5-2009

Diasporic Identities in Israel: A Study of Ethiopian Jews

Erich S. Roberts
Connecticut College, eroberts@conncoll.edu

Diasporic Identities in Israel: A Study of Ethiopian Jews

by

Erich S. Roberts
Class of 2009

An honors thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology at Connecticut
College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Contemporary concerns of anthropology stress the role of power relations in framing the study of a marginalized people within society. In this study, the present predicament of the Ethiopian community in Israel is examined through the highly political processes of nationalism, ethnic conflict, and identity construction. Each of these factors hold implications for the ways by which a dominant European nationalist ideology in Israel has come to impose forces of authority upon subjugated, non-European ethnic groups. The Ethiopians are one such group. The point of divergence between the community of Ethiopian Jews and Israel's national identity has caused the Ethiopian youth to rebel, resist, and construct their identity both globally and spatially. This phenomenon creates a significant dependence on the behavior of prominent communities in the African diaspora. The structure of this paper aims to illustrate the transnational identity of these youths as a response to Israel's decision to ideologically orient itself toward Western, capitalist values. Zionism's original foundation took root in precepts prevalent in the European Enlightenment, such as socialism and Marxism. My work, however, reveals a distinct Ethiopian perspective that today views the nation-state as a source of much conflict. This paper emphasizes conceptions of the field in anthropology, as well as the practices of fieldwork. It also, however, engages fieldwork itself to explore the specific role of space in the lives and imaginings of Ethiopian youth.

Contents

Introduction

Ethiopian Jews largely arrived to Israel in two large-scale migration movements. The first, Operation Moses, began at the end of 1984 and ended a few weeks into 1985 and the second, Operation Solomon, occurred in 1991 (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 246). According to estimates, roughly 100,000 Ethiopians currently reside in Israel, with very few Jews of Ethiopian descent still living in Ethiopia. The community has experienced a collective transportation from East Africa to the Middle East. Joseph Halevy, a western Jew and noted Semitist, was the first to study the rare occurrence of practicing Jews in East Africa in 1867. His student and successor Jacques Faitlovitch set the stage for their entry into the realm of World Jewry by setting up schools and even sponsoring a number of young men to travel to Europe and Israel to study among Jewish communities. These men eventually served as leaders in their communities throughout rural Ethiopia (Wagaw 1993, 15-16). Despite the enactment of the Law of Return in 1950, which was said to allow all Jews in the diaspora to return to Israel with full citizenship, it was not until 1973 that Chief Sephardic Rabbi Ovadia Yosef finally declared that they were in fact Jews and could migrate to Israel under the Law of Return (Wagaw 1993). The decision was made after much deliberation on the legitimacy and rationale of their practices and Judaic origins.[1]

The focus of this study is not on the historical origins of this community, but rather on the contemporary predicament of this community and how the Israeli

---

[1] The popular belief in Israel is that the Ethiopian Jews are descendants of the tribe of Dan, one of the ten lost tribes of Israel. These tribes disappeared after the Kingdom of Israel was attacked and destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. and many of its inhabitants were enslaved and exiled (Kaplan 1992, Kessler and Parfitt 1985). There is no way to prove the validity of this theory or any other prevalent theory.

nation-state gradually developed a system of stratification among Jews from non-European countries. A popular approach to the study of Ethiopian Jews, as seen by the numerous books and articles written in last several decades, is to begin with life in Ethiopia, then move on to the exodus in the early 80s to refugee camps in Sudan (where Operation Moses occurred), next is a focus on the much larger Operation Solomon taking Ethiopian Jews from Addis Adaba to Israel, and lastly a short discussion of the Ethiopian community in transition. Many works have placed the emphasis on the controversial origins of the community, life as Jews in Christian/Muslim Ethiopia, the grueling journey to Sudan, or the widely televised airlifts. Some authors have contextualized the situation as a flight or exodus towards freedom in a modern nation, yet for the purposes of this study I am more concerned with the social position occupied by Ethiopian Jews as recent immigrants to Israel. The historical component examines a link between theories of nationalism and ethnicity with the creation of Israel and how the Ethiopian Jews, like many other non-Ashkenazi[2] immigrant groups that migrated to Israel before them, are oppressed while also being essential to the development of the nation-state.

Along with the work done by Uri Ben-Eliezer (2004) in Ethiopian communities regarding racism and identity politics, the fieldwork I conducted for 10 weeks in northern Israel among Ethiopian teenagers comprises the vast majority on the material on the community in this study. Last summer, I worked for a non-profit organization called Hiyot[3] which strives to achieve the social, education, and economic integration of the Ethiopian community, while also empowering their status

---

[2] For the purposes of this study, Ashkenazi refers to the majority group in Israel with roots in Germany and Eastern Europe.
[3] Hiyot means "life" in Amharic, which is the native language of most Ethiopians living in Israel.

in the Haifa region of Israel. I lived in an absorption center inside the city of Haifa, the 3rd largest in Israel, built-up in recent decades by the growing immigrant population. Absorption centers typically house recent immigrants and allow them to live (very inexpensively) for up to two years. The centers require Hebrew language classes for all recent immigrants, along with other programs and experiences offered by the government of Israel to introduce its newest citizens to the country. Aba Hushi, the name of the center where I resided, is designed for singles and houses very few families. I primarily lived among singles from Ethiopia and the countries that made up the former Soviet Union, the residents were anywhere from 18-45 years of age. Each day I traveled by bus to a small town roughly 20 minutes north of Haifa called Kiryat Motzkin. Hiyot ran a youth center in this town for Ethiopian youth aged 10-18 and I worked there as a counselor and English tutor, but also played soccer, assisted with summer homework, and chatted with anyone who was interested in practicing their English language skills (my Hebrew was relatively limited for the majority of the summer). The center (or club as they called it) was designed to keep Ethiopian youth out of the streets and therefore avoid a stigma regarding blacks in Israeli society because the teenagers refuse to stay in their small, crowded apartments, but have nowhere else to go. I would see anywhere between 50-80 different children and teenagers each day and managed to build a relationship with a number of older teens who had just graduated from high school and were preparing for three years in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), along with several younger boys and girls interested in improving their English. I also spent some time on the other side of the Hiyot project, attempting to find funding and even speaking to U.S. and Canadian visitors about the

monetary needs of this upstart organization. Nearly all of the commentary on Ethiopian Jews comes directly from my informal interviews with mainly Ethiopian youths that I either lived with or spent time with at the youth club, along with information that I received from numerous Ethiopian employees of Hiyot and from the French-Israeli director of the program.[4]

The year-long study contains three parts and a conclusion. Part I begins by describing how I became interested in the topic, before charting my intellectual development as an anthropology major, then moves on to a discussion on the conceptions of "the field" in anthropology. It presents this fieldwork as a more modern approach to the discourse, while also outlining the manner in which I collected the information for this project. Part II examines anthropological analysis of nationalism and ethnicity, processes that led to the formation of the Israeli nation-state and how the ideals have changed over time. This section contains a brief case study on Arab Jews to illustrate how the formation of a European national identity in Israel isolates non-Ashkenazi Jews, including Arab and Ethiopian Jews. Part III applies narratives and conversations from my fieldwork to contribute to a larger theme of identity construction among the teenage community. Through the use of anthropological concepts of space, I show how the teenage population defines themselves within their geographic location in Israel and how this transnational identity has drawn heavily from African-American culture. The conclusion inserts some new data and concepts as a way to tie the entire study together.

---

[4] In order to conceal the identity of those mentioned in this study, no one is referred to by their actual name, excluding Batia Makorez (the Israeli newspaper editor) who I only spoke with recently in the United States and gave me permission to use her real name.

Part I

Reflections on Anthropology and Fieldwork

Why Israel?

The story of this year-long study begins the summer prior to the one in which I completed my research among the Ethiopian community of northern Israel. I labored through three months of a harvest season on an organic farm in western Massachusetts and traveled to Israel for 10 days with Taglit-Birthright. For anyone unfamiliar with this program, it advertises a free journey for all Jews aged 18-26 living in the diaspora to explore the beauty of the land of their ancestors as they "strengthen the sense of solidarity among world Jewry."[5] It is the gift of a lifetime, according to many advocates, and as I was informed by peers who recommended the program, it would be an unforgettable experience. In some sense, my peers were right, especially since I am still thinking and even writing in regards to this supposed "heritage journey" nearly two years later. The trip is designed for young Jewish adults of all nationalities dispersed throughout the globe; however, the vast majority of trips are run out of cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., Montreal, and Quebec. These locations contain some of the largest and also the most prosperous Jewish communities in the world. Taglit-Birthright intends to draw wealthy young adults to the land of Israel in the hope that they will fall in love with the country (and just as importantly, a fellow Jew), establish roots, and empathize with its unfortunate situation. The organization aims to make a lasting impression that will translate into future capital through trips and donations. In a sense, the private

---

[5] From the "About Us" section on the Taglit-Birthright Israel website (www.birthrightisrael.com)

philanthropists and partners are investing in these individuals as a way to assure Israel will maintain ties with the wealthiest of world Jewry.

Anyone who has ever traveled to Israel through any programs affiliated with Birthright will agree that the trip is fun, and my goal here is not to dismiss or discredit this notion, but rather to explain why this experience led me back to the land of Israel. My specific program was labeled Israel Outdoors, meaning that we would see and explore this country primarily through outdoor activity—mainly hiking, walking, etc. Trekking through the Golan Heights in the North and the Negev Desert in the south was undeniably beautiful, and walking tours through the new and old sections of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv were equally as thrilling and astounding. The trip does move extraordinarily quickly, and most participants merely complain that the journey should be marked "Israel by bus" and that they are treated as 8th graders on a class fieldtrip. Either way, the reviews are overwhelmingly positive, and any past participant would jump at the opportunity to join another group of 40 and do it all over again.

The program is deeply associated with the Government of Israel as well as the United Jewish Communities, which represents North American Jewish Federations. These organizations establish an itinerary that allows the participants to observe the strictly wealthy "Jewish" areas of Israel, along with those preserved locations connected with the immemorial past of the Jews and places of natural beauty (Golan Heights, for example). This may construct the best possible experience for any Jew visiting Israel, but it also glorifies the country's existence. The guides make continual reference to heroic battles won by the Israelis and unfair treatment by its Muslim

neighbors. I cannot blame a tour guide for not providing both perspectives in regard

to a religious or political conflict between Israelis and Arabs, especially since the

immense majority hail from countries in alliance with Israel's social and political

agenda in the Middle East. I can, however, be upset at the program's inability to

speak about or even drive through some of the less glorious, multi-cultural locations

where numerous Jews reside in seemingly peaceful cohesion with Arabs, Christians,

Baha'is, among others. In the past two decades, more than one million Jews have

migrated to Israel, primarily from the countries of the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia,

and the Americas. I am fairly certain I never even saw a black (Ethiopian) Jew during

my ten days, and definitely was not informed about Israel as a country of mass

immigration. I do not expect the trip to enter the West Bank or speak of Israeli-

Palestinian conflict within the occupied territories, but I hoped to learn and observe of

the construction and booming development of new cities to accommodate an

enormous population growth. I am confident that if I had voiced any of these

complaints to those individuals and federations in charge of Birthright, they would

have assured me that ten days is simply not enough time to see all of Israel, which is a

valid excuse. But the issue is more of the Israeli Government's and therefore

Birthright's decision to hide (both physically and verbally) these parts of Israel,

leaving the participants with a false impression of Israel. Birthright hopes that every

18-26 year old arrives home to alert their family, friends, and relatives of the

magnificence of their ancestors' land, the amazing people they met along the way,

and encourage and plan more visits. Birthright always accomplishes this goal because

there is something mystical and indisputably attractive that describes the tourist

regions of Israel. I, similar to other Birthrighters, made plans to return, but this time I hoped to unmask the false perception imposed on me; a perception that hails from my brief first experience in Israel, but is also influenced by the social and political aspects of Judaism in America.

Ethiopian Community

Growing up in the United States, I was imbued with preconceived notions of what individuals fit snugly into which groups. The majority of Jews looked like me, light-skinned and dark hair, and even though I always wondered why this was the case, I accepted it as the distinct characteristics of my ethno-religious group. My whole world was turned upside down when I was introduced to the community of Ethiopian Jews in a film titled "Live and Become." The film begins in a Sudanese refugee camp sheltering displaced Ethiopians and tells the story of a non-Jewish boy who assumes the identity of Jew to board a plane to Israel. The film portrays the experiences and struggles of blacks living within a white society, while also telling the story of the white Israeli family who adopted him and fought for his acceptance. Despite the emergence of black Jews in Israel in 1980s, black was not associated with Jewishness, which was a development I believed could have vast implications for those Ethiopians living in Israel.

As I described above, my first trip to Israel was a disappointment as I failed to grasp an in-depth understanding of the motives and identity of a recently established nation-state which had labeled itself as a safe and accepting habitat for Jews globally. I felt as though I had very few interactions with Jews who were not of European

origins and was only presented with one perspective into Israeli society. I needed

another means of viewing their society, in the same way that African-American

history and perspective represents an entirely different viewpoint from the one that

embodies my outlook on American society. The Ethiopian community would enable

me to observe this multi-cultural society from the bottom. The portion of society less

concerned with fighting for land and peace with their Arab neighbors and more

concerned with fighting to establish an accepted identity. Regardless of wealth,

resources, elite citizens or any other factors, it did not seem feasible that a nation-state

as new and as filled with immigrants as Israel could be immediately transformed into

multi-cultural and accepting. The Ethiopians were the darkest-skinned and the most

recent community to be transported to Israel, along with being primarily from a rural

setting.[6] They would require assistance in the adjustment process and if the history of

Africans in other countries has any bearing on this case, they would be discriminated

against. In furthering my understanding of the diversity in Israeli society, studying the

Ethiopian community was an obvious choice.

Going to the Field: Peruvian Amazon

At this point, I plan to step away from Israel and my fieldwork among the

Ethiopian community in order to examine my previous views of the discipline of

anthropology and how these were established. Anthropology, as a discourse, often

faces the task of separating past and present practices in the minds of the

unacquainted. The birth of ethnographic practices in anthropology are embodied in a

---

[6] They are the only large community of African Jews to hail from a country outside of the North African region or South Africa.

13

figure like Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), who sought to observe native culture in complete and utter isolation and if this was not possible, his ethnography would act as reconstruction in the way he felt life may have appeared prior to contact (Burton 2002, 81). Malinowski's participant observation approach to ethnographic fieldwork has been widely adopted and required living in close contact with the supposed "primitive" people for an extended period of time. A primary aim was to allow the natives to encounter the ethnographer on such a normal basis that eventually they would cease to be interested or even alarmed at his/her presence. By this point, the ethnographer would be able to observe natives in their natural state and compile a collection of detailed facts from which to draw conclusions (Malinowski 2006, 174-175). Basically, the earliest practices of modern anthropology were focused on the study of people with the highest degree of otherness. Anthropology, therefore, was a discipline that appeared to only take form on remote islands, in impenetrable jungles, and in scarce deserts.

The romanticized nature of anthropology is attractive to naïve, undergraduate students, as it so uniquely different from disciplines examined in high school and this is especially true if the past is not disassociated from contemporary practice. At the same time, my first impressions of anthropology were closer to the Malinowskian school of thought than modern practices, making it exceeding difficult to distinguish practice from ideas. Studying in remote locations was fixed in my mind as the only legitimate method of obtaining anthropological data and the initial introduction of practicing in less remote, more populated, or even urban settings caused confusion with opposing discourses. If an anthropologist could practice in New York City, for

example, wasn't this simply the practice of sociology? And if not, what exactly is the study of sociology? It did not dawn on me for a while that anthropology was in fact inter-disciplinary and an integrated approach toward studying individual and group behavior, rather than a study that could only take place among specific people in secluded locations. Another setback from understanding these developments was my first experience with anthropological fieldwork.

In the fall of 2007, I traveled to Peru through a SATA (Study Abroad Teach Abroad) program affiliated with Connecticut College. The program was designed around a 6-week Ethnobotany/Ethnoecology course in the Peruvian Amazon, which involved intensive interaction with the Matsigenka tribe. The first week and a half incorporated accelerated Matsigenka language and Amazonian botany/ecology courses in preparation for a research project focused on gaining an understanding of the Matsigenka's knowledge of their environment. I distinctly recall feeling slightly uncomfortable at first because our actions and lifestyle felt so dissimilar. The Matsigenka tribe is made up of roughly 12,000 people dispersed throughout various basins in southeastern Peru (Izquierdo and Shepard 2004, 823). Pre-1950s, they lived in semi-sedentary settlements, yet the arrival of missionaries has caused many families to cluster around the community center, where the school and health center are located. They have always subsisted off of a steady diet of "fishing, hunting, forest foraging and long-fallow swidden agriculture" (Izquierdo and Shepard 2004, 823). Prior to the 1990s, they maintained little contact with the outside world, but in the last two decades have participated in political rights movements, sent children to schools outside of the community for secondary education, and are more aware of

happenings within Peru. The Matsigenka I spent time with live deep in the heart of a nature reserve and therefore still to this day remain isolated. It seemed as though I would not be able to relate to them because they were so "other" from me, but soon I realized how to establish a relationship and commonalities. We began playing soccer, laughing at one another, and these activities began to reveal some ideas about my approach to the practice of anthropology. It was humbling to develop relationships on a personal level, and the opportunity to conduct my own anthropological research was an incredible and unforgettable experience. But the reason I made reference to this experience was to point out how it primarily contributed to a prior, inaccurate understanding of fieldwork. The type of ethnographic research I carried out among the isolated Matsigenka is undoubtedly a practice of anthropology no more or less important than practice among other groups in different locations. At the same time, it is vital to identify the role outside factors play in the study of a community. The Matsigenka, for example, have relatively limited contact with the outside world because of where they live and although their practices, beliefs, and material belongings have certainly changed in the last several decades, their lifestyle has not been greatly affected by the processes of globalization. If I chose to ignore their involvement with the political movements that affect their environment, for example, it would be possible to study the Matsigenka in the same manner that Malinowski studied natives in the South Pacific, which was initially problematic for my study of the discipline.

