

**Ethnic Diversity in Israel:
Immigration, Assimilation and Israel's future**

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The state of Israel is one of the oldest new societies to have been established in the post-World War II era. Its roots are embedded in the very distant past of the Hebrew Bible and in centuries of minority status and anti-Semitism in Christian and Moslem societies. Emerging politically out of the ashes of a destroyed European Jewry in the Holocaust, Israel was carved out of the nineteenth-century Ottoman empire and was based on European ideologies of nationalism and ethnic politics. Built on Western foundations of justice, independence, and democracy, it has struggled continuously for political legitimacy among its neighbors, and its members have battled over its boundaries and territory, the distribution of its resources, and the treatment of its minorities. Committed to peace, it has been in warfare and ceaseless conflict; defined as a secular state, religion has been an integral element of its politics; dedicated to being an open, pluralistic, egalitarian society, it is divided by ethnicity and religion; fiercely independent, it remains the major recipient of economic and military aid from the United States and from Jews around the world. Designed as a haven for the remnants of world Jewry, it contains less than half of the Jewish population of the world after almost six decades of statehood, immigration, and population growth.

Israeli society has integrated millions of Jewish immigrants from an enormous range of diverse countries, invigorated an ancient language to form a common basis of modern communication, and developed a rich culture of literature, theater, film, and scholarship. It has become one of the leaders in agricultural innovation and rural communal experiments, even as it is one of the most urban of contemporary societies. The deserts have bloomed, and modern technologies have flourished in Israel; major family revolutions have occurred, and extensive health care institutions have been

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organized. Israel has become a model state for many Third World nations and a major source of identity for Jewish communities around the world. Characterized by heterogeneity and by intense and continuous change, Israel is a small state occupying a disproportionate share of the headlines and stories in the Western press. Indeed, Israel is a complex society; it is diverse in composition and has undergone changes over the last six decades. There are many keys to unlocking the complexity and diversity. I want to focus this evening on one feature that is critical for understanding a broad range of issues—**Israel's ethnic diversity** among Jews and between Jews and Arabs.

Issues of ethnic diversity have been at the core of national Jewish identity in the formation of the State of Israel. Jewish ethnicity was not about who is a Jew or who was to become an Israeli citizen of the emergent state but who had access to the opportunity structure and state support, and the relative value of diverse Jewish ethnic cultures and communities. The recognition from early in Jewish Yishuv that the nascent state needed a larger population base for both practical and ideological reasons required the dependence on Jewish immigration from diverse Jewish communities as a solution to small demographic size. The commitment to settling border areas and the demands of national security moved the tensions between Jewish ethnic diversity and national integration to the forefront of the ideological and political agenda.

I have been puzzled by the role Jewish ethnic diversity plays in the formation of the Israel nation-state! In particular, how did the new state reconcile national integration with ethnic diversity? Surely ethnic diversity was the price Israel was to pay for immigration from diverse Jewish communities. But how was it to forge a nation-state, and national identity, when ethnic diversity was so conspicuous? The simple answer offered by the state and its ideology was **assimilation**. The state was to enhance national commitments by integrating and assimilating the immigrants and their children into becoming Israelis. Yet it was not so simple and therein lies a lesson for a beginning understanding Israeli society (and other ethnically pluralistic societies including the US) that have been enhanced by immigration.

The transition from Yishuv (the Jewish settlement in Palestine) to Israeli society occurred in the context of a massive Jewish immigration from dozens of countries around

the world, primarily from East European and Middle Eastern countries. The Arabs in Palestine devastated by war and depleted by mass and selective out-migration, became a minority in the emerging Jewish state. This re-composition of Jewish and Arab populations changed everything in the new state and created the diversity that characterizes contemporary Israeli society. The complex layers of ethnic differentiation are complicated further as some groups have assimilated and disappeared over several generations, while new ethnic divisions have emerged created by the state

Jewish ethnic diversity was not sustained by ideology. Indeed, national policy and cultural ideology favored the integration and total assimilation/nationalization of Jews from diverse countries of origin in the Jewish state. Yet ethnic differences have characterized social life in Israel despite ethnic integration into the national society and polity. **Paradoxically, the integration of groups has at times led to increased ethnic distinctiveness rather than to total assimilation.** Thus there are tensions between ethnic change and continuity, between ethnic pluralism and an ethnic melting pot.

