems were hampering the future development of the children of the immigrants. All this led to the development of conditions of poverty among many newcomers, especially the Orientals.11

On cultural front, the possibility of overcoming cultural estrangement by opening alternative channels of activity and mobility was not available to the Afro-Asian immigrants after the establishment of the state. These immigrants lacked what the Germans had possessed in terms of formal education and training and cultural norms instilled in early socialisation.12 Furthermore, the paternalistic approach to the absorption authorities did not facilitate their adaptation to the dominant society since the Israeli cultural norms imposed on them were perceived by the newcomers not as universal values but as expressions of Ashkenazi dominance.

This cultural dichotomy created a paradoxical situation in the country in the initial years. While those elements that shaped the new Jewish way of life to emerge in the Yishuv, and particularly those who adhered to the lifestyle and value orientation of the

11 Avraham Shama and Mark Iris, op., cit., p.85.
12 Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, op. cit., p. 74.
Labour Movement regarded their culture as a successful expression of the radical Zionist aim of "negation the Diaspora," the immigrants from the Islamic countries saw all this as having nothing to do with them -- it was matter of importance only for those who came from Europe. Since most of the Afro-Asian immigrants adhered to a tradition religious life, the dimension of modern Israeli culture that reflected the "negation of Diaspora," with all its anti-traditional overtones, was alien to them and they were not even aware of it.13

Though one would agree, that it would have been next to impossible for decision makers to have satisfied all the expectations of Oriental immigrants as the material resources for such a utopia did not exist, the development of future problems could have been mitigated and reduced the differential rates of development which were to emerge in Israel.

One can argue with some amount of certainty that the Oriental Jews right from beginning were not being absorbed and integrated as coequal partners in Israel. One of the major reasons for that is that the attitudes, culture and background of the Sephardic immigrants were not integrated into the absorption plans. For example, to plan for Oriental immigrants coming to Israel a life style as farmers was to demand from them a change in their basic belief in regard to agriculture, which they viewed as very demeaning. In this case, the change demanded by the planning authorities was drastic.

13 Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, op. cit., p. 75.
Consequently the immigrants were not to be satisfied with a plan to make him a farmer.\footnote{Avraham Shama and Mark Iris, op. cit., p.93} Such plans were opposed to in different ways by immigrants.

Though the immigrants were ostensibly the beneficiaries of various social planning programmes enacted by the government and the Jewish Agency, the conditions which developed in various institutions created atmosphere where the Oriental immigrants lived in relative isolation from the earlier settlers of Israel and the national social policy of integration received various setbacks.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the existing economic institutions primarily favoured the Ashkenazi Jews, and, the additional factor of unskilled Oriental immigrants who formed the bulk of the labour force created a situation in which their social integration was further impeded. The analysis in the second chapter reveals that by 50s there was an inequality of income along ethnic lines which transcended the influence of education.

The 1960s witnessed a period of change and stagnation in Israel. The economy, after stabilising and then slumping badly, made a sharp recovery and then expanded rapidly. The international scene was transformed by the Six Day War and the emergence of a more secure Israel as the major military power in the Middle East. It was a period of relative stagnation in that Sephardim found themselves in an inferior position relative to the Ashkenazim in terms of housing, income, education and employment -- an inferior position which persisted through the decade and hampered their social integration into
Israeli society. But during this period, there was a gradual change in Sephardim self-perception and a change in their expectations in regard to governmental policy especially their expectations in regard to governmental policy changes to alleviate their plight.

Much repeated statements of political figures on the urgency of integration encouraged these expectations. Yet official sensitivity and responsiveness to these problems had not changed, as the figures on socio-economic status in the later decades indicate. In the midst of such environment and under such conditions it would have been reasonable to expect some form of conflict to emerge which we have discussed in the third chapters. These social tensions, assuming violent overtones, amply demonstrated that Oriental communities were far from the integration even in later decades.

Various spokesmen had warned that the integration of the communities ought to be a top priority so as to avoid potential conflict. Their warnings were given lip service, but little concrete change occurred. The power structure, with few Sephardim in its ranks, was unaware of the serious social problems. A solidification of the economic and social gap, a gap which usually along ethnic lines, had provided basis for protest movements to emerge in the country. These groups attempted to create greater awareness of their problems and social integration among both the public at large and governmental decision makers through various tactics of demonstration and confrontation.

Over the years not much has changed, and the questions raised by various protest groups remain as relevant today. Various studies of Oriental Jews have shown that although relatively there has been a good deal of basic improvement in their social and

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15 Avraham Shama and Mark Iris, op., cit., p.139.
economic conditions, they are still far behind the position of the Ashkenazim on the social scale.