The Matsigenka fit the Malinowskian prototype in terms of distance traveled in order to physically "enter the field." Our group left Cusco, Peru (where we were

stationed and taking classes during the rest of the semester) on a bus around 8 a.m.

(By the way, it's not like any airline offers direct flights from Hartford to Cusco, we

first had to go to Atlanta to catch a flight to Lima, and then a short flight from Lima

through the Andres, finally arriving in Cusco.) The bus drove us up and out of the

valley that Cusco lies within and then we began the descent towards the Amazon. A

full day of slow travel on non-paved and dangerous roads brought us to the cloud

forest, where we stayed for a night. Around 5 a.m. the next morning we awoke and

traveled by bus for another 10 hours until descending a total of 13,000 feet to sea

level. By late afternoon, we boarded long, narrow motorboats (pekis, we called them)

and traveled a few hours down the Madre de Dios River to a research station. A few

days later we boarded those same motorboats for a much longer trip (probably 8-10

hours) that transported us onto the Manu River into Manu National Park and

eventually to Casa Matsigenka, the site where we conducted the majority of our

ethnographic research. Numerous hours of travel were necessary to reach "the field,"

making it then impossible to enter and re-enter each day. Throughout the journey

from Connecticut College to Casa Matsigenka we continued to pass increasingly

unfamiliar and unrecognizable locations, until finally reaching a place of "otherness,"

meaning much different from what we knew and understood. None of the students

could have been prepared for what we were about to experience, since we could only

imagine a remote, exotic destination. Therefore, my idea of what is grasped under the

study of anthropology was romanticized. Arriving, via boat, to encounter a far-away

tribe in a dense, untouched rainforest was exactly why the practices of anthropology

became popular; it was exciting and exotic. Highly trained scientists, like

Malinowski, had hoped to escape the corruption of a rapidly modernizing society, perpetuated by the rise of industrialization. Through the study of a "pristine" society, one could abandon the decaying mores of modernity and find satisfaction in the representation of a lost culture. The research we conducted in the Peruvian Amazon was not in any way similar to the work done by early ethnographers, but the spatial location and isolated natured were oddly reminiscent.

It is unfair to blame anyone specifically for my misunderstanding of the goals and subjects of contemporary anthropology, even though the discipline has the tendency to hold on to its origins. This may be because it emerged relative recently in academia, compared to philosophy or psychology for example, and therefore the roots are not so far removed from present practice. It was not until I returned from Peru that I learned the of anthropology's ability to address contemporary issues such as globalization, immigration, multi-lateral organizations, and development.

Contemporary Approaches and Issues in Anthropology

A more modern approach to anthropology views it as the study of people's experiences and the ways in which collective identities are formed through constant and opposing interactions. Through the processes of globalization, which is the transformation of local into global phenomena and vice versa, individuals encounter varying ideas, peoples, and objects. The result is low numbers of communities with extreme isolation from the outside world, and thus numerous factors that affect the identity of a collective group. As anthropology adjusted to population movements,

far-reaching institutions and organizations, and the effects of dominant authorities, we are left with a discipline capable of analyzing a modern, global world.

My first step towards grasping, understanding, and applying these concepts was in a seminar entitled The Anthropology of Space and Place: (DE)Locating Culture and Anthropology. This class focused on how space and place is both important to anthropological thought and people's experience of their surroundings. It introduced me to the processes and perceptions of transnationalism, modern diaspora, political identity, and the role space and authority play in the formation of how these ideas relate on the individual level. The class was structured around a research project, and I chose a comparative study of the Jewish Ethiopian community's occupation of space in rural Ethiopia and Israel. Particularly fascinating were the ways in which religious customs were adapted to fit into the available resources in Israel, especially in regard to menstruation. The focus on the project was split between Ethiopia, which was a rural lifestyle that was relatively unaffected by opposing peoples, ideas, etc…, and Israel, where the Ethiopian community was susceptible to an immense transformation of lifestyle and religious conduct, to name only two. Through this project I came to realize the importance of studying population movements because of the ways in which a community's environment (which includes people and ideas) affects their experience of that space. This, along with a desire to gain a greater understanding of the less spoken about populations in Israel, was the reason why I was so bent on researching in Israel.

The next semester I enrolled in another seminar, People on the Move: Migrants, Refugees, and Tourists in Anthropological Perspective, which focused on

population movements in the contemporary world. The class provided me with a broader grasp of the factors at play in understanding the hybrid and/or transnational identity of a mobile community. People move for a multitude of reasons, but what may be even more important are the results of these movements. I came to understand processes of rejection, integration, and assimilation by a host society, among other aspects of tension involved in ethnic conflicts. The class also discussed less hostile relations such as international retirement and various types of tourism, to gain a full grasp of when, why, and how people move between and among nation-states.

I am currently enrolled in a class that introduces and provides a survey of the history of the field of Applied Anthropology. Thus far, we have examined the ethics and codes of conduct necessary to practice as an applied anthropologist, along with the function applied anthropologists serve in public policy research and in the field of development. In this regard, anthropology can redefine early ethnographic research practices to predict solutions in a corrupt, problem filled world. Applied Anthropology is finally emerging as the fifth major sub-discipline within the discipline of anthropology, which I view as encouraging because of the implications it has to address social issues, rather than simply focusing on contributing to a larger body of theory. The study of anthropology is active in the goal of understanding people's needs, and even though the roots of the discourse are not in community service, it is becoming imperative to use the research as a means of assistance. In this sense, applied anthropology is a culmination of modern views and applications on the field of anthropology.

The practices of contemporary forms of anthropology tend to focus mainly among minority and marginalized groups. This is certainly a sign of changing practices in the adjustment to the modern world, but still also an approach to examine the "other" within society. Anthropology has adapted to embody a field still primarily concerned with segregated people which now also deals specifically with issues that are applicable both in up to date academia and the professional world. Anthropology has become increasingly pertinent as a means to study all spheres of society. The type of fieldwork I completed last summer has roots in transnational identity construction, globalization, and migration policy, all issues developed out of anthropology's ability to meet the needs of the contemporary human agenda.

Urban Fieldwork and Degrees of "Otherness"

The task is then to apply these concepts to the existing structure of fieldwork. The issue that must be addressed is the notion that anthropologists still view the world as "broken up into 'areas' and 'sites' sanctioned for study" (Passaro 1997, 148), because of a necessity to enter a defined "field" in order to legitimize practices within the discipline. As a means of practicing in non-traditional field sites, it becomes necessary to contextualize the study to fit within the limits of older forms of anthropology. According to ethnographic tradition, a field site must be controlled, workable, and contain delimited boundaries to provide the necessary framework for anthropological study (Passaro 1997, 150-151). Yet, "postmodern space in a globalized world" is hectic, unorganized, and entirely unmanageable (Passaro 1997, 151). Urban landscapes, then, may not be comprised of appropriate sites, even though

the thematic study of the anthropological concepts discussed above may only be accessible in large, cluttered cities. This brings about a new form of anthropological study which attempts to set boundaries in the process of redefining the concept of "the field."

Joanne Passaro's (1997) article, "'You Can't Take the Subway to the Field!': 'Village' Epistemologies in the Global Village," discusses how her fieldwork done among the homeless in New York City encountered problems from others in the discipline of anthropology. She never slept on the streets to gain the perspective of living with those who she was studying, nor did she set definitive boundaries for the study, for example; a specific region, shelter, or group. Technically, she lived out her life and conducted research in the same "field"— New York City. Another issue is that Passaro felt her academic peers "would be happiest if I discovered some sort of secret communication system among homeless people" (Passaro 1997, 152), which was certainly not her goal when undertaking the project. In her study, she garnered an understanding of gender inequalities among homeless, a phenomenon she may have not have identified if she limited herself to specific sites. But despite this discovery, her peers were still most fascinated with structure or specifically a "communication system" among the homeless in New York City. By devising such systems the homeless could be viewed as exotic, yet Passaro managed to identify the roots behind homelessness. It is incorrect to say her study was frowned upon, but a definite disconnect exists between her research and the predicted approach of her peers. Passaro, among others, helped me understand the difference between redefining the

approaches of early anthropology to fit the modern world and applying anthropological concepts and methods to our global world.

An interrelated and equally important conflict is a lack of physical distance from her subjects, which allowed many to infer that she "might be too close to 'see well'" (Passaro 1997, 152). Meaning, her spatial proximity and degree of "otherness" from the homeless people may prevent her from providing any perspective into the situation. Implied within anthropology is the assumption "that an epistemology of 'Otherness' was the best route to 'objectivity'" (Passaro 1997, 152), a principle that may or may not still hold true as many 21st century anthropologists confirm "otherness" as theoretical rather than geographical. At the same time, "objectivity" may still be viewed as vital in the production of accurate knowledge as a researcher should not contain internal partialities or else the study is supposed to fail in its attempt to be ethnographically adequate. Passaro does not speak specifically to how her inherent biases add or subtract from the study (something that I will look into regarding my own research), but does discuss how her activities outside of fieldwork add to her perspective of a definitive "other." An anthropologist can only take away conclusions based off of what he or she personally brings to the study. There is not only one authentic form of knowledge that can be concluded from a study of homeless people in New York City, and Passaro proves how her approach to not using specific sites is helpful in attaining broader, applicable conclusions.

This past summer I lived in the city of Haifa and in order to "enter the field" each day I took a bus to a busy station roughly 20 minutes north of Haifa and then hopped on another bus heading toward Kiryat Motzkin. I stepped off the second bus

near a shopping center of sorts and walked nearly 10 minutes to "enter" a two-room

bomb shelter underneath a synagogue. One room in the youth club contained eight

computers along the walls with a large table in the middle, while the other had

couches, a ping-pong table, a foosball table, a refrigerator, and a large television. All

of these objects were very familiar to me since I hail from the United States and

arriving at the youth center, via buses, was not exactly a difficult process despite the

language barrier. The point is that the environment did not present anything

particularly foreign as the region north of Haifa is urban and bustling with people and

cars, even though the people do present a significant "other." In the ethnographic

past, a significant "other" suggested a great degree of objectivity on the subjects,

while the next sub-section aims to prove how a 22 year-old American can only

present one perspective to the study of the Ethiopian Jewish community. My

definitive personality and approach to the research allowed for the creation of specific

type of project which will be expanded upon in the coming sections.

Methodology

Anthropologists generally include a section on methodology in any

ethnographic research. This section elaborates on the specifics of any system or

approach used to acquire the data. It will also identify the demographic dimensions of

the field studied, and will most likely make reference to stories, experiences, and

explicit informants. In the case of this research project, I will explain my approach

this past summer and elaborate on how the research reflects the aims of this study. I

did not prepare surveys or questionnaires, rarely thought of questions I wanted to ask,

and never scheduled times to speak one-on-one with any potential informants. The process was entirely informal, partially because I did not initially intend to use the internship as a chance to collect data for the production of an honors thesis, as I was there to be of assistance and understand the unspoken places in Israel. The situation changed for the better when I soon realized that many of the elder teenagers really wanted to talk to me about living in Israel. They genuinely cared to express their opinions regarding the Israeli government, media, and citizens, and what was probably most important to them is that I also cared. They loved to ask me questions about life in America (mainly about the large, prolific African-American community, an issue I deal with in full in Part III), but were equally fascinated by my dedication to understanding their situation. To put it simply, I was a white Jew from the United States of America who, in their minds, probably could have been doing plenty of other fun and interesting things with his summer. Instead, I chose to listen to their stories, be patient with their English, and show up nearly everyday for 10 weeks.

Throughout the majority of this research project, I was dealing with subjects under the age of 18, which brings about the first crucial task of gaining the respect of teenagers. If I was planning on acquiring information through dialogue, I needed the youth to feel comfortable speaking with me, which also included making myself available and convincing them I was someone worth the time. Before my first couple days at the youth club, I had never learned about obtaining the trust of informants who were not adults. An adult most likely wants a researcher to be a great listener, professional and completely dependable. Teenagers, on the other hand, are seeking a role model, someone to look up to, who can teach them something about sports,

music, and social life. I had to be this person because they were only prepared to speak to me if they felt as though they would be acquiring information in return. Therefore, preparing for interviews revolved more around studying up on American hip-hop artists than devising any structure to my informal interviews. The topics of discussion were consistently African-American hip-hop artists, athletics and culture, and European football. Luckily, I was well versed in all athletics, especially soccer throughout the world, but they all certainly knew more than I did about hip-hop artists, songs, and recent albums. They were seldom concerned with any music that was not overwhelmingly popular in the United States and especially widely accepted among African-American communities. Also, they were not overly concerned with World Jewry, even though they accepted their identity as Jews and occasionally questioned my religious customs, nor were they interested in discussing popular Israeli culture, artists, athletics, and music unless it specifically reflected their situation as a desperate minority group. After understanding who they were and what they were interested in, I was presented with the task of making these characteristics translate into conversations about all aspects of life within Israeli society. But before I was able to make it to this stage, I first had to gain their admiration.

The key to my success was my knowledge and ability to play the game of soccer. Soccer, after all, is the sport I began playing at a young age. In high school, I played the game year round, and now I play for the intercollegiate team at Connecticut College. For me, soccer has always been a way to relate to people of varying cultural backgrounds, which was also the case in Peru, as it is the world's game. The game is not more popular anywhere on the globe than it is in Africa, and

in this Ethiopian community they followed the trend. They loved to play soccer, play soccer computer games (especially in the heat of summer), talk soccer, and watch highlights of European games. I had the chance to prove myself to them early in the summer when the 16-18 males at the youth center I worked at had a game scheduled against its cross-town rivals, a youth center also affiliated through Hiyot for Ethiopian teenagers in Kiryat Bialik. My youth club loses to its rivals each year, which I soon found out is a serious and sensitive issue. I probably should not have played in the game, but I was not aware of the intensity or violent nature of the game and simply agreed to be the goalie because I was asked. I am an adequate goalie at best, but fortunately for me Ethiopians have much better coordination with their feet than with their hands, which made me stand out compared to their previous goalie and counterpart on the opposing team. We won the game and I was praised for my efforts, which I immediately felt bad about because I altered the outcome of the game between two groups of 16-18 year old Ethiopians. Anyway, the point of the story is that the game, which was well attended by every boy and girl from the youth club, allowed for the realization I could play soccer, and therefore I was no longer known as the white Jewish American who is trying to learn Hebrew and does not know much about the hip-hop music in his own country. Another, smaller contributing factor was that I am a fine ping-pong player and many vital conversations occurred while someone challenged me to a ping-pong match. Occasionally, if someone was very open and blunt when speaking to me and I anticipated learning a lot from them, I would make sure that the games would be very close and I would alternate winning or losing. This guaranteed me additional time with that individual, as I knew they would

seek out more games against me. The first mission of the fieldwork was to present myself in a way that would make teenagers want to converse and participate in sports and other activities with me. This was the hard part of the research because I needed them to respect and look up to me as an older brother, and as soon as they wanted to associate themselves with me, it only became a matter of guiding the conversation into certain directions.

Working with teenagers was much more difficult than I anticipated because they are easily affected by petty problems. In order to counter bad moods and complacency, I forced myself to come into the youth club with a smile on my face everyday. Despite being young, these kids knew their position as a minority group was not ideal, and they constantly spoke of boredom and unfair treatment. I attempted to counter any negativity inside the center by presenting myself as someone who cared about them, even though I did not have to. They knew I was not being paid, but rather, that I chose to come in every day. They are used to having volunteers come in and out, but they typically pay little attention to them because they do not last very long or appear intermittently. The Ethiopian community has established itself as a community in need and therefore it does garner the support of many throughout the country, yet I was able to show dedication. I did not immediately realize the effect I was having because it was gradual, but eventually the students began to greet me each day when they arrived and were also beginning to seek out more information regarding what I was actually doing here and how long would I be here. I became a fixture for these teenagers last summer, and that was important for the relationships that ensued.