Why do we focus on ethnicity? Our goal is not to examine ethnic **differences** per se but to identify how ethnicity is conveyed **generationally**. How are ethnic differences translated into inequalities—the unequal access of groups to the rewards and opportunities within the society? The timing and selectivity of immigration and the continuing patterns of residential concentration, have been critical in shaping the emergence of the ethnic mosaic in Israel, and are directly linked to the perpetuation of ethnic differentiation and inequality. Ethnic differences which are embedded in the structure of social life in Israel tend to be perpetuated. Those ethnic differences that are primarily transfers from places of origins are rarely sustained and at best selectively reinforced. The sharp ethnic differences in family patterns, for example, that characterized groups in the past have narrowed considerably as exposure to Israeli society has increased. These origin factors are no longer the sources of ethnic distinctiveness and mainly reflect national origins and socioeconomic factors. But ethnicity emerges in new arenas. Searching for the **why** of ethnic continuity should not be sought in the cultures of places of origins but in the **contexts** of Israeli society.

Ethnic Categories: Construction and Definitions

Jewish Ethnicity

Ethnic divisions among Jews do not derive from Zionist ideological sources or explicit Israeli policies. To the contrary: The national ideology, Zionism, denies the salience of ethnicity as a continuing factor for the Israeli Jewish population. National origin differences among Jews are viewed as the product of the long-term dispersal of the Jewish people in the Diaspora--; returning to the homeland, it is argued, will result in the emergence of a new Jew—untainted by the culture and psychology of the Diaspora and freed from the constraints and limitations of experiences in places of previous (non-Israel) residence.

Zionism's construction of Jewish peoplehood involves the assignment of ethnic origin to the minority experiences of Jews outside of Israel and, hence, requires its devaluation. The long Jewish Diaspora of 2000 years is viewed simply as an empty interlude between the origin of a Jewish nation in the land of Israel and the return of Jews to their land of origin. Hence, Zionist ideology posits that **Israel is the national origin of Jews**. Their countries of “interlude,” that is, their ethnicities or national origins, are not the source of their Jewish-national identity; Israel is. It follows that the recognition of ethnic origins as the country of ancestry would be, in part, a denial of the “return” home to Israel. To recognize the continuing salience of ethnicity would be to treat coming to Israel as immigration in the normal demographic sense, not as aliya, the imperative “ascent” to Israel of Zionist ideology. To deny “returning” to Israel would be ideologically and politically untenable, as would the acknowledgment of the value and salience of ethnic origins. **The continuing distinctiveness of ethnicity among Jews in Israel is perceived, therefore, as temporary, reflecting the past, diminishing in the present, and expected to disappear in future generations.** Zionist ideology constructs the obvious evidence of Jewish ethnic differences in Israel as transitional and largely irrelevant to the longer term goals of national Jewish integration and nation-building. Indeed, ethnic differences in most Zionist conceptions are either a long-term embarrassment or a reflection of first generation immigrants.

The consensus within Israel about the value of bringing Jews to Israel and the resulting policies encouraging this “in-gathering” are consistent with Zionist ideology, as is the anticipated integration of immigrants with these diverse ethnic backgrounds into the national culture and polity. To hasten achieving this latter goal, explicit policies were

designed and implemented to “absorb” Jewish immigrants into Israeli society. (To whom were these groups to be absorbed was never fully articulated.) These goals have been at the top of the national agenda from Israel’s earliest days. A great deal of effort and extensive resources were aimed at closing the economic, cultural and social gaps among Jews of different ethnic backgrounds with the goal of achieving integration and equality.

Israeli policy makers fully expected the total assimilation of Jews as the third generation emerges, distant from ethnic origins, socialized into the national polity and culture by exposure to educational institutions and the military, and raised by native-born Israeli parents. The ethnicity remaining among third-generation Israeli Jews is expected to be marginal, cultural remnants of no economic or social significance, celebrated in “Diaspora” museums as relics and curios of the past. Nation-building was expected to remove Jewish ethnic origins, as new forms of national Israeli loyalty emerged, focusing on Jewish peoplehood. Religious similarity, military service, exposure through the educational system and “collective consciousness,” derived from Israel’s security situation, it was argued, operate to dilute ethnic differences. **Ethnic cleavage becomes a “problem to be solved,” not a cultural trait or a source of generational socioeconomic inequality.**

Nowhere is the ideology that denies the salience of Jewish ethnicity more poignant **symbolically** than in the way ethnic origin is treated in official government statistical publications. Ethnic origin among the Jews in Israel is almost always categorized in terms of the place of birth of the person (i.e., some “objective” fact that is ascriptive and unchanging). Ethnic origin is simply limited by time (until the third generation) and is descriptive of the immediate past. Exposure to Israeli society marks the progress toward the end of ethnicity and ethnic self-identification. The question of the “ancestry” of the native born of native-born parents has not so far been addressed by officials in Israel. Indeed, to judge solely by the way official government bureaus in Israel present their texts, this third generation has no differentiating ethnic origins of significance

Official information by specific country of origin is re-categorized into broad divisions by continents—Europe-America, and Asia-Africa (with a third category—Israeli born of Israeli-born parents). This ethnic categorization is unique historically

among Jewish communities of the world and is constructed only for Jews living in the state of Israel. It clearly reflects a distinction between Jews of “Western” and “Middle Eastern” origin. It is a rejection of the more widely used, and historically more complex, division between “Sephardic” and “Ashkenazic” Jewries. The latter distinction has been retained only to identify the political designations of the two chief rabbis of Israel, the only legitimate, governmentally recognized and reinforced arena for Jewish “ethnic” diversity. This designation is largely political and serves as a cultural division within the secular government of Israel.