One can conclusively argue, as also the empirical data reveals, that the social policy and planning, which led to lop-sided development, was not successful in achieving the much publicised goal of social integration. The government data and various studies reveal that the economic gap widened in spite of governmental policy designed to bridge the divide. Further, by settling Oriental communities in separate neighbourhoods and development towns, the government did not promote much desired interaction between the immigrants from Oriental countries and those from European and American countries and also between immigrants in general and those already settled in Israel. The dispersal of population in far-flung areas hampered such desired contacts between various ethnic groups, so crucial for the development of a common enriched Jewish culture.

ORIENTAL IDENTITY AND SELF IMAGE

What a man does or does not do depends, in large measure, upon his conception of himself. Each individual is tied to a pattern of communal life by the manner in which he is identified. By virtue of being what he is, he assumes status in a group. He can locate himself and it recognised by others, and his relationship to each of the others is thereby defined. Since self image plays an important role in the individual's life, in as much as it ties the individual to society, it is necessary to recognize and get a clear view of the Oriental Jew's self image.

Several studies have shown that Oriental Jews and their children have a relatively
low self-estimation. For example, the Moroccan Jews, despite gaining of equal citizenship rights in Israel, have transferred their low self-image when they migrated to the country. Thus, while in Morocco they felt that they were occupying a secondary position on account of their Jewishness, in Israel they feel differentiated on account of their Moroccan origin. Paradoxical as it may seem, their "Jewish identity" had been replaced by a "Moroccan identity."\textsuperscript{16}

One could say that due to his experience of occupying a secondary position in Morocco on account of his Jewishness, the Moroccan Jew simply transferred this low self-image to Israel where it took, of necessity, the different shape of a "Moroccan identity." If this was so, it could be argued that it was not the Israeli society exclusively that contributed to the Moroccan Jew's self low image. However, this would be more likely to be the case so far as the immigrant generation is concerned. A study of the second generation, i.e. those born in Israel of Moroccan parents, could therefore serve as a purer indication of the circumstances which cause and perpetuate low estimation in Israel.

An experimental study on national stereotypes in children has shown that among Sephardi children as well as among Ashkenazi children there is more frequently a perception of Sephardi looking young men as non-Israeli and less liking is expressed towards them. Thus, to quote one set of comparative figures, 50.4 percent of Ashkenazi boys and 48.6 percent Sephardi boys identified "Sephardi pictures" as non-Israeli -- almost as many Sephardi boys gave their own "image" a low rating. When shown

within ethnic groups. The deep cultural divide and dominance of Ashkenazic culture has impeded the social integration of the Oriental communities. We have already dealt with the question of ethnic ecological segregation and ethnic neighbourhoods in the earlier chapters. Dealing with Israel's problem raises questions like are we dealing only, or even primarily, with a socio-economic gap, a cultural-psychological divide, and educational gap, a genuine inter-ethnic problem or all these put together.

Since early days of immigration, the cultural difference between Ashkenazim and Oriental communities posed severe problem of cultural integration. The establishment also faced some serious dilemmas in the 50s, the most important of which was the choice between pursuing policies of rapid integration, or reconciling itself to the existence of cultural pluralism and accepting it as fact. This dilemma was particularly pronounced in two spheres, the political and the educational. The political spheres was the first to abandon the more radical expressions of the melting pot.\textsuperscript{18} The opposition to ethnic parties was shared by the entire political elite, both the ruling parties and the opposition, but this did not prevent them from manipulating the traditional frameworks for mobilizing political support.

In one sense, the present situation has its roots in a misconception which has guided (misguided) the individuals and institutions that took charge of immigrant "absorption." Since the days of old Yishuv, immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa have been asked to become "absorbed" into and then to share in cultural-political

\textsuperscript{18} Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, op. cit., p. 77.
milieu totally foreign them. Those who could not or would not were left behind. This state of affairs, combined with an educational system that presupposed active participation by the family, resulted in the exclusion not only of the immigrants themselves (who were conveniently dubbed "the desert generation" and thus given up a lost cause) but of their children as well\(^\text{19}\) which affected adversely the social integration of these communities.

It must be remembered that Israel teems with Middle Easterners, East Europeans, North Africans and North Americans who have been exposed to a process of absorption into and adaptation to an ideology and a culture vastly different from their own. This process affected all these groups, albeit in different degrees with varying measures of harmfulness. But it had especially corrosive effects on members of the Oriental communities.\(^\text{20}\)

We have already mentioned in the third chapter that various political parties sought to woo Oriental support and raise issue concerning them. However, continuing lower mobility rates, lower economic and educational status and governmental policy to provide a homogeneous type of educational product, quite detached from cultural background and aimed at helping the "culturally deprived",\(^\text{21}\) continued to hamper social integration in later years. One can argue that primarily cultural differences were and still are perceived as a sign of cultural backwardness.