Once the barriers of respect and comfort were passed, it became easy to initiate conversation, joke around, and feel comfortable listening among a group of older or younger teenagers. At this point, I began to ask a lot of questions which did not seem to bother anyone, especially as they would ask questions to counter mine. Generally, I would initiate conversations, but as they became familiar with whom I was and what type of information I was seeking, they often approached me to talk. However, despite free flowing conversations and my participation in a number of events and activities, I still relied on several 16-18 year old males for the vast majority of my information. They were the least embarrassed to speak English, and they had much to say about work and social experiences among various ethnic groups within Israeli society. These young men (a few of which were entering the Israeli Defense Forces in the next few months) were very willing to share their impressions on Israel and how the community has been affected and treated by the government and its fellow citizens. They loved that I would listen to them voice their concerns for the future and had even more fun speaking to me about the life they could have in America or back in Ethiopia. The point of concern I learned from them is their community's voice is unheard, a theme that has implications for the construction of their identity and therefore appears throughout this study. These individuals became my friends and a main part of our relationship was listening and learning about one another. We played soccer, spoke of girls, read about sports and political news on the computer, discussed music, and watched television and movies. It hardly seemed like fieldwork and I never used my notebook as we were discussing issues of contention or anything else. I did not want them to feel as though I was there to receive

information, and I convinced myself of this fact, even after I knew I would use the ethnographic data for a project. I generally jotted down my notes from the day on the bus ride home or later that night.

The unique nature of this study stems from my approach to participant observation, rather than the community studied or the focus on identity construction. Uri Ben-Eliezer's (2004) "Being a Black Jew in Israel: Cultural Racism and Anti-Racism in Contemporary Israel" is certainly one of the works that addresses similar issues to the ones I stress in Part III. A Professor at the University of Haifa, he even studied Ethiopian teenagers from the same region. Through extensive research in Israel, he has written numerous works regarding Ethiopian Jews and identity politics. Naturally, my study identifies and elaborates upon similar issues to his work, and I even feel my research is valuable and potentially adds to the discourse. But the point of this study is not to disprove any previous works or provide any definitive facts regarding the situation or identity of Ethiopian teenagers living in Israel. I simply provide any alternative perspective and approach to studying the community. By being an individual very similar in age to the teenagers I studied, I was able to closely identify with their actions, daily activities, and behaviors. I had the ability to be as close as a trusted friend while conducting research and while I do agree that this may have its positives and negatives, it offers entirely separate results. In this project, I took the anthropological approach of participant observation to a whole other level. I became a participant in these kids' lives, as a friend, in order to understand day-to-day conflicts. I never ran out of things to converse about and therefore did not need a strict methodological system to conduct the research. I certainly approached the

summer as a curious, undergraduate kid and fortunately the results show more depth than I began with. But an important aspect of this study is that I was only able to answer the questions that I specifically identified throughout the research. I cannot provide the entire spectrum on this community, nor have I attempted that task in this study. It is simply my method of examining the situation.

Part II

Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Nation Identity

Introduction

This section is guided toward answering questions on the development of the Israeli nation-state from its origins until contemporary times. The primary concern is the transition from socialist ideals at the start of the movement to western, capitalist values in the present and what this shift means for the numerous ethnic groups residing in Israel. The earliest decades of the nation-building process relied on immigration from communities outside of Europe for the creation of a working class and presently the nation-state still relies on them to offset the growing Arab population, yet the gradual transformation has increasingly affected their socio-economic status within the country. By emulating the west, Israel has created a stratified society with the European origin Jews being first the founders of the political movement and now at the forefront of its national identity. I begin with Anderson and Gellner because they present the ideas of national sentiment based upon the advent of media, through the large-scale dissemination of literature, and democracy. They allow for an outline of how nationalist movements develop, but the history of nationalism in Israel lends itself to a discussion of ethnicity. The concept of ethnic groups in a battle for political autonomy characterized the Jewish predicament in Europe, and ethnic conflict is also an issue in contemporary Israel. This section sets the stage for a case study of contemporary Israel, specifically how identity issues of the recently migrated Ethiopian community reflect society at large.

Roots of Nationalist Theory

   Benedict Anderson is vital in beginning a discussion on the Israeli nationalist

movement because he revolutionized nationalism as a field of study. His celebrated

book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*

(1983), examines the factors that contributed to the emergence of nationalist

movements over the past three centuries. The idea behind an "imagined community"

is that the members of a modern nation will never come to know one another or even

experience face-to-face interaction with a small percentage of their countrymen, but

rather are connected by the language that they share, the written literature

(newspaper) that they each have access to, and national events (for example, war).

These factors combine to create "a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1983, 7)

between members. As early as the 1830s, the Jewish Enlightenment or Haskala began

to develop a collective identity as a way "to give Jews a new sense of community,

based no longer on religious adherence but on following a particular culture"

(Dieckhoff 2002, 3). The early intellectuals produced and spread "Hebrew and

Yiddish literature and press" (Dieckhoff 2002, 3), which alerted Jews of the

community that exists across the globe and connected them under one broadly

defined ethno-religious group that shared numerous cultural characteristics. Zionism,

introduced by Avi Birnbaum in 1890, is the official term describing a Jewish rebirth

in the land of Palestine. Yet, before the official birth of the idea, Jewish intellectuals

had already spent significant time developing, spreading, and promoting the idea of a

united Jewish nation. Theodor Herzl, who is often regarded as the father of modern

Zionist thinking, further contributed to the creation of a Jewish culture with his book

The State of the Jews published in 1896. The "distribution of books" writes Dieckhoff (2002, 33), was another step towards calling all Jews toward action.

The pamphlets, newspapers, and eventually books that were said to have been dispersed throughout Jewish communities across the globe, were likely spread primarily among Ashkenazi Jews living in Western and Eastern Europe, along with those living in places like New York City. Despite not reaching some of the far-spreading Jewish communities, the printed literature in Hebrew and Yiddish was the first movement toward the creation of an "imagined community." Anderson argues "that the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community," and this in turn is able to "set the stage for the modern nation" (Anderson 1983, 46). Although print literature was vital in the process of organizing an "imagined community" into a nation, the global Jewish community completed the stages in a different order then how Anderson characterized the development. The "imagined community" still lived on numerous separate continents, needed to select one language that could define it from all other nations, and gain control of the land to build its nation from scratch. Anderson's fundamental aspect of nationalism did, however, prove to be the way that this 20th century nationalist movement first mobilized its community.

A linguistic unification of the widespread, linguistically diverse Jewish community was the subsequent step in the process of forming a nation out of an "imagined community." The Zionist leaders and intellectuals were faced with a very difficult situation because of the number of available options. Several widely spoken

European languages would have made viable options because of the large population

of Jews living in specific regions of Europe, such as areas under German rule.

Yiddish was potentially even a better option seeing as that "of 10.5 million Jews in

1900, about 9 million were Yiddish speakers" (Dieckhoff 2002, 101). This reveals

that the Jews in the diaspora primarily spoke Yiddish, and therefore "to reject Yiddish

was to reject the Jewish diaspora experience" (Dieckhoff 2002, 102). Zionist leaders

desired to create a new "collective identity" (Dieckhoff 2002, 102) that set the Jewish

communities free of their unfavorable experiences with anti-Semitism in Europe (no

German, among others), while also preaching the dismissal of Yiddish as a way to

seal any connection between the language that barely connected the Jews during their

years dispersed throughout the diaspora and the language which will define the

nation. Hebrew was chosen, but managed to prevail over Yiddish only after the

events of World War II utterly destroyed Yiddish speakers, literature and culture. Due

to the impracticality involved with making Hebrew usable as a spoken language and

forcing thousands to learn it, it was unpopular among many, including Herzl himself

(Dieckhoff 2002, 103). At the same time, Hebrew is the language of the ancient

Judaic past and the formation of nation-state is intended to connect the Jews of today

with the Jewish world of the past. By enforcing Hebrew, the Zionist leaders were

disassociating the movement with modernity. The new citizens of this land would be

taking a step backwards because of the need to build the foundations to teach

Hebrew, instead of choosing a language that would make it relatively easy to

communicate globally. The Zionist thinkers sought to build this nation from the

ground up because it would finally be a place for the Jews and thus, it is not alarming

that the nation does not contain the foundations to be competitive among other European economies. These early values slowly fall apart, which will be a recurring theme throughout the study.

Herzl's distaste for the implementation of Hebrew as the national language relates to the fact that he "has frequently been criticised for more or less banning all reference to Judaism in his vision of the state" (Dieckhoff 2002, 41). This notion of isolating religion from the Jewish identity as a homogenous ethnic group allowed Herzl to play a major role in what is often called the "Uganda affair" (Dieckhoff 2002, 41). In the beginning of the 20th century, Britain was very close to handing the territory of Uganda to the Jews. This land was of no significance to the Jewish people, but it did represent a victory for the Zionist movement and Herzl was desperately concerned with its success. During Herzl's only visit to the land of Palestine in 1898, "he was deeply disappointed by the reality," which was a territory filled with cities "full of poverty and destitution" surrounded by land which "seemed bleak, desolate, deserted" (Dieckhoff 2002, 46). Herzl's goal was to expand upon the success the Jews achieved in European society, and he believed this could be accomplished with "technical progress" (Dieckhoff 2002, 44). In The State of the Jews, Herzl outlines his plan to create ideal cities in the Jewish homeland and speaks of man's ascent towards the highest stages of civilization. The land of Palestine appeared to be troubled, which is why Herzl and those others politicians who followed his school of thought were open to creating a Jewish state in Africa, other parts of the Middle East, as well as in South America and Russia. They believed "technical knowledge" was necessary "for [the] methodical exploitation of the

country's resources and the growth of industry" (Dieckhoff 2002, 45). Herzl

envisioned the state as being the ultimate perfection of human society, a utopia. The

achievement of this dream was not dependent on a connection to the Jewish faith, but

rather on having the appropriate natural resources to develop industry and emerge as

a world power. Herzl originally lost this battle with the other early Jewish scholars

and politicians because the fulfillment of Zionism was dependent on taking back the

land of Palestine. This confirmed a Judaic foundation in the initial construction of the

state, yet Herzl's assertion that the Jewish people would look to create a nation that

was based upon modern technical progress did eventually prevail.

As Jews like Aharon Gordon began to move to Palestine in the early 20th

century, he and others advocated the creation of communal living settlements

(Dieckhoff 2002, 67). These were early versions of Kibbutzim, which set to combine

the practices of Zionism and socialism through the creation of agricultural

settlements. Kibbutzim still exist in Israel today, but few are still based upon

socialism and even fewer rely strictly on agriculture. The Jews of the diaspora would

need "roots in the soil" (Dieckhoff 2002, 81), as a way of creating a spiritual

connection between themselves and their ancestors. By literally sticking their hands

"in the soil," it would become possible to attach meaning to Palestine and reconstruct

it as a land of the Jews, once again. Gordon latched onto this notion and "wanted to

preach to them the virtue of physical labour" (Dieckhoff 2002, 69). He would spend

the rest of his life focused on the sacred nature of cultivation because of what it meant

to be reconnecting land and religion. The success of this already established

egalitarian lifestyle depended upon whether or not European Jews would be willing to

abandon their businesses, labor unions, and capitalist modes of production in favor of socialism. For obvious reasons, "neither capitalist entrepreneurs nor the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe were rushing to Palestine" (Dieckhoff 2002, 66). The creation of a Jewish agricultural labor force had run into difficulties because the European Jews were just not willing to drop their wealth (no matter how large or small it was) to spend the rest of their life sweating in a field with strangers. If nationalism meant working hard for their fellow Jews, then many did not want to take part in the movement.

Despite Gordon's position on the matter, the Jews of Palestine would not conform to a non-capitalist mode of production. Capitalism was the only logical answer to convincing European Jews to come to Palestine, especially since a bourgeoisie already existed. The problem was the lack of a proletariat. The only available candidates appeared to be the experienced, Arab workforce or the Jewish proletariat from Eastern Europe. Early leaders did not want to form a dependence on non-Jews in the work force, especially since the ultimate goal was to take back the entire land of Palestine (there were still 10 times as many Arabs in Palestine than Jews) (Dieckhoff 2002, 83). The Russian working class, as well as the proletariat in other Eastern European countries, were organized by labor parties and were "scarcely receptive to Zionism" (Dieckhoff 2002, 82). The early stages of the 20th century did see an increase in agricultural workers; these were primarily young individuals who were willing to be proletarians for the sake of Judaism and Zionism. The movement was not large, but they did set the foundations for the rest of the society in terms of politics, unions, and communal settlements (Deickhoff 2002, 82). The nation needed

to built off of these foundations and create a Jewish proletariat and its only option was to attract the Jews of the East (not Eastern European, but non-Western). Yemeni Jews were brought to the communal settlements "between 1909 and 1914" (Dieckhoff 2002, 67), which marked the beginning of immigration of non-European origin Jews. The Jewish enlightenment probably never reached this community, even though they are one of the largest communities of Jews outside Europe (Cohen 2002, 40). The Zionist movement was based on European principles and determined by Jews of European origin. The goal, from the beginning, was to connect the Jews from the four corners of the globe and the movement of Yemeni Jews to Palestine begins this process.

Theories of Nationhood

The above sub-section utilizes a few of Anderson's fundamental processes as a way of linking the early Zionist movement with nation-building. Anderson's book is designed to be an exploration of the roots of nationalism and an "imagined community" is the essential step toward the construction of a modern day nation. Anderson's theory is developed through the emergence of an Industrial Revolution and what technical improvement means for the "processes of communication" (Jaffrelot 2006, 15). The emerging media, which is fueled by "the convergence of capitalism and print technology" (Anderson 1983, 46), aided the advancement of a "national consciousness" among citizens of the same language and geographic location. His theory of nationalism, although vital in understanding what processes bring individuals together under one nation, is not precisely a "concept of

nationalism" (Jaffrelot 2006, 17). In fact, it has become "more relevant for explaining an important element of nation-making, the feeling of forming a community – nationhood –, than for our understanding of nationalism as an ideology" (Jaffrelot 2006, 16). The term "imagined community" implies a larger, nation-like community and discusses how individuals are able to acquire a sense of belonging to the point of creating profound connections among strangers. He does not, for example, "elaborate on the impact of the superiority complex" (Jaffrelot 2006, 17) as a way to examine the more ideological content of nationalism. The book's chief concern is the nation, and although it proved helpful in a discussion regarding the mobilization of Jews spread across the globe, it does not explain why a nationalist movement was the answer to the Jewish enlightenment.

Along these same lines, Ernest Gellner's brilliant work *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), which was published in the same year as Anderson's book, is an attempt to explain why nationalism was a necessity in the post-industrialized world. The book begins by stating, "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (Gellner 1983, 1). In these terms, Gellner speaks of nationalism as a social movement that is powered by a "sentiment," to use his word (Gellner 1983). Industrialization causes a complete transformation of the division of labor, which results in communication as the key in understanding this new notion of technical nature in work. Literacy becomes the "pre-condition of all other specialisms" (Gellner 1983, 18), which drastically alters the relationship between culture and politics. He later defines nationalism as "the striving to make culture and polity congruent, to endow a culture with its own political roof

and not more than one roof at that" (Gellner 1983, 43). Essentially, this is speaking for homogeneity in cultural phenomena, which leads to the development of a "high culture" (Gellner 1983). Gellner believes this idea of a "high culture" is the fundamental component of nationalism in how it "pervades the whole of society, defines it, and needs to be sustained by the polity" (Gellner 1983, 18). In effect, a "high culture" demands a protective state which is the basis for a nationalist movement. He concludes his argument by saying that "Nationalism is a species of patriotism distinguished by a few very important features" (Gellner 1983, 138). His book is laid out to identify these "features" that culminate in "patriotism" among citizens of a newly formed nation. Gellner's theory of nationalism rests on an agreement between state and culture after the state's movement towards industrialization. Gellner, like Anderson, adopts a "developmentalist approach to the nation" (Jaffrelot 2006, 20), which means they define the necessary characteristics in the process of nation-building. This indicates "that Gellner is not interested in nationalism as an ideology, but in nation-making and nationhood, more or less like Anderson and the 'nation-building' school" (Jaffrelot 2006, 20).

Anderson and Gellner's answer to the nationalist question is based upon revolutions in certain industries (communication being fundamental) that lay the groundwork for large interconnected communities with needs for a political backing (Jaffrelot 2006, 15). These theories determine how an individual can gain a sense of belonging and defines how "national integration" (Jaffrelot 2006, 19) is ultimately possible. The idea of a unified consciousness is also addressed in these books as a way of examining the collective nature of nationalist movements. They speak to a

type of nationalism: the idea of identifying individuals through the homogenization of beliefs in order to create a political state. Christophe Jaffrelot, in his essay "For a Theory of Nationalism" (2006), labels Anderson and Gellner as the fundamental theorists in the nation-building school. They develop and explain the important components of nation-making, but they appear to be disinterested in the ideological aspect of nationalism (Jaffrelot 2006). He believes this idea of a sense of belonging, which Anderson and Gellner depend upon, "does not necessarily imply any demand for the control of the state or the promotion of one's identity against the Other" (Jaffrelot 2006, 17). The ideology of nationalism is more concerned with culture, religion, and history and how these issues guide a national movement. An individual's past and present must be consistent with his country's values or else conflict may emerge. In this definition, "most theories of ethnicity run parallel to theories of nationalism" (Jaffrelot 2006, 37). Jaffrelot's work brings a strong theoretical component to this sub-section because he asserts the need to discuss the role of competing ethnic groups in the fight for political autonomy. He shows how a national movement is able to progress, yet is also addressing the effects of opposing ethnic groups within a delimited territory.