Arab Ethnicity

The difference between Jews and Arabs is another basis of “ethnicity” in Israel. As constructed in government documents and in politics, these are differences of **religious affiliation**, reflecting variations among Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The core of Arab-Jewish differences is not viewed as based on national origins or ethnic characteristics. The distinction between “religion” and “ethnicity” as the basis of the Arab-Jewish differentiation in Israel lies centrally in the quagmire of a series of political and ideological debates: Are Jews a nation or a religion? What constitutes Arab nationalism? What are the commonalities among religiously diverse Arabs—Moslem, Christian, and Druze? The treatment of Arabs in Israel in religious categories denies (symbolically) their ethnic national identity (“Palestinian”) and their political relationships to Arabs (or Palestinians) elsewhere in the region.

The Arab-Jewish distinction is designated on the identity card carried by all adults in Israel and characterizes all transactions between Arabs and others in Israel. The Arab-Jewish distinction is therefore clearer publicly and socially than the more ambiguous ethnic differences among Jews. Arabs are often identified by the majority as the “other” and the category “non-Jew” is used explicitly in official government publications to reflect this otherness. The formal designation of “minority” in Israel (along with government bureaus of minority affairs) is a category allocated to non-Jewish “religious” groups; their communities have their own “religious” organizational character, with appropriate religious leadership positions and institutions supported by government allocations.

The Arab population within the state of Israel has citizenship rights without formal political constraints and with recognized rights enunciated in Israel's declaration of independence. The politics of the region result in less than full rights of participation (e.g., in the military), limited political expression, geographic-regional concentration, and powerful informal rules about geographic mobility and residence, marriage and social activities, and hence about access to economic opportunities, social integration, and quality education. Until 1966, Israeli Arabs lived under a military administration within Israel and were confined to specific geographic areas, resulting in their sharp differentiation from the Jewish population. In contrast to the political and institutional attempts to reduce ethnic origin diversity within the Jewish population, Arab-Jewish differences have not been a direct target of policy in Israel.

The classification of persons into ethnic categories is a social construction that varies with who is categorizing, who gets categorized, and in what contexts these categories are applied during the life course. Thus, for example, Moslem Israelis may define themselves as Palestinians when joining those on the West Bank in political protest but as Israeli Arabs when they vote; they may be viewed by Israeli Jews as "Arabs" or categorized as "non-Jews." Similarly, third generation Israeli Jews of Yemenite origins may be classified in Israeli government records as Israelis, born of Israeli-born parents (i.e., without ethnic origins). In a local community they may be classified as of "Middle Eastern" origins (or of Asian-African origins) or classified by family members as Yemenites of a particular regional origin. American Jews living in Israel may be referred to by some as "Westerners," European-Americans, as "Anglo-Saxons," or as New Yorkers. When they are touring Europe or visiting family in the United States, they may be labeled "Israelis".

These labels are neither correct nor incorrect but are constructions designed by different "others" in an attempt at social classification and definition. Ethnic categories designated formally or informally can, of course, change. Young adults living alone may be less likely to identify themselves ethnically, whereas families with young children may be linked to ethnic communities through networks, jobs, schools, friends, and neighborhoods. The salience of ethnic identification may increase as new families are formed or as transitions occur—marriage, childbearing, death—that link the generations.

Ethnicity may be reinforced through family networking during particular seasons of the year, holidays, and celebrations. Since the boundaries dividing some ethnic groups tend to be flexible, people are able to shift between groups most commonly at particular points during the life course.

The Changing Ethnic Mosaic in Israel

Despite the ideological and political denial of Jewish ethnicity in Israel and the concomitant reification of religion as the only basis of cleavage, there is significant ethnic differentiation at one point in time and over time, between the generations. There is also substantial evidence of convergences among Jewish ethnic groups in some areas of social life. So we have two questions: First, What does the current ethnic picture look like in Israel? And second, why do some forms of ethnic differentiation diminish over time and how do new forms of ethnic distinctiveness emerge for both Jewish and Arab ethnic communities?