\(^{20}\) Nissim Rejwan, op. cit., p. 44.

\(^{21}\) Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, op. cit., p. 80.
Some writers even go the extent of describing the Law of Return as contained a built-in "social time bomb," arguing that it was highly unlikely that immigrants from such different cultures as Europe and the Middle East would be able to merge in a socially equal society in a generation, as Israeli leaders predicted during the state's early years.\textsuperscript{22} Such arguments obviously stem from years of cultural, educational and political alienation of Oriental communities.

Another interesting aspect of a dominant culture looking down upon the subservient culture is some of the modern Hebrew literature. The term "modern Hebrew literature" is today immediately associated with Hebrew literature written by European Jewish writers about European Jews. Therefore, when modern Hebrew literature is seen as a mirror reflecting the socio-historical events which shaped the lives of Jews within the last generations, the fact that this mirror reflects very little of the Sephardim is simply ignored.\textsuperscript{23}

The modern Hebrew short stories reflect more than one image of Sephardim. Sometimes the Sephardim are regarded as perfect "angels," and other times the image is extremely negative. In a society where one finds communities struggling for recognition of their unique heritage, the negative characters are often characterised as representative of the Oriental community. Many short stories written by prominent literary figures and less prominent writers hold an extremely negative view of the Sephardim. Such

\textsuperscript{22} Naomi Shepherd, "Will Israel's Social Gap Become an Abyss: Paternalism is Not Enough." \textit{Present Tense}, Volume 2, No. 1, New York, 1974, p. 59.
description of Oriental communities amply demonstrates the supremacy of the Western-Ashkenazi culture that looks upon the Sephardi members as something backward which needs to be "assimilated" into the Ashkenazi society.

For example, the story "Human Reformation" by Milah Ohel presents an Eastern Jewish father who is "the most atrocious, disgusting, and ugly character that ever appeared in the shape of a human being," whose home emits "a thick heavy mass of fouling smelling air," who beats his family at night, gets drunk, and whose wife is a "donkey" for him at night. The Ashkenazi teacher of one of the sons decides to take him to his home so that his father will not be able to abuse the child anymore. When the Sephardic father comes back home, he is described as forcing his wife to go to teacher to get the child back. The wife goes to teacher and this is how she addresses him.  

Teacher, teacher ... Give Soli (her son), teacher.. Gabriel (her husband) to kill teacher, Gabriel to kill... Gabriel to kill me, children... Gabriel to kill teacher............... Gabriel is Arak (kind of alcohol)..... all day .... Arak all day.... O crazy.... Arak to kill teacher..... And at night he me.... know teacher... At night he me, every night, every night..... No strength... no strength teacher, I no strength. During the day beating and at night he me... know teacher..... At night he me, every night, every night like a donkey, really.... like a donkey no strength teacher.... Also in Iran he all day Arak, all day, at night

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24 Lev Hakak, op. cit. 298-301
a girl, every night, O... every night a girl. Such is Gabriel.... In Iran my three children
die..... he all of them to kill, all of them to kill teacher.... Give Soli. give Soli teacher ..... 

Another typical beating scene is found in Hurgin's "At Uncle Raful's".25

Bring me the cane!... and now come here !... Chaim come close, as a boy who has
sinned, and he is stammering and pleading... O father! forgive me! I only chatted... Go
and find out... I swear on Rabbi Meir!

-- Lie down and stretch your legs towards me!

-- O father... I will never be late again! I will come back early! Forgive me this time, dear
father! I have sinned!

-- Lie down!, orders Uncle Raful -- He hits strongly and with great devotion, on the feet...
Chaim wails, and Aunt Cammilah's heart is in pain seeing her youngest son suffering.
But she is afraid to interfere, lest the cane will turn towards her and beat her.

These stories demonstrate that modern Hebrew short stories approach Sephardim
by stereotyping them and the negative image they give of them reflects prejudice. For
example the Sephardim man in a number of Hebrew stories is described time and again
as being violent towards his children, wife and others while Ashkenazic characters are
portrayed as gentle and civilised rescuers. Since literature is a reflection of values of
society, depiction of such cultural dichotomy where Western culture is necessarily
supreme that one needs to assimilate into, it reflects lack of social integration of Oriental
communities and intolerance for cultural pluralism.