Any theory of nation-building is useful in understanding the steps early Zionist thinkers took in their process of constructing a Jewish nation-state from scratch. Yet, this brief study is also concerned with the demand for a separate state and how the nationalist movement dealt with groups of immigrants. Judaism is a religion, but being a Jew living in the Jewish nation-state has come to have an ethnic connotation. The varying ethnic identities that Jews have embraced as they were

dispersed throughout the four corners of the globe create a nationalist conflict in the modern day state of Israel.

Ethnicity and Nationalism

While the nation-building theories of nationalism are concerned with the pre-conditions for a nationalist movement, such as communication and education systems, Jaffrelot develops an ideological theory through the examination of ethnic groups, with the help of such scholars as Max Weber and Fredrik Barth. Nationalism contains the idea that political and cultural boundaries should be compatible, while ethnic groups do not have control of a political state. When ethnic groups do gain control; however, this means "they have developed a nationalist ideology" (Jaffrelot 2006, 38). This demonstrates the role ethnicity plays "as a stage in the development of nationalism" (Jaffrelot 2006, 38). Since culture is a process of change, it would be difficult to gain an understanding of an ethnic group's history through an analysis of cultural elements. Culture has the ability to transcend the boundaries of ethnic groups, which signifies that these groups seek another method for defining and redefining themselves. Anderson and Gellner speak to a sense or feeling of belonging in the creation of nationalist movements, while Jaffrelot addresses the notion of a "criteria of belongingness," which identifies how ethnic groups are able to maintain and reinvent themselves over time (Jaffrelot 2006, 41). This idea of a "criteria" places emphasis on the boundaries as a way for groups to "distinguish one from the other, almost irrespective of their culture" (Jaffrelot 2006, 41). Ethnic groups define themselves in reference to one another, a process that draws upon the larger theme of

rivalries among groups. The theory that arrives out of these ideas is that "ethnic groups are interest groups in competition" (Jaffrelot 2006, 44). This applies only to groups who are in geographic proximity to one another, and therefore are seeking a comparatively superior status. To have an interest or association with an opposing group has further implications in a context of competing ethnicities.

This theory articulates the development of a national movement out of conflict. The ideology of nationalism is therefore "based on a strategy of stigmatization and emulation of a dominant Other" (Jaffrelot 2006, 47). In all ethnic conflict, the superior group discriminates and oppresses its rivalry as a means of affirming a strong identity. The group being threatening seeks a way out and because of this "intellectuals shape a nationalist ideology in order to resist the domination posed by some dominant Other" (Jaffrelot 2006, 47). Jaffrelot is chiefly concerned with this notion of a "dominant Other", which represents "the bureaucratic state or other modernising forces from outside" (Jaffrelot 2006, 46). "Emulation" is a key component to the ideology because it portrays a longing for replication and a desire to be ethnically dominant. The theory explores how and why nationalism seeks to be repeated among ethnic groups, whose claim to political boundaries is the essential step in the process.

Despite the relative degree of success achieved by Jews in modern-day Europe, a current of anti-Semitism has flowed from Western Europe to Russia for a number of centuries. Jews were received with hostility in countries like Spain, France, Germany, and Russia, among others, by the ethnically dominant groups. They did not make up the majority nor were their values sought after, making them

outsiders. European Jews, unlike the global Jewish population, does constitute an

ethno-religious group because they share history and religious values, as well as a

shared experience of hundreds of years of European anti-Semitism. This makes it

possible to argue that "Anti Semitism, as an essential feature of the Jews' condition as

strangers, was the keystone of Jewish nationalism" (Dieckhoff 2002, 64). The

enthusiasm associated with anti-Semitism would only cease to exist when the Jews

possessed their own land, therefore making Jewish nationalism a necessity that

emerged out of oppressive relations with a dominant other. The Jewish movement fits

the prototype of creating nationalism out of ethnic tensions. Ethnicity's relationship to

ideological theories of nationalism answers the question of why a national movement

was necessary, rather than simply answering the question of how it would physically

come together. Jaffrelot's theory of nationalism based on theories of ethnicity also

reflects contemporary struggles in the land of Israel. The nationalist ideology created

by the founders of the Zionist movement to escape from the authority of opposing

ethnic groups in Israel oppresses the non-European citizens of Israel. And these

various ethnic groups are forced to contend for authority and by doing this choose an

act of resistance against this superior "other," in this case the European Jews. Part III

shows the relevance of this idea to the Ethiopian community, yet many other non-

European ethnic groups within Israel are also stuck in this battle to be heard.

Reflections on Changing Patterns of Immigration

The history of Israel and the events leading up to its creation can be defined as

a history of immigration with policy implementations and developmental processes

reflecting the country's reaction to specific migration movements. This sub-section will focus on the patterns and effects of immigration to Israel as the study turns away from theories of nationalism (a topic which will be revisited) in order to create a link between theory and behavior. At the start of the 20th century Jews from Yemen were beginning to flow into the country as part of a process to build the proletariat. By the end of 1919, it was estimated that the Jewish population in Palestine was roughly 56,000 individuals (Cohen 2002, 36). By the time the Jewish state was established in May of 1948, the number had increased to nearly 650,000 (Cohen 2002, 36). More than 75% of the immigrants during this time period hailed from European countries, mainly Poland, Russia, Germany, and Romania. The other countries heavily represented in this pre-Independence movement were Yemen, Turkey, and the United States of America (Cohen 2002, 40). Migration patterns have shaped the demographic history as well as the social, cultural, political, and economic history of Israel, but this time period did not have vast implications since the majority were Ashkenazi Jews (Europe and U.S.A) and no other migrant groups were large enough to make a significant impact on social classes (Cohen 2002, 36). Also, Jews lived a relatively egalitarian lifestyle in these years, and the Jewish settlements were scarcely developed with very little industry.

Israel underwent a "demographic transformation," to use Cohen's words, from May of 1948 to 1951, a movement that brought almost 700,000 Jews to Israel from countries all over Europe, Africa, and Asia (Cohen 2002, 37-40). Nearly half of the Jews who migrated during this period of immense transformation were from Europe (mainly Poland and Romania), yet these three-plus years also saw an enormous

increase in the Mizrahi population (mainly Jews from Africa and the Middle East), which grew to 33% by 1951 (up from 12% in the pre-Independence era). The other major reason for this so-called "demographic transformation" was the Palestinian exodus that began in December of 1947 (Cohen 2002, 37). Roughly 700,000 Palestinians were displaced and dispossessed throughout the course of the 1948 war, which made them refugees in bordering Arab countries; when they sought to cross the border for economic motives they were defined as "infiltrating" the Israel (Shlaim 1999, 81-82). The migration of approximately 700,000 Jews and the departure of nearly 700,000 Palestinians increased the proportion of Jews to an unprecedented 89% of the population at the end of 1951 (Cohen 2002, 37). A number of historians have referred to this massive movement of Palestinians to neighboring countries as an exodus, but Shlaim (1999) and Cohen (2002) agree that the movement was forced and the subsequent actions by the state of Israel were aimed at maintaining the high level of Jews in this land. The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) prevented Palestinian "infiltration" by placing soldiers along the borders, which marks an early instance of the Israeli government shaping and restricting the make-up of its population (Shlaim 1999). Israel not only coveted the land, but also the homogenization of its population. As I mentioned earlier, nearly one-third of the population were Jews from outside of Europe or the Americas, mainly from Iraq, Yemen, Turkey, Libya, and Morocco (Cohen 2002, 40). The integration of numerous non-European groups did not pose a problem in the early years of the state of Israel, primarily because it was "one of the most egalitarian of countries in the 1950s" (Kapeliouk 1997). A transition in the type of society began to occur in the subsequent decade, but for the time being most of the

Mizrahi Jews and Holocaust survivors worked together in agriculture and construction.

The largest wave of immigration ended by the start of 1952, possibly because of a new restrictive migration policy; it is also possible that the decline in numbers began to occur before the policy was implemented (Cohen 2002). Either way, Israel sought to slow down the pace of migration and the next wave, which lasted roughly 15 years until the Six-Day War, saw fewer than 600,000 immigrants arrive in Israel (Cohen 2002, 39). Moroccan Jews represented over 200,000 during this period, and other large communities arrived from Romania (over 100,000), Poland, Iran, and Egypt (Cohen 2002, 40). This period is defined by North African immigrations and therefore was a stage of distinct ethnic transformation (Cohen 2002, 39). The vast majority of Jews who arrived during this wave were escaping oppression or bad living conditions in their former countries. That is, they did not migrate for Zionism nor to live an egalitarian lifestyle, but simply to seek acceptance. Israel was still an egalitarian country in the 1960s, but a transition began with the emergence of an exploding Mizrahim, and especially the Moroccan population. According to Kapeliouk (1997), Moroccan integration into society took a generation, but if I were to ask the same question to any Ethiopian teenagers, they would respond by saying that the Moroccans were at the bottom of the social pyramid until the Ethiopian community arrived. The Moroccans were the lowest of the low in Israel and faced a "permanent threat of unemployment," eventually breaking "down under the impact of the prevailing Ashkenazi culture" (Kapeliouk 1997). This community lost their history and cultural traditions (meaning customs they followed in Morocco) because

of an Ashkenazi desire to form all the Jewish citizens of Israel into one ethnic group. The Moroccans were arguably the most vulnerable, especially because many of their elites elected France over Israel, and were forced to give in to the dominant power (Kapeliouk 1997). The government prevented the Moroccans from succeeding and this marks the true transformation to a non-egalitarian lifestyle in favor of a modern, capitalist government with the Moroccans providing plenty of labor. For obvious reasons, the Ethiopians and many Middle Eastern Jewish communities faced identical conflicts with mainstream Israeli society.

The development of a modern economy, which emerged after the Six-Day War, is reflective of the immigrant population that arrived during the period. Roughly 1.5 million Jews arrived from 1967-2000 and more than 1 million were from the countries of the former Soviet Union (Cohen 2002, 40). Others heavily represented were numerous countries in Europe, more than 70,000 from the U.S.A. and roughly 50,000 from Ethiopia (Cohen 2002, 40). Aside from the Ethiopian community, the overwhelming majority was Jews from developed countries that saw Israel as "an increasingly attractive destination country for immigrants seeking to improve their economic situation" (Cohen 2002, 41). By the 1970s, most Jews will no longer partake in manual labor for the sake of Zionism and by the 1980s Israel becomes one of the least egalitarian countries (Kapeliouk 1997). Equality ceases to exist as Jews from prominent, developed countries come seeking wealth and in the process exploit labor. This is possible through the transformation of the workforce that occurs as a result of Israel's new occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, allowing menial laborers to come from the Palestinian workforce (Kapeliouk 1997). This creates a

problem because the Palestinians are willing to work for less than the many Mizrahi Jews, for example, making unemployment prevalent throughout non-Ashkenazi communities. Another important dimension of Israeli society is that the European and North American immigrants who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s were rapidly and very successfully integrated into the labor market and economy before many of the Mizrahi Jews who migrated prior to 1967 (Cohen 2002, 46). Israeli society responds favorably to those who migrated from the west, which creates a dichotomy among those who fit in immediately and those who do not and may not for a number of decades. The Zionist movement was originally constructed for Jews to escape oppression in Europe. The Ashkenazi Jews were successful in this endeavor, but now have used their status as the dominant group to oppress others. It is hard not to be impressed with the egalitarian values of the Zionist movement, but Israel's early success in the Middle East set the country on the fast track towards modernity. The state of Israel was supposed to represent success for all Jews and now it is a country where some are pre-determined to achieve success, while the others are stigmatized.

The most recent wave of immigration, which occurred throughout the 1990s, was heavily represented by migrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union, along with the largest movement of Ethiopian migrants (40,000), and a substantial number of migrants from the U.S.A (Cohen 2002, 40). The social and economic absorption of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union has been successful thus far and therefore appears to follow a trend of rapid integration among European Jews (Cohen 2002, 46). The former Soviets elected to come to Israel because it represented a step up from a number of downtrodden countries in Eastern Europe. These

immigrants have had a swift assimilation and favorable impact on Israeli society because they have vastly increased the number of doctors and engineers and, unlike the Ethiopian community, are able to easily adapt to Western technology (Kapeliouk 1997). Also, the numbers of professionals in this elite migrant community have even made immense contributions to the growth of Israel's economy in the past two decades. The former Soviets represent a unique case of immigration because it is believed that anywhere from 10% to 50% of this community are, in fact, not Jewish (Kapeliouk 1997, Lustick 1999, Cohen 2002). Cultural backgrounds account for dramatic differences in fertility rates and have caused a relatively small Palestinian community to grow at a rapid pace (Cohen 2002). Israel attempted to counter this growth and keep the Jewish population overwhelmingly dominant by making an amendment to the 1950 Law of Return that would allow residence and citizenship to any individual who had one Jewish grandparent or their spouse had a Jewish mother or Jewish maternal grandmother (Lustick 1999, 422). Basically, the 1970 amendment to the law made it very easy for an individual from a number of different backgrounds to attain citizenship in the state of Israel. The Israeli government was willing to accept immigrants who were not officially recognized as Jewish because it created a larger non-Arab majority, which became an issue of fundamental importance to the growth of Israel (Lustick 1999, 418). The estimate of the number of non-Jews in this wave of immigration has been a topic of dispute, but for my purposes the significance lies in the implications this movement has for the nature of Israeli society. Secularism was "another important objective" (Kapeliouk 1997) to the Zionist movement, especially to Herzl, yet by the 1990s Israel had sacrificed much more than its

religious identity in the process of constructing a political identity that now accurately reflects modernity and the west.

The former Soviet migrants arriving in Israel in the 1990s is unprecedented in its mass and immediate influence on Israeli society. By 1992, a "Russian" or former Soviet party managed to win seven out of the 120 seats in the legislative branch of the government (Kapeliouk 1997). This is especially astounding since the community of ex-Soviets living in Israel only began to acquire its large numbers by the early 90s. Daniel, an 18-year old Ethiopian and one of the teenagers from Kiryat Motzkin with whom I formed a relationship, often made reference to the one million "Russians" (which refers to all those from the former Soviet Union) living in Israel. Since Daniel has lived in Israel for 16 years he has seen the growth of this community and said that in northern Israel everyone is speaking Russian, reading Russian literature and they have taken control of the government and businesses. He feels as though it is not acceptable for the Ethiopians to use their former language, Amharic; however, the "Russians" are able to maintain their language because they are white professionals. He also made reference to his observation that everyone everywhere understands them (meaning their language). Daniel's view on the "Russian" community in Israel affirms a notion of European dominance in Israeli society. The Ethiopian community arrived to Israel during the same wave of immigration, and is unable to even marginally integrate into the economy (which to them means menial employment) without a complete grasp on the Hebrew language. Other factors are at play, mainly the size of the communities, since the "Russians" have surpassed the one million mark, while the Ethiopian community has barely reached 100,000 (Cohen 2002, 40).

Israel is attempting to construct its society and thus its identity in a specific fashion, which tolerates "Russian" language, influence, and customs.

In the last few years Israel has continued the trend of moving towards modernity without the help of the Palestinian workforce (Kapeliouk 1997). Starting in the 1990s, for the first time in Israel's history it began to bring thousands of transnational workers to replace the menial Palestinian laborers. Nearly 300,000 have arrived, legally and illegally, coming from countries in Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia (Kapeliouk 1997). This again reaffirms the notion that in the modern era, Israel is not enforcing its identity as a Jewish nation, but rather, as a non-Arab territory.

The early founders of the state of Israel envisioned a new type of Jew emerging from all varying social and cultural backgrounds (Kapeliouk 1997). This Jew would speak Hebrew and adhere to the modern values of Ashkenazi Jews, while being cleansed of the past customs and history of their former country. It was important that all Jews carry the same set of ideals (history, religion, language, etc…) and the only way this would be possible is through a process of forced acculturation. Cultural racism, which "does not deny differences between racial, ethnic, or religious groups" but rather "posits the 'insurmountability of cultural differences'" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 248), is the key towards creating transformation within immigrant communities, and this is a prevalent aspect of Israeli society. The Zionist movement craved for the land of Palestine to satisfy the Jewish need for a homeland, but also as a way for Jews, globally, to escape oppressive behavior. The movement was by and for Europeans until the early leaders realized the prospect of socialism was not terribly attractive and therefore began to draw on the rest of the diaspora to build a

working class. Class structure and struggle exists virtually everywhere on the globe in the 20th and 21st century, but it is shocking to learn of cultural cleansing for the purpose of constructing a specific political identity. The next sub-section will continue to dwell on the effects of Eurocentrism in Israeli Society and how it specifically relates to the "Arab Jews," among others.

Eurocentrism: A Brief Case Study of non-Western Jews

Shohat asserts, "Within Zionist ideology, the very term "Arab Jew" is an oxymoron and a misnomer, a conceptual impossibility" (Shohat 1999, 6). She does not elaborate on this idea, but the reason is obvious; Zionism views Jews in an ethnic context because the movement was to reunite the Jewish people as one. Arab is also an ethnic group and to be an "Arab Jew" means a hybrid identity consisting of dimensions from two conflicting ethnic groups. Under this same rationale, Ethiopian Jews would never be referred to as "Amharic Jews" because the Ethiopian Jews connection with the Zionist movement is based upon the perception that Ethiopians will become part of the Jewish ethnic group founded on Ashkenazi (primarily European) customs, history, and values. Jews from the diaspora are therefore associated with their country or location of origin, for example, American Jews, Iraqi Jews, Baghdadi Jews, Jews of India, and so on. For Israel's purposes it is not important whether or not any of these diasporic communities have ideals closer to those of an ethnic group (Arab) that opposes or even threatens Judaism because by migrating to Israel they are agreeing to become part "of a homogenous nation" (Shohat 1999, 7). The aim of Zionism was to establish roots in the East, yet found

itself focused on becoming a "state ideologically and geopolitically oriented almost exclusively toward the West" (Shohat 1999, 7). This creates a connection with the modern, technologically advanced European countries, but what does this mean for the non-European diaspora? Israel created a Jewish experience which applies universally as a way to enforce the commonalities among Jews. One example is Jewish history in Europe, which is essentially a story of anti-Semitism, and most significantly a struggle between Jews and Christians for hundreds of years. The problem is that the roots of anti-Semitism stem from Christianity, and although Eastern Jews were considered minorities, and in some cases outcasts, many lived in relative harmony in places like North Africa and the Middle East. The point is that Zionist ideology, anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust, just to name a few, are not Jewish phenomena per se, but rather a history specifically linked with Ashkenazi Jewishness.

Zionism invented the term Mizrahi as a way to create a separation between the Ashkenazi Jews of Europe and the "others" (Shohat 1999, 13). Mizrahi literally means Easterners or Orientals and this newfound "imagined community" fails to identify the cultural differences among diasporic communities from countries and regions all over the globe (Shohat 1999). The non-Western Jews are linked together because they are targeted by a unilateral government policy which aims to conform all their observances to ones that are distinctly Western. The Israeli government may refer to it as an "assimilative project," but it is truly a cleansing process whose goal is to create "civilized" Westerners out of Jews from rudimentary societies (Shohat 1999, 15). Due to the rapid influx of migrant communities, Israel has become a country layered with stratification and "systematic racism" (Shohat 1999, 12). The

government has become so overly concerned with reuniting the whole that it forgot about what would happen to those diverse, individual parts.

One specific example is the Arab-Jews which were briefly mentioned above. Throughout the decades after Israeli independence, this large community abandoned less than ideal, but not horrible, living conditions in the Middle East in the prospect of no longer being a minority. They were surprised to experience cultural racism (Ben-Eliezer 2004) and to be labeled as economically attractive because their low social status allowed for them to be deemed cheap labor. Both Jews and Arabs, as ethnic groups, share the notion of a single, authentically homogenous nation, which therefore leaves "Arab Jews" stuck on the margins of opposing ethnicities and nationalist movements (Shohat 1999). The Jews see this community as insufficiently Jewish, while the Arabs see them as insufficiently Arab, which caused numerous Iraqi Jewish families to avoid Eurocentrism in Israel and settle in the United States of America (Shohat 1999, 8). Through this brief case study, we see that nation formation is complex when dealing with cultural diverse communities "since nationalism is inevitably the site of competing discourses" (Shohat 1999, 10). This leads the study back to another evaluation of theories of nationalism and what role they have played in the formation of Israeli society.

Nationalism in Practice

A present day approach to understanding the theories behind nationalistic movements can distinguish a multitude of contributing factors and philosophies. Anderson and Gellner, among others who followed in their nation-building school,

focused on how a specific ethnic group, throughout history, is able to adequately modify its society in a way that stimulates political development. This approach is historical and developmental, but it fails to address the role of competition in the construction of nationalism. In all forms of national sentiment, the body of individuals believes the connection lies in the adherence to a set of commonalities, and therefore the rationale for a national movement is to socially and politically distinguish one group of people from all others. An ethnic group is thus defined by its distinction from any opposing group. The development of nationalist ideology from early Zionist thought to the practice of nationalism in the present day inner-Israeli conflict is characterized by tension among opposing ethnic groups within the presence of a dominant group.

In the drive towards creating a modern, non-Arab economy, Israel relied on the labor of non-Western Jewish communities, which has aided in the creation of a diverse, multi-ethnic society. This is problematic because a national identity is reinforced through shared language, land, memory, and "a heritage rooted in an immemorial past" (Alonso 1994, 387). Despite the number of native languages spoken in Israel, linguistic unification has become possible through government absorption policies and the possibility for all people to learn to communicate with one another, given enough time. All citizens of Israel share the same parcel of land; however, the spaces occupied by "the dominant ethnic identity" are consistent with those places at "the core of the nation," while "the location of subordinated ethnic identities at its peripheries" (Alonso 1994, 394). Major cities like Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, located in the center of Israel, are inhabited primarily by those from the

dominant ethnic group, while the Ethiopian community for example is not very noticeable in either city, but rather is heavily represented in sites in and around Haifa area and in the central and southern districts. Technically, the land is shared, but "superior" ethnic groups dominate more desirable regions and the code of interaction in those locations because of social status and the presence of a national identity. The use of memory in constructing a national identity creates a universally accepted history based on those crucial moments that characterize an ethnic group's past. The Ashkenazi Jews are the dominant ethnic group in Israel and their memorial past is defined by European anti-Semitism. As I outlined earlier in the study, this is not the history of the Ethiopian Jews or broadly defined Arab-Jews, among other non-Western communities. All Jews do share "heritage rooted in an immemorial past," which is the factor that enables the state of Israel to exist as it does today, but in the case of Israel, this is not the defining aspect of the national identity. Israeli society is "characterized by multiple and heterogeneous senses of time" (Alonso 1994, 388), meaning the various immigrant groups do not fit into one single conception of origin.

In contemporary Israeli society, the ethnic identity of the dominant Ashkenazi Jews "is privileged as the core" (Alonso 1994, 390), which is defined in terms of space occupied and historical past accepted. At the same time, "the self-identity of nations has been secured partly through the construction of internal Others, whose markedness assures the existence of a national identity that, remaining invisible or unmarked, is successfully inscribed as the norm" (Alonso 1994, 390). This applies to mainstream Israeli society's relationship to its other ethnic groups, and the fact the security of a Eurocentric national identity can only be confirmed though a re-

construction of the opposing ethnic groups as they fit in with "the norm." The notion infers that there is more conflict to nationalism then simply a superior group emerging from opposing ethnic groups. Conflict also emerges when the dominant ethnic group seeks the acceptance of their national identity by forcing other ethnic groups to adhere to those values. This is a forced, integrative process, and provides an understanding for how an ideological theory of nationalism is truly a convergence and restructuring of ethnic identities.

This section (Part II) provides the background on how Israel became the nation it is today. The following section (Part III) explores how the emergence of a nationalist ideology caused separation between the various ethnic groups within Israel. The fieldwork I conducted among the Ethiopian community reveals the effects of the oppressive behavior as well as the emergence of a new identity revolving primarily around African-American culture and concepts of space.

Part III

Constructing a Spatial Identity

Introduction

Part II explores the means by which Israel transformed itself from one of the

most egalitarian countries in the 1950s to one of the least by the 1970s (Kapeliouk

1997). The Zionist movement emerges out of ethnic conflict in Europe and the

conflicts of a similar nature continue into the 21st century as Israeli society has

become increasingly stratified. These conflicts materialize from the dominance of

European religious, political, and social characteristics in the national identity, among

a country also populated with diverse, non-European populations. This section (Part

III) will investigate the pressure and authority employed by those Europeans who

make-up the national identity against the most recently migrated Ethiopian

community and the implications this clash has for the construction of their identity.

The fieldwork I conducted in northern Israel primarily involved Ethiopian children

and teenagers, while some of the data reflects conversations with young Ethiopian

men and women in their 20s and early 30s.

Uri Ben-Eliezer, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the University

of Haifa, has spent a number of years conducting research on the young Ethiopian

community in the Haifa region, focusing primarily on 16-24 year olds. He is also

concerned with the transformations occurring in a segregated, post-hegemonic Israel

and argues that the young Ethiopians are in the process of deconstructing their

"Israeli identity," in favor of "reconstructing it with new meanings" (Ben-Eliezer

2004, 258). They are associating themselves with the blackness that now defines their

existence in Israel and this identity draws "inspiration largely from the politics and culture of black America, Jamaica, and black Britain" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 260). He develops this thesis through addressing the recent social and political issues in Israel that have caused the Ethiopian community to feel the oppressive nature of the country, media, and its citizens. He argues that their identity "was already being gnawed at on all sides" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 258). While I agree that his point is valid and crucial in understanding the young Ethiopian generation, my experiences among this community have led me to believe that they never had a strictly "Israeli identity." The youth have been collectively grouped with their parents who, despite living in Israel, can be entirely identified from an Ethiopian context; now, due to opposition and confrontation within Israeli society, they are looking towards prominent black communities in other parts of the globe to construct their identity. The African-American community is arguably the most successful in the global African diaspora in terms of the cultural and social influence, and therefore this population has captivated the young Ethiopians. Ben-Eliezer (2004) does make reference to aspects of spatial analysis such as diasporas and globalization, but primarily focuses on their status in Israel and the new hybrid identity resulting from a number of large-scale conflicts in the 1990s.

This study will also add to Ben-Eliezer's work through a specific focus on the concept of space in the field of anthropology. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected through the movement of people, ideas, goods, and the media, it becomes possible to reconceptualize the global world through spatialized means and terms. Space has increasingly become "an essential component of sociocultural

theory" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 1), especially as communities such as the Ethiopian Jews come to view themselves in terms of the specific spaces they occupy within and outside of society. My experiences with the teenage community will illustrate the specific function space has in the development of their transnational identity. I utilize four anthropological concepts of space in this section.[7] Broadly defined, territorialization refers to the two generations of Ethiopian Jews coming to terms with their new spatial entity. Contested spaces are geographic locations embedded with hostile relations as a result of defined social positions, translocal spaces develop from the processes of globalization and the locations are literally deterritorialized as the imaginings of the people spread beyond the nation-state, and landscape as place inserts social and political meaning to the layout of an environment, in this case the state of Israel. The combination of these concepts helps to define the manner by which the Ethiopian community is constructing their identity.

Aside with working among teenagers at a youth club in Kiryat Motzkin, I also spent a few afternoons at a small, beat up recreation center in the city of Haifa also operated by Hiyot. The center was designed for elementary school Ethiopian girls and was run by two Ethiopian men with the help of American and Canadian volunteers. I did not dedicate much time or effort to the center because the staff rarely needed assistance, a result of the large number of volunteers in the summer months, and the place was much less lively than the youth club in Motzkin (as we will see). The center catered to girls aged 6-10 years old and although each one was born in Israel,

---

[7] These concepts were taken from the introductory chapter in a book entitled *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture* (2003), which consists of a collection of articles on the uses of space in anthropology. This introductory chapter was written by the editors (Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga) and it outlines the concepts of space and place utilized in the reader.

spoke Hebrew, and only knew of Ethiopia from their parents, the land of their family's past was a primary focus of attention. Aside from playing card games and basketball, the girls passed the afternoons painting thriving green landscapes (not typically seen in most parts of Israel) and the Ethiopian flag. They were overwhelmingly concerned with painting the green, yellow, and red colors in the correct order. It is difficult to make any distinct conclusions based on the behavior of elementary school girls, but it does represent the community's, in particular these girls' parents', focus on retaining their Ethiopian roots. Israel is a country proud of its national identity, and the Israeli flag can be spotted on every corner in Israel. But no girl cared to proudly display a depiction of it inside the center. These girls, like their parents, have clung to Ethiopia as the essential element that describes them.

One afternoon in Kiryat Motzkin as I was tutoring Martine in English, she dragged me over to a computer to show me a few images. I suppose she had located these online, probably via Google images, and the first was of a flowing waterfall surrounded by a lush, mountainous, and healthy landscape that she claimed was rural Ethiopia. Martine is an extremely bright 13 year-old girl who has a remarkable grasp of the English language and was born in Israel. As she continued to flip through other, similar images she continued to remark on how beautiful the country was and how badly she hoped to see it one day. Her goal, as I later found out, was to live in Ethiopia someday, and her female friend responded to that comment with a funny look, and then saying that her hope was to live in America. From 8-10 p.m. at the youth club some of the older boys usually hang out just outside the youth club and smoke cigarettes. This was the setting of some of my most productive conversations

and one night when I was conversing with a couple of 16 year old boys, one of them confidently told me that he wants to live in America when he is older, then he said that his friend would choose Ethiopia. This was surprising because I thought that my presence and questions warranted responses about America and life in Israel, but this was an example of these boys discussing what is attractive to them (since they all agree it is not Israel). This is just a few of many examples showing how day-to-day activity and behavior is partially formed through thinking outside of an Israeli mindset. They are consumed with imagining living life elsewhere, which is certainly not a reality for the vast majority, but may seem entirely relevant because of the community's relatively recent migration to Israel. This is just the start of understanding a community implanted with imaginings of other parts of a global world. They know of Ethiopia from their parents and relatives and America from television, movies, and music. The specific space they occupy in Israel has come to reflect aspects of both these countries and in some ways also in reminiscent of experiences they could have in these other places.

Territorialization Part 1: Dreams and Reality, Reconciling the Past

Before this section moves on to a discussion of identity construction among Ethiopian teenagers, I would like to provide a brief history as viewed through their own stories and recollections of the past. An aspect of Ethiopian community I did not anticipate having an impact on the lifestyle was the prospect of migration across three generations. Through some initial research focusing on the journey from Ethiopia to Israel I learned of parents carrying infants and walking side-by-side with young

children as they trekked to refugee camps in Sudan or later on to Addis Adaba. The dangerous nature of the journeys seldom appeared to allow for grandparents or elders. Therefore, I foresaw encountering a young, two-generation community, with many others unable to take part in the voyage. When I actually arrived in Israel, I realized that many of the younger 1st and 2nd generation immigrants I conversed with at the youth club were able to discuss the migration experiences of both their parents and grandparents. The older generations provide an alternative perspective because the number of years spent in Ethiopia and what this means for their perception of Israel.

Esther, a female 27 year-old graduate of Human Services from the University of Haifa, arrived in Israel at the age of 8 in 1989. She migrated with an extended family that included her grandfather. She recalled her earliest years in Ethiopia and her grandfather speaking of a land called Jerusalem. On a side note, all conversations have led me to believe that in Ethiopia, the term Jerusalem referred to the present-day notion of the state Israel, Jerusalem was discussed as the territory not the city. In the way that they used it, it is interchangeable with the state of Israel. Her grandfather's stories presented Jerusalem as a beautiful land filled with lush hills, a place that would make all their problems disappear. The tales have been passed from generation to generation; beginning at a time when the existence of Israel was still in question (it appeared in their texts). Jerusalem, they believed, would be a land filled with equals. Their dreams would come true as they found salvation on earth. Ethiopia was their home, but as it is prone to droughts and they are not surrounded by fellow Jews, it is not ideal. Jerusalem is the place they are supposed to call home. Her grandfather's first impression of Israel was more like a nightmare than a dream. Equality did not

exist, they lived in black ghettoes rather than near Jerusalem, and just three years later her grandfather passed away. He just barely lived to be disappointed by the land he (and his collective community) so desperately dreamed of seeing. The journey to Israel killed him rather than rejuvenated him, and Esther remarked that she wished he never made the trek given that it would be better to die with that dream than live knowing this reality.

Avi, a 33 year-old male Ethiopian student of history with a teaching certificate, also arrived in 1989 at the age of 14. He too came with grandparents, but unlike Esther, his grandfather was well-off for Ethiopian standards, meaning he had men working under him. His family came for the reason everyone else did; life would improve in the land spoken of in their religious texts. His grandparent's also passed away, disillusioned by the tales of their past. His grandfather wished he had died with the dignity he had worked to achieve in Ethiopia, even though his equally respected father (as we will see) was able to come to terms with his predicament in Israel. The Ethiopian community's past is embodied in the idea that Jerusalem represented hope. The eldest generation was disheartened by the reality, which is important for the transition and an understanding of the way they narrate their history.

Avi spent 14 years of his life in rural Ethiopia and recalled the appearance of white journalists, anthropologists, and Semitists in his earliest years. The scholarly invasion of their village most likely occurred before the initial large-scale migration movement in 1984. As a mere child, he was unfamiliar with the norms his parents and grandparents grew up with and despite these being the first white people he ever laid eyes on, he did not characterize the study of his village as odd. Through speaking

with friends and family, he came to understand that they were curious about religious practice and daily routine and asked questions in regard to food consumption, daily schedule, and study habits. Although children may have viewed the activity with excitement, the older generations probably did not express the same enthusiasm. Studies done regarding their religious customs were conducted to either legitimate or disprove these practices connection to Judaism. Despite the fact that Avi was born several years after a Chief Sephardic Rabbi declared the community to be Jews, the dispute was not over then nor is it over now. At the same time, the community became familiar with Israel and Jerusalem as a home for all Jews, they became accustomed to questioning who they are and where they come from. Many of the earliest works written about their community were extremely racist, and although this fact is not important in regards to their understanding of history, this process brings to the surface a number of issues that will come to define this community's existence, such as conflicting views, racism, and Eurocentrism.