25 Lev Hakak, op. cit. p. 301.
For some time a dominant theme in Israeli intellectual discourse has been the "Orientalisation" of the country and its institutions. For the advocate of this view, the country, with increasing population of Oriental communities and their right-wing political support, would pose the threat of Oriental culture -- also termed as Eastern, Arab, Middle Eastern or Levantine, and threaten the western value system. Different cultural traditions and tastes, different modes of functioning in familial and other social networks continue to operate as significant factors of differentiation in Israeli society.

Others argue that Israel is predominantly western in culture and all non-western ethnic groups are asked to be "assimilated" into this culture which has created problems of social integration for ethnic groups with diverse (and quite contrary to western) cultural backgrounds. As discussed earlier these Oriental communities are expected to shed their past cultural and traditional roots which are looked at as "primitive" and "backward."

When we talk of social or cultural integration of one particular ethnic group, the question arises what is Israel's culture? Western, Eastern or Israeli? Is Israel really in danger of Orientalisation? This largely results from the absence of a policy of living and letting live culturally. The last thing Israeli society needs today is any kind of cultural "planning" aimed at either westernisation or Orientalisation. There is no way of forcing it in either direction without causing harm to the country's future, as well as a good deal of hardship for one or other of its various ethnic and cultural groups.

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ETHNICITY AND INTERMARRIAGE

Interruption among Jews is marriage between Jews (and their families) across ethnic origin boundaries. Interethnic marriages can denote a healthy trend of assimilation of various ethnic groups. Since generally marriages are ethnically determined, Israeli politicians and social scientists alike tend to stress the rise in the proportion of interethnic marriages, from nine percent in 1952 to about 20 percent at present. Though primarily marriages have taken place within ethnic categories in Israel, of late the increase in ethnic intermarriages is a positive sign and can be interpreted both in the context of the emergence of independent families and as the basis of ethnic assimilation and social integration of Oriental Jewish communities. Over the years the increasing rate, though marginally, of ethnic intermarriage reflects ethnic convergences and at the same time contributes to further integration in the future.

However, the majority still prefers to marry within their broader ethnic categories. Some supportive evidence among high school students in Israel reinforces the notion of specific ethnic origin preferences among those who will marry in the next generation. Israel-born Jewish young adults of Israeli-born parents, raised with egalitarian and liberal attitudes toward ethnicity, express very ethnic-based attitudes about their own ethnic preferences in spouse selection and have fairly strong negative views about specific ethnic origins. Those of Middle Eastern origin are more likely to view others of Middle Eastern origin (not necessarily of their specific country of origin but the Israeli

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constructed category of "Oriental") as preferable potential spouses and partners over "Europeans" or Westerners.\(^{28}\)

Few also point out that chances for a continued increase in that trend of interethnic marriages are slim, for, it one takes into account class positions and ecology segregation, the pool of candidates for probable interethnic marriages is quite limited. Another important trend has been taking place in the country: namely, a rise in the proportion of marriages between members of various Oriental groups (for instance, between Moroccans and Iraqis). In 1952, 70 percent of Oriental grooms married brides of their own country of origin, and 22 percent married brides of other Oriental countries of origin (8 percent married Ashknazic brides). While in 1975 the figures were 42.4 percent and 40.7 percent (and 16.8 percent).\(^{29}\)

One could argue that these figures indicate, among other things, a clear trend in the direction of the formation of an "Oriental" -- as distinct from Moroccan, Iraqi, etc. -- community in Israel. Ethnic communities are not simply extensions of past ethnic origins but are based on new-Israeli-created constructions, moving beyond the meanings of ethnicity in places of origin. Hence, the key question in understanding intermarriage patterns is whether they signal the retention or the loss of community. The currently stable rates of intermarriage and the educational and ethnic trade-off, along with uncertainty of how children of mixed ethnic origins will select their own ethnic

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\(^{29}\) Shlomo Swirski, op. cit. p. 84.
communities over their life courses, point to the continuous salience of ethnicity for several generations.

In the longer run, ethnic origin may diminish significantly as a basis for social, cultural, economic and political cleavage among Jews in Israel. However, as the previous chapters reveal, there is every basis for arguing the continuing salience of ethnicity in the next generations because of the overlap of ethnic residential patterns and educational and occupation patterns with ethnic origin, along with implications for socialisation and politics.

Ethnicity in Israeli is not simply the reflection of closeness to cultural roots: but it is the lack of soci-oeconomic equalisation among groups that has characterised Jewish ethnic subpopulations. Family and economic networks have served to reinforce family ties and ethnic communities based on family ties. The shape ethnicity will take in the long term will depend in large part on the continuing overlap of ethnicity and social class, residence, and culture in the next generation.