Avi's father, like his grandfather, was very successful by Ethiopian standards and operated a village factory with men working for him. When he arrived in Israel, the only job he was able to secure was cleaning streets in Afula, a growing city with a large Ethiopian population in north central Israel. Avi assured me that his father has never complained, does his job, is learning Hebrew and enjoys life in Israel, while his mother refuses to learn the language and despises the country. In speaking of her parents, Esther told me that her father prays for the safety of Israel and does not mind Israeli life, while her mother is unhappy. She also told me that she and her father sometimes go to Jerusalem and meditate from a spot right outside the gates of the Old

City. She says that this gives her a "special feeling" and comes away with strong, positive outlook on the land of Israel. This is an example of a strong spiritual connection to the country, which is not uncommon in my experiences, and can go hand-in-hand with a frustrating overall outlook on social and political life. These accounts are intended to provide a brief suggestion of how this community viewed the transition, beginning with initial dreams of Jerusalem to the roots of the issue with black, rural Jews to impressions and a forced acceptance of life. The older generation (which, for the purposes of this study, includes individuals the age of Avi and Esther) can compare life in Israel to Ethiopia, because of their relative familiarity with both and therefore unhappiness in Israeli life in some cases can lead to a return to former practices. This obviously presents problems, but it does not cause an identity crisis. They are Ethiopians living in Israel, and the government has given up on them in favor of a focused approach on the assimilation of the youth. Their children, the 2nd generation immigrants, those who were born in Israel or arrived at a very young age,[8] have not chosen to fall back on the Ethiopian identity that has left their parents with nothing.

Finally, we move to a focus on this younger generation, a group of individuals that face racism on a daily basis. Their parents, the so-called "generation of the desert," is the component of the Ethiopian community that sets the population apart as different from the rest of society, but their children bear "the brunt of this discrimination" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 255). The parents have a 70% unemployment rate

---

[8] Although Portes and Rumbaut (2006) assert that those immigrants who arrived between the ages 0-12 are labeled generation 1.5 (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 232), for the purposes of this study I have categorized all youth/teenagers as 2nd generation immigrants. This group includes those Ethiopians who were born in Israel as well as the individuals that were born in Ethiopia at a very young age (2 years old or younger).

and often stay at home, while the children are in schools and in the army attempting

to integrate (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 255). The Ethiopian community is often accused of

taking from the nation-state and not giving anything back, an accusation that should

fall on this older generation and the government's inability to devise and implement a

multi-cultural approach to immigration. As this younger generation goes about its

daily routine it experiences racism in school, in the army, and in the job market.

These conflicts occur not because they have done anything wrong, in fact they are

bright, psychologically strong, and hard-working, but rather because they are exposed

to the rest of the society (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 255-256). Naturally, they have chosen an

act of resistance, along with a refusal to be identified by a society that does not accept

them.

Territorialization Part 2: The Task of the 2nd Generation

As we learn from Part II, the history and formation of the Israeli nation-state

is best understood through the use of immigration to match the needs of the country's

social, political, and economic agenda. While the sheer number of immigrants and

their process of adaption to Israeli society is important for the structural make-up, it is

in fact the descendants of immigrants who "have had the heaviest role in the

evolution" of the host society (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 244). This quote comes

from a chapter in Portes and Rumbaut's book *Immigrant America: A Portrait* on 2nd

generation American immigrants, which stresses the idea that this new generation has

options in the assimilation process and considers how they "are adapting to their role

as American citizens" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 244). The important relationship

between this chapter and my study is that the second generation Ethiopians are the first group of Ethiopians to be fully integrated into society. They speak Hebrew and contribute to the labor force, unlike the majority of their parents' generation. This group has the "heaviest role" because they determine how the Ethiopian community fits in with the national identity. They could choose to leave behind their past, fully embrace it, or more accurately choose somewhere in between these two extremes. It is a fact the 2nd generation assimilates, but "the presence of multiple alternative options" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 262) raises the question of "what segment of that society it will assimilate" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 255). The case of Ethiopians in Israel is rare for a predominantly white society, making these options contingent upon a number of factors. Not only do they incorporate aspects of Ethiopian and Israeli society into their newfound identity, but equally important is the integration of the characteristics of the global black diaspora, most importantly African-Americans.

One night at the youth club Daniel and I spoke of the decisions his generation will be forced to confront in the future. Once the community is solely made of those individuals who were born in Israel or have spent the majority of their life here, they will simply become black Israelis of Ethiopian descent. They will no longer have those strong connections to Ethiopia; for example, he lived there for less than two years and is only able to recall what he hears from his parents. He told me that he does not want to fall into the predicament of his parents' generation; they are not part of society, cannot find a decent job, and do not speak the language of the rest of the country. At the same time, he remarked that he does not want to lose his background. He hopes to hold on to the ability to speak and understand Amharic, cook Ethiopian

food, and continue to practice religious customs while being a strong member of Israeli society. He believes that his generation is confronted with a tough task, as it would be very easy to lose all sight of Ethiopia. The goal is a balance of the two lifestyles, he said, which is not a surprising comment from him because he has taken the mature approach to his dilemma. Many others speak of how outsiders poke fun of the way they smell, which is a result of the strong East African spices their parents use in traditional dishes. Or they are embarrassed by their parents' wardrobe or that they refuse to eat Israeli cuisine and slaughter their own animals. The majority of the kids did not want to talk about their parents and especially the religious practices they impose upon them. As Daniel once said to me, we are the most religious of all Jews because there is nothing else to do in Ethiopia. True or not, many teenagers and young adults have told me that they were religious until they left their parents' households. They have chosen not to practice when they move out because their lifestyle becomes dictated by a secular Israeli state.

On a similar note, I met a half-Ethiopian, half-French man named Ofir who used to work at a similar youth club and now operates a shady, probably illegal (at least from the Ethiopian side) business importing Ethiopian spices and grains that he disperses around the country to Ethiopian communities. He believes there is money in the business for at least the next 12-15 years. When the community first arrived, health issues were prevalent among the older generations, teeth were falling out, immune systems were breaking down, and the country eventually realized that they were only eating bread and vegetables, refusing to eat a balanced diet of Israeli cuisine. The community became healthier now that food is imported (Ofir is certainly

one of not a few reaping the benefits from these necessary commodities). The younger Ethiopians eat their parents' food, but also McDonald's, Israeli, and Mediterranean cuisine. Ofir knows that once this older generation dies out, it will be much harder to find a market for his products.

Sara, a female student of social anthropology at the University of Haifa, is the third person employed by Hiyot at the youth club in Kiryat Motzkin. She has been employed there for a number of years and appears to have the greatest understanding of the children's needs. The major issue, she told me, is that the parents of these children are from an entirely different background, they do not understand Israeli or American society, which is all the children know. In many Ethiopian households, the children and parents can barely speak to one another, since the parents know little Hebrew and the children may understand Amharic but in many cases cannot speak it fluently. This after-school program, therefore, is designed to be a place where they can receive guidance from Ethiopian adults who are well-versed in Hebrew and Israeli society. They need to be assured that there is nothing wrong with being black and the key to understanding this notion is optimistic, well-educated black role models. I remember chatting with Avi and Esther one day when a 17 year-old began asking Esther whether or not it was fair to spend as much money as he did last weekend on a date and how he should approach the situation. Esther and Avi both provided advice on the norms for dating, spending money; they were answering questions that this boy's parents would have no answer to. Throughout my time in the club, I often noticed how many girls, younger and older, are often speaking in private to Sara and Esther, and the guys, less secretly, do the same with Avi.

A few weeks before I left Israel, I spoke with Sara about her professor, Uri Ben-Eliezer, and his work among the younger Ethiopian community in northern Israel, especially in regard to his thoughts on the development of a new identity. She also agreed with the assertion that those who were born here or came at a very young age are stuck between two worlds. She said their parents will die as Ethiopians, and although the younger generation may have the option to live and die as Ethiopians in Israel they will not choose it because they empathize with the life of their parents. She said that at this point, these kids are Israelis, which is a notion I am not sure I agree with, but went on to speak of Israel forming their identity. In fact, they are in the process of constructing a political identity and while I agree that the key factor is black culture, it results from the need of this minority group to develop a voice within society as they associate themselves with an established community in the global African diaspora. Another prominent attribute of this newly forming identity is the concept of space, and especially how their perception of space contributes to the relationships these teenagers have with the outside world.

Contested Spaces

Identity, a concern of contemporary anthropology, more often than not is linked with politics. The association is necessary as forming a new identity or reconstructing an old one often involves conflict and a struggle for power. Conflicts "reveal broader social struggles" and contested spaces can address "social conflicts that are focused on particular sites" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18). These specific conflicts emerge "in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or

resistance" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18), and they assist in defining or redefining the identity of the group or individual. The Ethiopian community rebels in these forms because they "are defined by differential control of resources and access to power" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 18). A space becomes contested as the problems are chronic and the structure of the geographical location then comes to reflect those social conflicts, which is a situation I observed and discussed in northern Israel. The Ethiopian community is subjugated in Israeli society as they have no control over their spatial mobility and religious identity; this leads to acts of rebellion, confrontation, and resistance against those who exercise the authority. They choose violence for empowerment (even if they are fighting among themselves). The social conflicts that create a contested space lead to a new way of seeing the world. This sub-section focuses on religion, violence, and the army to display the conflicts and hostile relations that have come to define the second generation Ethiopian identity.

One late afternoon in mid-July, I was sitting down at a table inside the youth club conversing with Daniel and Ethan (17). We were joking around about Ethan's girlfriend and a recent game of ping-pong where Daniel barely beat me (a game I did not intend to lose and he knew I was upset about), when I began to guide the conversation towards a discussion on being black in Israel, an issue these two never shy away from. In response to my questions, Daniel requested I take a look at this place (he means the youth center) and remarked that it is not very nice, but all they have here in Israel. He then told me there are not at the top of society and then Ethan grabbed the newspaper and pointed to the front page. This is initially odd to me because although Avi always brings the day's newspaper to the club, I never usually

see anyone glancing at it, aside from an occasional glimpse at pictures or advertisements. Ethan is pointing to an article with two pictures; the bigger picture is of a white Ashkenazi Rabbi and the other, a much smaller image, is of an Ethiopian Rabbi or kes, a term that describes "the respected religious leaders of the Ethiopian Jewish community" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 252). Since the article was in Hebrew, they recapitulated the important points to me. In their words, the article discusses a recent declaration by the white Rabbi (who apparently holds some authority in Ashkenazi Judaism) with regard to all marriage ceremonies led by the Ethiopian kes. According to the white Rabbi, this man does not have the proper certification to marry anyone, therefore making all Ethiopian marriages under this respected leader invalid. They showed me this article as a demonstration of how they are treated in this country. The legitimacy of their Jewishness is always in question, especially now as their religious leaders are being ridiculed publicly. Daniel then referred to the white Rabbi as evil and began to speak of an experience he had when a white person passed him on the street and told him he was a real Jew. He was not sure how to take this, remarking that this type of behavior does not make him feel any better as he already knows he is a real Jew. If anything, this incidence shows that an accepting person may be unaware of how to make members of the community feel comfortable living in Israel.

The white Rabbi mentioned above is part of the Ashkenazi sect of Judaism, which is "the most highly esteemed group in religious Judaism and bearing the highest authority in religious matters" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 252). Meaning a chief Ashkenazi Rabbi's declaration is basically the only opinion that matters in a religious conflict. Ashkenazi literally means German Jews and is a term that has come to

characterize all Jews of European origin. Although, the other two religious groups—

the Mizrahi ultra-orthodoxy and national-religious group—do recognize the

Ethiopians as Jews, the Ashkenazi ultra-orthodoxy does not (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 252).

This is obviously problematic because as stated before they hold the authority on

religious matters and the result is an insistence on a ritual immersion to validate their

Jewishness. As Daniel said above, he already knows he is a Jew and therefore neither

he nor his community should be forced "to undergo the simple immersion ceremony"

(Ben-Eliezer 2004, 252) to convert them to Judaism. The outcome is that the

Ashkenazi, as a religious group, have "totally rejected the authority of the kes" (Ben-

Eliezer 2004, 252). Judaism has put into question the practices, beliefs, and thus

Jewish identity of the Ethiopian community. This is simply another way that Israeli

society has labeled them as outcasts.

Near the end of July, Daniel and I sat on the ground in a small alleyway not

far from the youth club (because of his younger sister he prefers not to smoke

cigarettes right outside the club) as he nervously smoked cigarettes and talked about

his upcoming draft date, August 6th. I asked him how he feels fighting for a country

that, as we have already discussed, does not fight for him or his community. He

responded in two entirely different ways. First he stated he is fighting for the Jewish

people and not Israel and then by remarking that he would never fight for Israel

against Ethiopia. He sees himself first as a Jew, then as an Ethiopian, and finally as an

Israeli. The conversation quickly moved to his second response regarding other Israeli

immigrant groups as he wondered whether or not the Moroccans, Yemenites, or

"Russians" (mainly citizens of the countries that made up the former Soviet Union)

would fight for Israel against the country of their ancestors. Daniel then decided that the other immigrant groups may not have the same harsh feelings towards Israel as the Ethiopians. The Ethiopians are, according to Daniel, at the bottom of society and even though the Yemenites and Moroccans tell the Ethiopians that they are in the fight with them, Daniel knows that behind his back and under their breathe they utter the term "kushi" (which means "nigger" in Hebrew) to describe him and his Ethiopian peers. As Daniel prepares to be a combat soldier and fight for the freedom of Israel against the surrounding Muslim countries, he knows that his community is in a constant battle to be heard and understood within society. This story embodies the numerous problems Ethiopians have fighting for Israel. He feels as though it is a service he is being forced into, and remarked that if he did not go to the army he would go to prison. I am unsure who or what gave him this impression, but I do know of many other Israeli citizens who have bypassed the armed forces by contributing to the country through extended community service projects. I do not know if Daniel is unaware of this option or if by his being a lower-class citizen, this option is unavailable.

In Israeli society, a key to success and prosperity is "excellence in the army" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 257), and it can be noted that most prominent leaders served in elite units. Before an individual achieves a noteworthy status in the country, they must prove their worth in the military and this has become a "rite of passage" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 257). The Ethiopians, on the other hand, soon realized "that they could not translate their military service into upward social mobility, and that many of them could not even make a living afterwards" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 257-2588). They were

not, in fact, like everybody else in the country and naturally this became a point of contention. Many no longer cared to serve their country because it allowed them to be "exposed to racism on a daily basis" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 257) and failed to improve their marginal status in society. This probably has enormous effects on the rest of society at-large, as they already feel the community is a burden that fails to contribute. But from Daniel and the rest of the community's perspective, it is difficult to commit so much knowing that the benefit will be so small.

Another interesting dimension to relationship between the Ethiopian community and the IDF comes from the mouth of Ofir (the half-french, half-Ethiopian man I spoke of above), who always speaks with immense conviction. The first time we met he remarked that the reason the Ethiopians were originally allowed to migrate to Israel was because of a need for soldiers. He said that the first large group of Ethiopians to arrive was men aged 20-30 in the early 1980s when Israel was involved with a conflict between Iraq and Iran, under attack by a Palestinian Liberation Organization, and interfered in the Lebanese Civil War, which led to the outbreak of the first war with Lebanon in 1982. He claimed they badly needed soldiers and turned to Ethiopia. After migrating, the men were immediately enrolled into Ulpan (Hebrew) classes and then sent straight to battle. Ofir also told me that in his experiences in the army, the Ethiopians were well respected and even resented by fellow citizens because of their inherent ability as runners, along with their physical strength and mental aptitude. Racism existed, but it was no different from the racism they experienced outside the army. This certainly provides an alternative, yet potentially skewed perspective because although he is speaking on behalf of all

Ethiopians, he is not as dark-skinned as most and was college educated before entering the military. An overlapping point in this discussion of the IDF is the unjust treatment of the community. As Ofir speaks of their impressive skill set as soldiers, I am reminded of Daniel telling me he will be on the front line. He has grown to understand that despite any natural ability or work ethic he will not achieve upward mobility within or outside the army.

The first time I left the club with a large group was for a 13-14 year old girls soccer game between the youth club I spent time at and another club operated by Hiyot in Kiryat Yam, just a town or two over. The club emptied out to go watch the game, which was surprising, but exciting that the teenage community was willing to support one another. Before leaving, I was briefly prepared for the game by Avi alerting me that the kids over in Yam think these kids are spoiled (based on a difference between the two towns, for example, the apartment buildings in Motzkin are painted) and therefore always try their hardest during any and all competitions. This comment did not leave any lasting effect on me, and I walked over expecting nothing more than a youth soccer game. When the game started my mindset began to change because I noticed rough play on the court (in Israel soccer is typically played 5 vs. 5 on concrete basketball courts), the girls were making strong physical contact during the course of the game and "talking trash" to one another. The intensity really began to pick up when Motzkin's fans (since the game was played in Motzkin, very few Yam fans were there) started screaming at the players, as if the 50 boys and girls on the sidelines were all coaches. The fans were jumping up and down, running on the court when upset with the referee, and I certainly joined in the fun. Everyone was

acting as if this game determined much more than pride between two sets of girls who rarely see each other. The intensity can be explained by the fact that the best players never came out (the drive to win was so strong) and some players (remember these are girls aged 13 and 14) did not even see the field. The only goal of the game was scored only a minute or two before the end of the game, resulting in a dramatic loss for the Motzkin team. The game really was exciting, regardless of the added energy contributed by the fans, and I truly was shocked at the high level of play. We congratulated the girls on a well-played match and I mindlessly began to stroll back to the club. As soon as I was outside the gates enclosing the playground and onto the street heading back, I heard loud noises behind me. I turned around and saw the two groups of girls cussing each other out. I could not believe what I was seeing. Although it was Hebrew, I had a general idea of what they were saying and then the hand motions and other gestures followed. They appeared as though they wanted to fight, especially the girls from Motzkin, but luckily the bus came, the counselors intervened, and peace was restored.

As I mentioned in Part I, I was part of and watched a number of other soccer games between older teenage males and they were as violent as a legitimate soccer game could be. Punches were thrown during and after games, boys checked each other into fences and benches. They were both relentless in their efforts to destroy the other team, both physically and at the game of soccer. As I thought more and more about their violent nature in certain facets of life, it began to make sense on a number of levels. The first point I should make as I continue validate a theme of the community embracing the quintessential black experience in a white country. For

example, some perspectives could see African-American culture as advocating for violence against its white oppressors. Violence then becomes attractive in that it contributes to and confirms the image of a "tough" person. At the same time, violence is a way to feel empowered and respected. As blacks and recent immigrants they sit squarely at the bottom of society with very little potential for spatial mobility and therefore hitting someone or calling someone out may be the only way to acquire authority, as temporary as it may be.

Ben-Eliezer's research in the Haifa area further corroborates some of the above assertions. He remarks that in the past when referred to by the term "kushi" (which he says means black, while the kids in Motzkin told me it means "nigger") they were "offended and backed off," and now "they would lash out at anyone who used the term" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 258). He also remarks that by the late 1990s "10 per cent of all Ethiopian youth had a police record" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 258). He believes that much of this illicit activity is done in collective groups as a way to protest against a society that has "depicted them and other Ethiopians as inferior, passive, and dependent" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 258). The crime and the violence are simply a means of defiance which acts as a separation from the manner in which Israeli society has chosen to define them. A main component of this new identity seeks to escape many of the generalizations determined by Israeli society to be true, meaning they refuse to be classified by anyone but themselves. Violence serves a number of purposes, and even though Hiyot was designed to reduce crime by providing the teenagers with a place to be each afternoon, and allegedly has been somewhat successful, the violent behavior will persist as long as they are expected to

live at the margins of society. Ben-Eliezer observes that they have become

increasingly violent over the years as the social conflicts persist. They have chosen an

act of subversion against those that may have thought they could categorize them.

This space is contested as it reflects no opportunities for upward mobility and the

result is acts of violence and resistance. As their geographical location epitomizes

opposition, it has implications for the ways in which they come to construct their

identity.

The Formation of a Translocal Space

The processes that connect and globalize our world also create "new

translocal spaces and forms of public culture embedded in the imaginings of people

that dissolves notions of state-based territoriality" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003,

25). The media, television, and movies all contribute to this process of

deterritorializing, making "space detached from local spaces" (Low and Lawrence-

Zúñiga 2003, 25). Translocal spaces provide the means "to deal with peoples who

inhabit the borderlands and account for cultural difference within a locality" (Low

and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 28), which is an issue that becomes increasingly

pertinent as people transcend borders for religious, social, and political reasons. It

may be possible to assume that in the past "countries embody their own distinctive

culture and society" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 28), but the "process of

cultural globalization" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 25) has allowed space to

exceed beyond the borders. Examining individuals in translocal spaces implies

looking outside and across the boundaries of the nation-state. The Ethiopian

community is globally displaced in a country of whites and therefore they have formed spatially dispersed relationships with the outside world. Reterritorialization is occurring in northern Israel as they have created "place as a destination and a site of collective imagination" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 29). Through stories and dialogues from Israel, this sub-section explores how the concept of a translocal space relates to the teenagers experience of Israel. They are always listening to American hip-hop music, have chosen to emulate African-American culture in dress and style, and idolize American and European artists and athletes. As a community, they have come to embody a "collective imagination" of life outside of Israel.

Martine, a girl who frequents the club, was the first to point out the only black girl in a newspaper advertisement for an originally American play called High School Musical now successfully adapted into an Israeli version and touring throughout the country. I did not think much of this remark, simply looked at her and nodded "oh." Throughout my time spent on buses and walking in the Haifa region I had seen dozens of billboards with four attractive, smiling young adults, who I rightfully assumed played the lead roles in the play. The significance of one of the main characters being black should have dawned on me, especially since the majority of advertisements in Israel make the appearance of a country filled with people of Scandinavian origin rather than a multi-cultural society, but it did not. Martine flipped to the back of some local newspaper, pointed to her, and told me she was Ethiopian. Since the advertisements for the play were everywhere, close to half a dozen pointed out the Ethiopian "star" to me within the next few weeks, and not just girls, also older boys like Daniel and his buddy Ethan. Her presence in the popular culture of Israeli

society represented a small victory for the entire community. They did not know the story behind this actress, but for their purposes, she is a marginalized black in Israel that has managed to achieve relative success in the entertainment industry. She has grasped a voice in society (represented by her "black" face on billboards, in magazines, and on the backs of newspapers), which is rare for this underappreciated and underachieving community.

Through this realization, I began to understand why they were so in love with African-American athletes, hip-hop artists, and culture, a lifestyle they observe in American movies, MTV, and BET (Black Entertainment Channel), two channels they consistently watch. African-American culture is popular throughout American society and the world, and despite any racism and struggles that still exist, they are a minority that has made itself known. African-Americans are one of the other rare cases of a community making up part of the global African diaspora and living in a predominantly white society. It has taken decades, but finally the African-Americans have made their presence felt primarily through the emergence of star musicians, artists, and athletes. They have a voice in American society, which can be observed through the global idolization of figures like Kobe Bryant and the late Tupac Shakur. The United States even has a black president now, which is significant for my point and certainly a celebrated moment in our history, but not something discussed among the teenagers as they were more concerned and informed with culture than politics. Identity formation can also be a process of association, and in a country where they feel little connection to the rest of the people, they have chosen to associate themselves with another black community as a way to feel accepted. The government

or citizens of Israel have neither made significant attempts to make this community feel welcome nor feel as though they are a vital part of the country's make up. They are forgotten by their country, so they have chosen to look elsewhere for the means of spatial identification. Aspects of Israeli society are not completely lost as they still follow Israeli football clubs, and identify with Judaism. But despite the prevalence of multiple and diverse means of identification, they have joined the global black diaspora. Although the fundamental characteristic of all communities in this diaspora is the notion of returning home to Africa, for the Ethiopian community in Israel it also means the emulation of respected, outspoken black communities living in a similar predicament. Most importantly, they have found a role model in the African-American community.

Despite making up less than 15% of the U.S. population, African-Americans dominate basketball and football rosters on professional and national teams and are well-represented in baseball and soccer. The 2008 United States Olympic Basketball team, for example, was made up of 11 African-Americans and 1 seemingly white player (Jason Kidd), who turns out to have an African-American father and Irish-American mother. The music industry is also populated with African-Americans, especially in Jazz and hip-hop. Jazz originated in African-American communities in the southern United States in the early 20th century, while hip-hop emerged as a cultural movement among communities of African-Americans in northern cities in the 1970s. Hip-hop has quickly become one of the most popular forms of musical expression in the United States and the artists are still overwhelmingly African-American. They often rap (which is the major component of hip-hop music) about

social and political issues, racism, and violence, and the music videos portray the affluent lifestyle of the artists. The strong messages produced spread globally through television, albums, and media because people (black, white and everything in between) listen, which empowers the artists and culture. Israel, on the other hand, has few black athletes, most of whom are not of Ethiopian origins and mainly play in the professional football and basketball leagues. They are not idolized figures either within or outside Israel and thus were rarely spoken about by the young Ethiopians. Popular music does not contain messages for social change within society. In America, certain markets and industries are directly associated with blackness, but in Israel this is not the case. Israel does not have black artists, musicians, athletes or political figures to speak out against class struggle and racism.

The legend of Bob Marley aids in the creation of a connection between Ethiopia and the western world. As is commonly known, Marley was an internationally known Raggae singer whose involvement with Rastafarianism popularized the religious movement. This movement views Haile Selassie I, the former Emperor of Ethiopia, as its messianic figure and incarnation of Jesus Christ who will lead the deserving to peace and prosperity in the land of Africa. The religious movement refers to this utopia on earth as "Zion", a prevalent topic in many of Marley's songs, which opposes the "Zion" of the older Ethiopian generations. Marley, among other Reggae artists, is certainly popular with the younger Ethiopian generation as his music addresses the theme of a prosperous return home and the lyrics stress peace, love, social injustice and political issues. Reggae music presents Africa with optimism and is the reason why Marley appeals to the younger Ethiopian

generation. Two or three times during my stay at the youth club, I noticed a couple of the 17-18 year olds passing out flyers for an Ethiopian party at a night club in the Haifa area. I briefly stepped foot into one of these clubs, even though some of the boys laughed when I asked if I could come, and heard Reggae music and American hip-hop. Several of the Ethiopians were dressed in the image left behind by Marley; dreadlocks, baggy clothes, and a relaxed style, while the style of others more closely resembled an African-American culture that can be witnessed on MTV and BET in music videos.

The late Tupac Amaru Shakur was one of the most common topics of discussion at the youth club. They were constantly listening to his outdated songs (everything he produced and released occurred in the early 90s), asking me about his lasting reputation and my favorite songs of his, and at the end of each day as we would clean the club, I occasionally found pieces of scrap paper with 2pac (his stage name) or Tupac Shakur scribbled on them. I knew very little of Tupac, especially since his era of influence was before a time when I would listen to explicit and controversial lyrics, an essential characteristic of his music. And while they also listened to popular present day American hip-hop artists, I needed to understand why Tupac? My first day at the club, Sara and I spoke as a number of younger and older kids watched music videos. She believes they find the lifestyle attractive, but they do not fully understand the meaning behind the rap lyrics or the nature of the lifestyle. I believed her until I starting spending time with teenagers of all ages and realizing that many 12 and 13 year olds are capable of comprehending television shows in English. They choose to be surrounded by American culture and even if they do not like

speaking English to me, their daily activities (television, computer games) have allowed them to grasp the language. The case of Tupac further validates this point because along with being a rapper, he was also an actor and social activist, who was known as an advocator of social, political, and racial equality. Along with rapping about drug use and violence, he also addresses the difficulties growing up in economic hardships and the issues for blacks in society. His lyrics speak to the situation of underprivileged black minorities living in a predominantly white society and I think without an understanding of his lyrics, Tupac would not appeal to them. As one of the top-selling hip-hop artists of all time, he has claimed international recognition for his influence almost as much as his style.

As I mentioned earlier, I lived at an absorption center in downtown Haifa that primarily housed Ethiopian and former Soviet Union singles. Most of the elder Ethiopians (20s or 30s) were not recent immigrants, but rather were either students or employed in the Haifa area that needed an inexpensive place to live. All other Ethiopians were younger and more recent immigrants who were being absorbed into Israeli society. They were enrolled in Hebrew classes during the day and were constantly hanging around the center at night. Throughout the month of June, the Eurocup (a soccer tournament that occurs every four years to crown the champion of European football) flooded Israeli television and being a fan, I spent many nights in a common room in the absorption center watching games. This appeared to be the highlight of each day for the recent immigrants, and I would often bond with them over good soccer and Tecate, cheap Mexican beer. On a side note, I have yet to speak much on the effects of globalization in Israeli society or this community, but it was

interesting to observe that Tecate was one of the few beers sold in a small store

outside the absorption center and is also one of the cheapest beers available in Israel,

hence the reasons Ethiopians often drank it, creating the bizarre image of Ethiopians

drinking Mexican beer in Israel. We bonded over beer and football because we could

not communicate to one other, but as they spoke during games I heard them

constantly concerned with which players played for which club teams. I would hear

the words of the European giants in football: Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal,

Real Madrid, Barcelona, and Juventus, to name a few. They were especially

infatuated by the Portuguese superstar and Manchester United member Cristiano

Ronaldo, and Dutch International and Arsenal standout Robin Van Persie. The

obsession with European football was also prominent in the youth club where I often

found myself looking over the shoulders of a number of young boys to watch the

highlight videos of these same stars, among others. Ethiopians love their soccer and

by migrating to a Eurocentric nation (that is considered to be part of the European

football federation rather than Asian or Middle Eastern) has garnered them access to

all the European action. This is one aspect of their daily activities and identity that has

strong ties to Israeli society.

Another influence of Israeli society is the game of basketball. It has emerged

as one of the more popular sports in Israel and the country established a national

league with high salaries that are able to attract players from all over the world. On a

much smaller scale than European soccer, the Ethiopian community has embraced the

sport. Outside the absorption center was a basketball court always filled with

Ethiopian and non-Ethiopians on nights and weekends, and many of the teenagers at

the youth club would often dribble soccer balls to show their skills in this game. The interesting aspect of their relationship with basketball is that throughout all discussions on the sport, I never heard them speak about any Israeli teams or players. As they came to know that I hailed from the Boston area, they would often speak of Boston Celtics star Kevin Garnett and would joke about the storied rivalry between the Celtics and Kobe Bryant's Los Angeles Lakers. The African-American superstars of the NBA (Kobe, Garnett, and Lebron James) were the basketball players they were interested in. These athletes dress in fancy clothes, wear flashy jewelry, and have a certain air of confidence that makes them envied as role models. Some of the teenagers even knew of AND1 mixtapes and the street basketball scene prevalent in Rucker Park, New York City. Basketball is a component of African-American culture that they have not failed to recognize and emulate.

It is interesting to note which external characteristics and traits of African-American culture the community has chosen to embrace and which they have chosen to ignore. The way they wear their clothes, for example, is not very characteristic of the typical African-American style viewed in music videos. The teenager boys at the youth club generally wear t-shirts that fit and shorts and pants that are tight around their waists and legs. The girls wear what appears to be typical Israeli clothing, but do often present the clothes in a style that exposes their sexuality, very similar to the female artists they observe on television. The clothes may be more characteristic of Israeli style as a result of personal opinion or maybe because very few, if any, clothes stores in Israel sell the styles prevalent among blacks in the United States. Jewelry, on the other hand, is more readily available. And therefore, one can sometimes see boys

wearing inexpensive diamond earrings, gold necklaces, while many of the girls have their noses pierced and sometimes wear jewelry of an African flavor.

Hairstyle is most closely related to current African-American fashion. It is difficult to describe in words the elaborate, atypical styles, but many of the males sport afros, straightened hair, types of braids, partially dyed, and cornrows or occasionally combinations of two or more of the aforementioned styles. The female styles emulated are less intricate, but still often utilize braids, gel, and the attachment of artificial hair to depict a certain image. I would suggest that since hairstyle is a relatively inexpensive and highly effective way to present a certain image, it is more often employed more than dress, jewelry, and other exterior styles.

I was both surprised and discouraged by the sheer number of youths of variety of age and gender who smoked cigarettes. I watched 13 and 14 year olds sneak their first cigarette outside the club and although smoking in Israel is as popular as it is some European cities, I think this aspect is more representative of how they care to present themselves rather than the pressures or effects of Israeli society. Many boys and girls often portray a laid back "I don't care about nothing or no one" lifestyle, which along with smoking cigarettes helps to present the image of someone tough. The notion they are attempting to portray goes hand-in-hand with a person seeking respect from peers. At the same time, I have also watched and laughed as a number of boys and girls dance along to hip-hop music videos in a style that absolutely recreates the style they are watching on television. They are intimately of aware the style they are after in all realms of life and this is ever so apparent as I watch boys dance in rhythm and girls shake their bodies in the typical, sexual manner.

The specific locality where these teenagers reside makes up little, if any, aspect of their newfound, spatially constructed identity. In fact, the components are imbedded primarily in North America and specifically in African-American culture. By living in a technologically forward country they have access to this other world, which has guided the formation of spatial relationships. Their formation of a translocal space has allowed them to live in one place while embodying the characteristics of other places. The young Ethiopian community may be grounded with the rest of Israel, but they speak for and from a different "voice" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 28).