The ethnic options are available to the next generation of the interethnically married and may be held to solve the ethnic origin dilemma of coming generation where choices could be to select ethnic origin of one of the parents or retain the combined mixture of Western and Eastern origins, thus leading to greater social integration. The second generation of mixed ethnic origins could become just Israeli and treat ethnicity as irrelevant. Those mixed origins might select this option while retaining some relationship to grandparents or other extended relatives who are ethnically identified. The mixed third
generations is most likely to respond to a question about their ethnic identity by identifying themselves as "Israeli."

THE ROLE OF ARMY IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION

In this atmosphere where most agencies have not achieved desired success in social integration, Israeli army could provide some scope for social unification. Generally the soldiers who have lived together, fought together and suffered together, from one society irrespective of their origins, cultural backgrounds, or religious beliefs. Military service is compulsory, and therefore unlike other agencies, the army takes the immigrants out of their traditional environment to incorporate him into a new social setting very distinct from the previous one. 30 During this period, mostly between 18 and 21 years of age, he is influenced less by his parents and their habits to the country of origin. It also brings together individuals from all communities and molds, Sephardi and Ashkenazi alike, within a framework of common experience.

It is generally assumed that the soldiers who have served together in army, eaten the same food, suffered the same hardships, sang the same songs, laughed at the same jokes, used the army slang, belong together and form on society. By rubbing shoulders with each other in a context of mutual aid and friendship, the newcomers (serving the army) derive a new awareness of their home and family, and when they leave the army they will no longer feel isolated and foreign in this country. It is also believed that the

army represents a unique environment or the development of identification, closeness and dialogue between the Oriental and Ashkenazi soldiers.

However, eminent Social Scientist Maurice Roumani argues that even army has not achieved desired results in this direction. The army is compulsory for all youth between 18 and 21 years and the question is how much comradeship remains after army service. Do Ashkenazi and the Sephardi "form one society" only in the army where conditions are such that they dictate social relations among groups or does it spill over beyond the army service?

Socialisation in the Israeli army, however, is not without shortcomings. When the Oriental Jews arrived in Israel, the army was confronted with the task of bringing about a positive attitude toward the Israeli state. The army accomplished this by teaching them to relate to the State in terms of rights and duties. Upon induction, each recruit received a booklet outlining some of the State's obligations toward Jews and the soldiers' duties toward the army and the nation. In essence, the soldiers are required to espouse the Zionist ideology.

For the Oriental Jews this means a transfer from messianic aspirations to a secular nation-state whose tenets are democratic socialism and historical Judaism. In addition, the army teaches Oriental Jews and Eastern Europeans, from totalitarian countries,
modern democratic values not through academic or philosophical debates, but by daily living experience in the army's setting.\(^3\)

The army has attained a major success in integrating Oriental communities in the values of the State and the land. However, it has been argued that it "fell short in its efforts to perpetuate solidarity between the Sephardi and the Ashkenazi." The military service created for the Oriental Jew a mixture of conflict, confusion and laxity in religious matters.\(^3\) Aside from these problems, a success of the army in integrating the Oriental Jew was achieved mainly because of the army's goals of national integration into the values of the state and the land.

While one is not denying that the army has helped achieve national integration, it could be even more successful if absorption and integration would operate simultaneously. The imposition of the dominant group on the masses to change is too much to expect. The process of integration and absorption must have a reciprocal relationship. The national integration to be ultimately successful there must be mutual and reciprocal adaptation of beliefs between various social and ethnic groups, the political elites and the masses and the dominant groups and the subservient one. There should not be any cultural planning and all diverse cultural systems should be respected while maintaining one Israeli identity. Also the elite must demonstrate a predisposition to

\(^3\) Ibid, p. 40.
change, a disposition to be receptive, in order to achieve a synthesis of the values and beliefs of all sections of society.

Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that to absorb and integrate so many immigrants from as many diverse cultural and educational background was not a mean task and Israeli government has definitely succeeded to some extent in improving the social conditions of many immigrants when compared to the countries of their origin. The imposition of the dominant group on the masses to change completely may not be possible in 40 or 50 years. The ethnic gaps may take some time and few more generations to bridge gradually as Israel is a relatively new country.

The process of integration and absorption, however, must have a reciprocal relationship. The national integration to be ultimately successful there must be mutual and reciprocal adaptation of beliefs between various social and ethnic groups, the political elites and the masses and the dominant groups and the subservient one. There should not be any cultural planning and all diverse cultural systems should be respected while maintaining one Israeli identity. Also the elite must demonstrate a predisposition to change, a disposition to be receptive, in order to achieve a synthesis of the values and beliefs of all sections of society.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Following are the main points that can be concluded from this chapter.

1: The initial dream of the pioneers, the "fusion of exiles" aimed at integrating
immigrants through a melting of culture to produce an enriched Jewish national
culture entailed some utopian components which could not achieve desired goals.

2: Though the immigrants were ostensibly the beneficiaries of various social
planning programmes by the government, the conditions which developed in
various institutions created atmosphere where the Oriental immigrants lived in
relative isolation from the earlier settlers of Israel and the national social policy of
integration received various setbacks.

3: Along with partial success, absorption planning of the government had serious
shortcomings which carried potential future problems which would impede social
integration process.

3: Development towns and neighbourhoods -- small urban settlements located
mostly in the outlying areas aimed at absorbing immigrants -- became a
geographical, political, economic and cultural periphery and can be described a
sociological category in the context of Israel, denoting marginalisation of Oriental
communities.

4: Various social tensions resulting in the emergence of protest groups some of
which assumed violent overtones, and emergence of right-wing and ultra­
orthodox parties in the country amply demonstrate that Oriental communities are
still far from the integration.
5: Lower self image among Oriental community and their children pose serious question about the social integration as to which are the conditions in Israeli society which create feelings of low self-estimation.

6: Continuing lower mobility rates, lower economic and educational status and governmental policy to provide a homogeneous type of educational product, quite detached from cultural background and aimed at helping the "culturally deprived" continued to hamper social integration in the country. One can argue that primarily cultural differences were and still are perceived as a sign of cultural backwardness.

7: Though in the longer run, ethnic origin may diminish significantly as a basis for social, cultural, economic and political cleavage, there is still a possibility of continuing salience of ethnicity in the next generations because of the overlap between ethnic residential patterns and educational and occupation patterns with ethnic origin.

8: Interethnic marriages, though not very frequent could boost the much-required social integration. Children of mixed origins are most likely to respond to a question about their ethnic identity by identifying themselves as "Israeli" rather than an "Iraqi", "Moroccan" or "German" Jew.
Where most government have gained only partial success, Israeli army has attained a major success in integrating Oriental communities in the values of the State and the land and could provide future scope for social unification.

The process of integration and absorption could be achieved through reciprocal relationship with mutual and reciprocal adaptation of beliefs between various social and ethnic groups, the political elites and the masses and there should not be any engineering of cultural planning in the ocean of diverse cultures.
thought to the ramifications of immigrant absorption and sharp ethnic cleavages. While the "melting pot" would ultimately seem to be preferred model in the Zionist vision of nation building, there was always a latent, yet sufficiently clear preference to a predetermined ideal type -- in this case, Western and European -- because of the intellectual frame of reference of the movement's major leaders and because a predetermined intellectual infrastructure.

Central to the debate on the ever changing salience of ethnicity is the assessment of the respective role and possible overlap of its social-structure and cultural components. Israeli society has been referred to as an "ethnic mosaic" or even a "human laboratory" in which the unfolding of complex social processes tied to ethnicity can be routinely observed in daily life. This reflects the seminal importance of large and heterogeneous immigration in the formative process of the Jewish population, as well as the presence of diverse non-Jewish religious, cultural and social sectors in Israeli society.

Contemporary Israeli society has significantly been affected by its origins which has to be located through the examination of the development of the Yishuv. The members of the Yishuv created many of the institutions necessary for the functioning of a modern society. Many of these institutions were created during the British mandate period and were structured in accordance with socialist Zionist ideology, which later posed problems of adjustment for Oriental immigrants. They created situations which were inherently discriminatory against many of the Sephardic immigrants who were to arrive in such a large numbers in the post-Independence period. Society and institutions
in Israel, as they existed in 1948, were better suited to absorb European immigrants than Oriental ones as the former were better equipped to enter a state apparatus they were not alien to.

Since European immigrants were first to arrive in post-independence period and the settlement in better areas was basically on a first come, first served basis, Ashkenazim were prime beneficiaries. Sephardim were later to be resettled in the areas on the fringes, mostly desert areas on the periphery of the cities or away from them. Also, as most of the Ashkenazim had required skills for jobs in a modern state, they had to spend less time in transit camps that helped them settle fast whereas Sephardim had to linger in these camps for quite long periods.

Oriental Jews by and large were not the committed Zionists and their migration to Israel was a logical fallout of their traditional religious values. They were also politically were not very active and they had greater opportunity costs in migrating. Ashkenazim shared more values and attitudes with existing Israeli society than did the Sephardim who had traditional way of life that made them less adaptable. For no fault of theirs, the Oriental immigrants were the victims of the negative images formed about them which created problems for them and continue to haunt them. Even the ruling political class had negative attitude towards Jews coming from Asian and African countries which influenced policies affecting them.