Landscape as Place

The concept of landscape aids in the "social construction of place by imbuing the physical environment with social meaning" (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, 16). Extracting meaning from a landscape is achieved through an understanding of how people view their surroundings, while also examining the ways in which the society constructs the landscape to fit the social status of its inhabitants. Israel is a country divided by religious adherence, political affiliations, subgroups (Sephardic, Ashkenaki), and ethnic groups, yet the factor they share "is a properly organized landscape" (Selwyn 1995, 131). In Tom Selwyn's (1995) article, "Landscapes of Liberation and Imprisonment: Towards an Anthropology of the Israeli Landscape," the overarching theme deals with conceptions of the Israeli national identity. He asserts that the concept of landscape in Israel "can be guaranteed to express their common nationality" (Selwyn 1995, 131), and when he says "their" he is speaking of

Jews globally. This study has revealed a dissonance between the values and imaginings of the Ethiopian community and the ideals that make up the national identity. I do agree with Selwyn's claim that Israel is a divided nation and in some instances the only connection is how they view the land they inhabit. At the same time, his idea of landscapes of imprisonment may more accurately describe the Ethiopians experience of the Israeli landscape. He argues that Israeli liberation in the land of Palestine in time led to an imprisonment of the Arab people on that same territory. The Ethiopian community has been forced to certain segments of towns, cities, and even specific locations within the country.

Every teenager at the youth club pointed in the same direction when I asked where they lived; towards the bustling road that runs from downtown Haifa through Kiryat Motzkin and along the water towards the ancient city of Akko. They are beat-up, roughly painted apartment buildings and in fact reflect the description Ben-Eliezer gives of many Ethiopians' living standards, "the only apartments they could buy with the money they received were located on the outskirts of the cities, in poor, dilapidated and neglected neighbourhoods" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 251-2). This accurately characterizes the Qryot region of Israel that has been inadequately built up as a home for numerous immigrant groups. And even within these immigrant regions the "Ethiopians became isolated and alienated from their surroundings" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 252) because their inability to secure menial jobs causes a further decline in living standards. They live off of what the government provides, and for the Motzkin community this means living in close quarters in tall apartment buildings along the highway.

Avi alerted me to the problems of an Ethiopian family living in an apartment. He said that since the older generations are accustomed to having yard space for gardens in rural Ethiopia, they go crazy in multiple floor apartment buildings. There is little for them to do inside the crammed apartments and outside is a world completely unfamiliar to them. They certainly do not have any land of their own and only meander outside for brief periods of the day. Living in black "ghettos," on the other hand, has an alternative effect on the younger generation. This attribute parallels their life to those African-American artists, for example Tupac Shakur, who speak of growing up in oppressed black communities throughout the United States. They feel as though they too are living the hard life and it creates an environment for violence, crime, and resistance. Their experiences of the space they inhabit reflect the broader social struggles within society, while also revealing the ways in which the host country dealt with their arrival.

The Qryot, the grouping of towns that includes Kiryat Motzkin, is an area of northern Israel just north of the city of Haifa (along the coast). In my estimation, the Ethiopian population in the Qryot dwarfs that of Haifa. Aside from the area around the absorption center (a place that housed most all Ethiopians I ran into in Haifa), the rest of Haifa is made up of "Russians" (former Soviet Union), Arab Christians and Muslims, and European origin Jews. Qryot, on the other hand, appears to be made up primarily of Ethiopians, Moroccans, and "Russians." The Ethiopian community is also heavily populated in the Central and Southern Districts. A place many referred to as "Little Ethiopia" is in the Central District, just south of Tel-Aviv, which is a town with a population make up of nearly all Ethiopians, living together under less than

ideal living conditions. Aside from the city of Haifa, these three districts have no major cities (both Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem make up their own district) and consist mainly of small towns and cities. These areas are under construction as the country attempts to make adequate space for all citizens. I saw significantly fewer Ethiopians in the major cities of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, while the Ethiopians I did notice were working as security guards outside fancy restaurants, hotels, or shops. Due to the cost of living and amount of available space in many of the more attractive destinations, many immigrant communities are relegated to spatially inferior status within the landscape of Israel. The Ethiopian community in Kiryat Motzkin is worse off than the other inhabitants of Motzkin and therefore is only able to live in one specific location, separated from other ethnic groups. Social struggles have prevented an integration of various ethnic groups into the same apartment buildings in Kiryat Motzkin, and I suspect this is the case elsewhere. If the vast majority does not have a chance to be successful in the job market, then the Ethiopians have no other choice but to be spatially demoted within the boundaries of the nation-state.

Concluding Remarks

Although the term Zionism has biblical connotations, the Israeli nationalist movement was "in many ways a modern and distinctively European political movement" (Selwyn 1995, 115). The inspiration for the movement derives primarily from the European Enlightenment, in the form of Marxist and socialist concepts, rather than being founded upon the ideals laid out in the Bible (Selwyn 1995, 115). Notwithstanding the focus being the congregation of Jews globally, Zionism was certainly not a religious movement. The European Jews were seeking ethnic autonomy after experiencing decades of anti-Semitism and therefore the political struggle involved an emulation of progressive ideologies. In the words of Jaffrelot (2006), nationalist ideologies are shaped out of a resistance to the forces imposed from a dominant other, which results in a process of emulation. Those who founded the Zionist movement in Europe hoped to achieve the same sort of sovereignty that they witnessed the Germans, French, and others achieve. The political movement may have felt it was capable of outdoing its European counterparts by founding itself upon the socialist ideologies, but only achieved partial success because (the declaration of Hebrew as the national language and the lack of a proletariat) initially were detrimental to the development of a modern, global economy.

When the state of Israel was established in 1948, it followed a statist ideology (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 247). The idea functions through the presence of a highly centralized government that assumes control and planning power over the rest of the economy. Statism was the government system for several decades and along with having control over economic enterprises, it also controlled the method of immigrant

integration, and primarily used a process of socialization (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 247).

Before the Ethiopians even arrived in Israel, the economy began to shift towards a

"decentralised market economy with little government control" (Ben-Eliezer 2004,

247). Essentially, it produced a neo-liberal outlook on the economic system that

allowed individuals to succeed in a capitalist mode of production. According to Ben-

Eliezer (2004), the transition to a post-modern economy has immense implications for

immigrant absorption. In this new economy, "the immigrant was immediately free to

choose his or her place of residence and occupation, in keeping with market

demands," (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 248) as opposed to an old system that controlled the

services they received. They periodically receive sums of money and are allowed to

proceed as they wish (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 248). The creation of a welfare state through

these checks is certainly problematic among the Ethiopian community. Numerous

families have become dependent on this money and do not push themselves to be

educated or successful, yet I also found that the government does wield a certain

degree of control over Ethiopian immigrants, an assertion also made by Ben-Eliezer.

Throughout the weeks I spent living at the absorption center, I noticed the religious

and education requirements enforced on the recently immigrated Ethiopians by the

government controlled center. He ponders that this may have been "the first sign of

impending racism" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 248). The other immigrants who arrived

during this time period, mainly from the countries of the former Soviet Union, were

not required to undergo a process of socialization. This suggests that the Ethiopian

community was received as inherently different from the rest of the population.

Policy decisions are yet another factor that caused the Ethiopian community to be isolated within the borders of Israel.

Lustick (1999) outlines the amendments in the 1950 Law of Return that allowed nearly one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union to enter Israel as citizens. Ideally, the "Russians" would counterbalance higher birthrates among the Arab population, while forcing Israel to become "a more pluralist and democratic society" (Ben-Eliezer 2004, 249). Yet, the hope in creating a multi-cultural society through weakened restrictions on citizenship and the acceptance of all non-Arab cultural backgrounds has proved to be ineffective. Instead, Israel currently reflects a situation with a multitude of disconnected cultures. Although the "Russians" have experienced success in the job market, they have not become an integrated community within society or caused Israel to foster a multi-cultural identity. Israel has embraced a national and political identity devised around a non-Arab population. The country is barely concerned with Judaic practices among its citizens and chiefly focused on creating an environment that will not allow the Arab population to thrive culturally, politically or demographically. This is yet another means by which the national identity refuses to incorporate aspects of all the citizens of Israel. The creation of a non-Arab nation-state implies the dismantling Arab authority, while also illustrating a lack of interest in anyone aside from those in authority. The nationalist ideology does not care for the Ethiopian or even the "Russian" community but rather utilizes them to achieve demographic goals, while subjugating these groups enough to maintain their current control of the government.

The themes above serve as a link between the post-hegemonic struggles of the Ethiopian community and the ideologies and policies enforced by the state in an effort to preserve control and the national identity. When these ideas became apparent, I realized the ways by which the research could be re-contextualized using concepts of space. A post-modern nation-state is characterized by "the fact that the identity it gathers in and encloses is often contested and unstable," (Gupta 2003, 333) as the boundaries of such locations are heavily populated with various ethnic groups. Gupta goes on to argue that "processes of migration, displacement, and deterritorialization" are the root causes in "sundering the fixed association between identity, culture, and place" (Gupta 2003, 333). An ethnically diverse nation-state like Israel can no longer be seen as having an absolute connection between the people and the nationalist ideology, as defined by the factors of a certain culture. This raises interest in the discipline of nationalism, but also illustrates that "national narratives are being brought under increasing critical scrutiny by those marginalized or excluded from them" (Gupta 2003, 333). The Ethiopian community proves one example of a people defined by how the "national narrative" locates them away from importance in the state of Israel. At the same time, the result of the exclusion creates new "processes that redivide, reterritorialize, and reinscribe space in the global political economy," (Gupta 2003, 333) a process described in other terms in Part III. Through examining space and identity, it becomes possible to understand how the nationalist ideology affects a community's experience of a place.

Before this study comes to a close, I would like to provide a slightly alternative perspective to the research I conducted in Israel. And in order to make this

comparison, I begin with a brief chat I had in the youth club. Esther, a 27 year-old female graduate of the University of Haifa, would often tell me that she found Israelis to be racist, not because of what they would say specifically but rather how they acted. She strongly emphasized actions without words, which hurt even more, she said. Esther illustrated this by recounting an interview she had not too long ago in the Haifa region. After applying for the job, she had a phone conversation with the person who did the hiring at the company and the individual seemed to really like her, as she was a perfect fit for the job. When she went to meet the person for a face-to-face interview, the employer was taken back. He obviously did not expect her to be Ethiopian and his reaction indicated that this was not a pleasant surprise. Esther was not offered the job and although she does not blame it on her skin color, she was strongly disappointed by the way he reacted. She remains optimistic about the future, partially because she has no other choice, yet she also believes that the future will bring changes. On another note, she has very few non-Ethiopian friends, as it is easier to relate to members of her own community, but cherishes a time when Israel values equality.

In mid-April of 2009, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to speak with Batia Makorez (in the United States), the main editor of the only Ethiopian newspaper in Israel. She is non-Ethiopian, but the newspaper employs primarily Ethiopians and releases a newspaper six times a year (every two months). The newspaper has been in business for more than nine years and reports on social life and education while also providing an optimistic tone by covering individual success stories and family life. The majority of the articles are written in Hebrew, but in each issue they also produce

one article in Amharic and one article in Tigray,[9] which serves to illustrate the importance of maintaining these languages, while also making the newspaper applicable to those who may not be able to read Hebrew. The newspaper is popular among the Ethiopian community, and roughly 22,000 copies of the last issue were sold. As Batia and I spoke about the Ethiopian community, she provided an alternative perspective to the one I received from conversations with individuals like Esther. Batia said that her way of encouraging and assisting Ethiopian youth is by telling them that they must do it by themselves. They cannot complain about the terrible predicament they were placed in because they are responsible for their own behavior. Israeli society will not simply change over time, but the individuals must force the issue, by maintaining a positive attitude. If they simply sulk, which many do, then nothing around them will magically change. Very few individuals I interacted with took this perspective, even educated, strong-willed individuals like Esther. They are stuck with a negative mindset; an attribute that Batia believes will not change the outcome of their lives.

I valued Batia's perspective because she frequently speaks with young, successful members of the Ethiopian community. As she interviews them for newspaper articles, she came to realize that the number one reason they were able to succeed was because of family support. Their parents were not passive, rather they pushed their kids to become educated and pushed themselves to find jobs and learn Hebrew. A similar assertion is made by Portes and Rumbaut in their elaborate study, they argue that "intact families can have a strong positive influence on second-

---

[9] Many of the Ethiopians who arrived prior to the first massive airlift in 1984 were from a Tigray speaking region in Ethiopia, as opposed to the Amharics from the Gondar region who make up the vast majority of the Ethiopian population in Israel.

generation outcomes, including aspirations, self-esteem, and the likelihood of graduating from high school" (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 251). On the other hand, many parents of the youth I worked with in Kiryat Motzkin often had alcohol problems, frequently stayed home all day watching T.V.; thus I wrote about a dissonance between the children and their parents. They did not try to learn Hebrew or become part of Israeli society because they were either too proud or too scared of what might happen. Naturally, this has and will continue to have a detrimental effect on the lives of their children. They have no one to look up to for guidance or using Batia's words, no one to push them to succeed. The second and third factors in the success of young Ethiopians are their surroundings and teachers. These are more uncontrollable since no employment possibilities for parents may force them to live in an undesirable location with bad economic life and school systems. It becomes increasingly harder to push oneself in an unfortunate living situation. Batia generally has the opportunity to speak with more educated than uneducated Ethiopians due to the nature of her work. She told me that in a town in the Qryot, I am more likely to meet a certain type of Ethiopian youth, which is the less educated who chooses to associate themselves with African-American culture. While an alternative group exists, these are the more educated who have chosen to return to their roots, meaning they begin to learn Amharic and bring Ethiopian traditions into Israeli society. This second group exemplifies a type of "selective assimilation" where "strong parental social capital in the form of stable families" allows youth to acculturate aspects of their new society without abandoning certain key elements (including language) of their parents' background (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 267). This insight provides a

reality into the material I produced about the community. Their identity, in fact, may vary on their family situation and what resources are and are not available to them as citizens of Israel.

References

Alonso, Ana Maria. 1994. The politics of space, time and substance: State formation, nationalism and ethnicity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23: 379-405.

Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 2006. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. rev. ed. London: Verso.

Ben-Eliezer, Uri. 2004. Becoming a black jew: Cultural racism and anti-racism in contemporary israel. *Social Identities* 10 (2): 245-66.

Burton, John W., and Caitlin W. Thompson. 2002. Nanook and the kirwinians: Deception, authenticity, and the birth of modern ethnographic representation. *Film History* 14 (1): 74-86.

Cohen, Yinon. 2002. From haven to heaven: Changing patterns of immigration to Israel. In *Challenging ethnic citizenship: German and israeli perspectives on immigration*, eds. Daniel Levy, Yfaat Weiss, 36-56. New York: Berghahn.

Dieckhoff, Alain. 2003. *Invention of a nation: Zionist thought and the making of modern Israel*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gupta, Akhil. 2003. The song of the nonaligned world: Transnational identities and the reinscription of space in late capitalism. In *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture*, eds. Setha M. Low, Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, 321-336. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Izquierdo, Carolina, and Glenn H. Shepard Jr. 2004. Matsigenka. In *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology*, eds. Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember. Vol. II, 823-837. New York: Kluwer Academic.

Jaffrelot, Christophe. 2006. For a theory of nationalism. In *Revisiting Nationalism: Theories and Processes*, eds. Alain Dieckhoff, Christophe Jaffrelot, 10-61. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kapeliouk, Amnon. 1997. The changing pattern of Israeli immigration. *Le Monde Diplomatique* 11, http://modediplo.com/1997/11/israel.

Kaplan, Steven. 1992. *The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia: From earliest times to the twentieth century*. New York: New York University Press.

Kessler, David, and Tudor Parfitt. 1985. *The Falashas: The Jews of Ethiopia*. London: Minority Rights Group.

Low, Setha M., and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga. 2003. Locating culture. In *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture*, eds. Setha M. Low, Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, 1-47. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Lustick, Ian S. 1999. Israel as a non-Arab state: The political implications of mass immigration of non-jews. *The Middle East Journal* 53 (3): 417-33,

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 2006. The subject, method and scope of this inquiry. In *Readings for a history of anthropological theory*, eds. Paul A. Erickson, Liam D. Murphy. Second Edition, 171-186. Toronto: Broadview Press.

Passaro, Joanne. 1997. "You can't take the subway to the field!": "Village" epistemologies in the global village. In *Anthropological locations: Boundaries and grounds of a field science*, eds. Akhil Gupta, James Ferguson, 147-162. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Portes, Alejandro, and Rubén G. Rumbaut. 2006. *Immigrant America: a portrait*. 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Selwyn, Tom. 1995. Landscapes of liberation and imprisonment: Towards an anthropology of the israeli landscape. In *The anthropology of Landscape*, eds. Eric Hirsch, Michael O'Hanlon, 114-134. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Shlaim, Avi. 2000. *The iron wall: Israel and the Arab world*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Shohat, Ella. 1999. The invention of the mizrahim. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29 (1): 5-20.

Taglit-Birthright Israel. [accessed February 20 2009]. http://www.birthrightisrael.com.

Wagaw, Teshome G. 1993. *For our soul: Ethiopian Jews in Israel*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.