The economic composition of Israel was such at the time of independence that Ashkenazim were better equipped to fit into the existing and new institutions than their
Oriental counterparts who comprised a huge chunk of unskilled workers in an ethnically stratified society. Thus by the end of the 1950s there was an inequality of income along ethnic lines which influenced the socio-economic status of Oriental Jews.

Though longevity in the country could be considered a major factor in improving one's condition economically, Oriental Jews could not reach the level of the European-American groups throughout the 50s and 60s and in the present. Despite the gulf shrinking marginally in the 60s during the boom period the divide further widened in the following years. Per capita income increased over the years but so widened the gaps between Ashkenazi and Oriental communities. In relative terms the position of Ashkenazi community improved more than that of Orientals.

The chapter on economic status reveals that Orientals tend to fill lower prestige occupations and blue-collar jobs while the percent of Ashkenazim in white-collar jobs is higher. Orientals have been found in disproportionately small numbers in higher status, better professions and crucial technical and administrative positions but were over-represented in the lower status occupations.

The political representation among Oriental Jews was very negligible in the formative years which continues to determine their social and economic status. Discrimination has been witnessed in ethnic ecological segregation also with a number of Oriental communities made to settle in "neighbourhoods" and "development towns" in the periphery of the main cities or desert areas. They tend to have a higher rate of density in houses with a higher proportion of families living in small, overcrowded and poor
housing conditions than Ashkenazim revealing disparities between the two communities in housing conditions. Crime rates are also higher among Oriental communities.

Inequality in Israeli society is also experienced in the field of education with discrepancies in educational level and nature of education. Also there is a strong positive association between one's educational level and one's income. There is a wide gap between the two origin groups in educational attainments right from the school level. The gap further widens in higher education. At university level, more students of American-European origin have been found to be studying than those of Asian-African origin as late as in 1995-96.

Further, those candidates of Asian-African origin who somehow manage to attain the university education, a majority ends up going for disciplines like Social sciences and humanities while a majority of Ashkenazi students are selected for more lucrative disciplines such as engineering, sciences, mathematics, medical etc. The gulf further widens at the final degree level from universities.

The initial dream of the pioneers, the "fusion of exiles" aimed at integrating immigrants through a melting of culture to produce an enriched Jewish national culture entailed some utopian components which could not achieve desired goals. Though the immigrants were ostensibly the beneficiaries of various social planning programmes by the government, the conditions which developed in various institutions created atmosphere where the Oriental immigrants lived in relative isolation from the earlier settlers of Israel and the national social policy of integration received various setbacks.
Though in the longer run, ethnic origin may diminish significantly as a basis for social, cultural, economic and political cleavage, there is still a possibility of continuing salience of ethnicity in the next generations because of the overlap between ethnic residential patterns and educational and occupation patterns with ethnic origin.

Marriages between spouses belonging to different origin groups are a prime mechanism for the gradual integration of Israel's Jewish population and are thus of profound social importance. Interethnic marriages, though not very frequent could boost the much-required social integration. Children of mixed origins are most likely to respond to a question about their ethnic identity by identifying themselves as "Israeli" rather than an "Iraqi", "Moroccan" or "German" Jew.

Where most government have gained only partial success, Israeli army has attained a major success in integrating Oriental communities in the values of the State and the land and could provide future scope for social unification. They army's role in social integration needs further probe and a systematic research.

Oriental communities at the outset suffered from unequal political representation as after the independence political power for most years has stayed in the hands of Jews of European and American origin which further curbed the political participation of the Oriental Jews. Since majority of immigrants from Oriental countries were not suited to fit into Israeli economy and were economically dependent on the state, it led to their political vulnerability and were seen as masses to be won by political parties.
Various studies reveal a negligible percentage of Oriental Jews in important political positions for decades. Wherever they have found participating in politics, they have to start from the lowest rank. Political discrimination on the basis of ethnicity becomes clear with the Labour party leader Ehud Barak apologising to Oriental Jewish community for the mistakes of the past.

The crystallisation of Israeli society into a cohesive social and political system has involved dealing with tension and conflicts emanating from social cleavage divisions. Ethnicity-based political discrimination led to emergence of various protest groups in Israel including militant Black Panthers who succeeded in raising the salience of burning questions Israel is facing even today. As in other societies, the relation between the cleavages and the overall social structure can be delineated and analysed in terms of group's respective positions on the status hierarchy and on the centre-periphery axis. In mapping a group's overall social position in terms of these two coordinates, we should take into account that they are not completely independent, and that a group's position on the centre-periphery axis may be influenced by its position in the stratification structure, and vice versa.

Explanation that the emergence of right-wing Likud in 1977 and later ultra-orthodox Shas is an outcome of an "ethnic vote" of Oriental Jews and their "militant nationalism" that Oriental countries produce is too simplistic. The second and third generation of Sephardim are as secular as Ashkenazim. Also there is a great difference
between the political agenda of Likud and the Shas with the latter in no way adhering to the right-wing agenda of the former and being open on the question of land for peace.

Alleviating feelings of deprivation by enhancing a group's centrality in society, can compensate groups at the bottom of the status hierarchy for their persistent social distress. In the modern socio-political lexicon, this phenomenon is known as populism, a phenomenon which characterised Israeli society when Likud was in power. The emergence of Likud and Shas can be attributed to, among other factors, the years of political and cultural alienation of oriental Jews and their disillusionment with decades of Labour rule, and later with the Likud regime, born out of their continuing lower socio-economic status. The political behaviour has reflected the socio-economic stratification of these origin groups more than the ethnicity.

During Likud period, there was no change in the stratification structure, but the Oriental communities' feelings of centrality in society did improve and they could relate to the political elites in some way or the other. The stratification gap between the Afro-Asians and the Ashkenazim was not reduced, but the former were compensated for this by the feeling of power that they derived from their political identification with the Likud.

Israeli society's ability to cope with its overburdened condition, to a large extent, determined its ability to realise its collective ideological aspiration. Such collective goals can be attained either through the availability of vast resources or through a high level of commitment, with people willing to defer gratification of individual needs and demands.
The drop in level of commitment can be viewed from the perspective of social integration and disintegration. From this perspective, it can be concluded that there has been a decline in social cohesion though the society has been able to absorb thousands of immigrants over the years from vast cultural backgrounds. Israel should recognise the pluralistic structure of its society where immigrants have been absorbed from vastly different parts of the world with different colour, race, origin and cultural background. This would mean that the country should not be obsessed with its identification with Ashkenazi community and face the reality of the existence of diverse groups with different needs and aspirations. It should incorporate components of diverse cultural forms into its culture building process and open its national culture to diverse influences (including the Middle Eastern one) instead of any kind of cultural planning aimed at "integrating others" (mainly Oriental communities).

The process of integration and absorption could be achieved through reciprocal relationship with mutual and reciprocal adaptation of beliefs between various social and ethnic groups, the political elites and the masses and there should not be any engineering of cultural planning in the ocean of diverse cultures.

Bridging the most differences between Jews of Western origin and Jews of Oriental countries is not possible as long as there is a pronounced correlation between the achievement components of status -- such as income, education, and occupation -- and the ascriptive components such as ethno-cultural background. This correlation is usually expressed through the concept of the "ethnic gap," which surfaces in public discussions.
of social and political issues. Israel simply can not afford a social problem of these dimensions. It cuts off half the population from the other half.

The founders of Israel had sought to make the state as homogeneous and egalitarian as possible. They had dreamed of a society composed of Jews, Jewish in its institutions, where ascriptive distinctions of ethnicity, religious observance and gender make no difference, and democratic freedoms apply to all citizens. This unpluralistic vision has for a long time sustained a denial of the pluralistic reality. The promulgation of the state ideology of "fusion of exiles" viewed Israeli society monolithically and worked against the ethnic diversity of the new immigrants resulting into the marginalisation of Oriental Jewish communities. This is time that Israel comes to grips with its structural pluralism, intergroup inequality and conflict and to do justice to its disadvantaged groups.

Different cultural traditions and tastes, different modes of functioning in familial and other social networks, and other similar variables continue to operate as significant factors of differentiation in Israeli society. Also, whatever little social mobility among Israeli Oriental community has been achieved might strengthen the demand for a greater equality.

It may be expected that the further evolution of the ethnic dimension whether toward greater equalisation or in the opposite direction, will reflect the nature of overall developments in the Israeli economy and the availability of socio-economic opportunities. Economic or political crisis and consequent public tensions and
competition for limited resources may lead to intensification of the persisting
potentialities for ethnic polarisation and conflicts. In considering the future of the ethnic
dimension in Israeli society, it is the objective socio-economic situations underlying such
divergent perceptions, much more than ethnicity per se, that seem to constitute the main
focus for concern.

As Israeli society continues to evolve, the ethnic dimension will continue to
represent one of the constituting factors. Though it is hoped that the social divide would
be blurred with coming generations, prolonged persistence of socio-economic gap could
also affect country's ability, that it has been displaying so remarkably, to defend itself.
The future social and economic policy will have to give a clear priority to the social gap
to prevent from widening. As has been expressed in the past, such gulf could lead to
social conflict and tensions which could assume undesirable tones.