Between 1948 and the 21st century, over three million Jewish immigrants entered the state of Israel, for an average of over 60,000 immigrants per year. Of this total, over two-thirds were from European or Western countries and less than one-third from Middle Eastern (or Asian-African) countries. The proportion of immigrants from Asian-African countries has shifted from over 70 percent in the period from 1952-1957 to less than 10 percent in the early 1970s and 1990s. Immigration during the late 1980s and 1990s was dominated by a large movement from Russia (and from the republics of the former Soviet Union). Of the 956,000 immigrants to Israel during the 1990s about 90 percent were from Europe, most from Eastern Europe.

A snapshot, cross-sectional view of ethnicity in Israeli society reveals a complex mosaic of ethnic groups. Out of a total population size of Israel in 2006 of over 6 million, Jews are the dominant subpopulation, representing 77 percent of the total, with a somewhat larger proportion of European-American origins than those of Asian-African origins. The relative population size of the third generation (Israeli born of Israeli-born fathers) is increasing and was about one-third of the Jewish population. Its ethnic origins can only be estimated, but given past immigration patterns, third-generation Israelis are currently dominated by Jews of East European origin. When the state of Israel was established at the end of 1948, there were 716,700 Jews, representing about 82 percent of

the total population. Most of these first Jewish citizens of the state were foreign born (65 percent) and of European origin (85 percent).

Of critical significance in studying the changing importance of ethnicity is to examine changes in socioeconomic opportunities and the differential access of ethnic groups to these opportunities --inequality. The concentration of ethnic groups in particular jobs, neighborhoods, industries, and schools imply at times socioeconomic disadvantage and inequalities. Social class combines with broad family-economic networks to establish bonds of community and generational continuities. Hence, the generational transmission of inequality becomes the key question to pose in understanding ethnicity over time. The importance of formal and informal, explicit or subtle, forms of discrimination in jobs, housing, schools, and government allocations are among the primary factors that reinforce ethnic communities.

When ethnic family members live close to each other, when they attend the same schools, have similar jobs and leisure activities, marry within their ethnic groups, and are involved in ethnic social and political institutions, ethnic attachments within groups are more intensive.

In Israel, ethnicity is constructed (or reconstructed) out of the present circumstances, shaped not simply by what was, but by what is, incorporating selectively from the past within the present. Ethnicity revolves around institutions, those that reduce and those that sustain ethnic communities. In the process, new ethnic forms appear, as different institutions develop to reflect these emergent cultural forms. Even when cultural differences weaken, institutions can be retained and can continue to shape communities. These institutions include family and kin, and social, economic, cultural, and political organizations. Ethnic groups that have retained, developed, and extended institutions have more cohesive communities when compared to those whose search for individual identity or for cultural forms of the past take precedence over social institutions.

We can now turn to a key question: **What is the most salient basis for the observable ethnic differences that we find in Israel?** There are three; Culture, social class and networks.

The first framework emphasizes the cultural aspects of ethnic groups and posits that ethnic variation reflects the culture or the values of groups. When cultural factors are the primary sources of ethnic distinctiveness, they are more likely to characterize the foreign born and their immediate family members and those that speak a language other than the national language and those who have received most of their socialization elsewhere. The second and third generations, socialized formally in places of destination, are more distant from their cultural roots and hence are likely to acculturate.

A second explanation treats ethnic distinctiveness as a reflection of the social class composition of ethnic groups. The argument is that ethnic differences reflect the disadvantaged socioeconomic status of the group as a whole and the inequalities in the overlap of social class and ethnic origin. Observed differences among ethnic groups are therefore primarily social class differences. Occupational and educational mobility reduce ethnic distinctiveness. Over time ethnic groups become integrated economically and assimilated socially into the society. Ethnic continuity, therefore, implies generational inequality and persistent socioeconomic gaps between ethnic groups. As economic discrimination is reduced through equalized education and job opportunities the basis of ethnic distinctiveness should diminish.

Both cultural and social class perspectives project the steady reduction of ethnic differences with the length of exposure to Israeli society. With linguistic homogeneity and educational equalization, with the reduction in ethnic job discrimination and residential integration, and, in general, when social class factors are more equalized among groups, ethnic distinctiveness should be reduced or eliminated.

Indeed, the Arab exception in Israel is often used to prove the rule. When discrimination blocks the integration of groups and their access to economic opportunities, continued inequality and distinctiveness are reinforced. When residential segregation and family patterns are reinforced by state policies, ethnic differentiation is likely to persist generationally. Political and social factors therefore reinforce Arab cultural distinctiveness.

Ethnicity as Networks

In addition to the cultural and social class arguments we need to emphasize the networks and the power of a community and its institutions that reinforces ethnic distinctiveness and identity.

According to this perspective, the basis of ethnic community is the extent of ethnic ties to the labor market. Changing economic networks forge the greater interactions within ethnic communities, developing bonds of family and economic activities at different points during the life course. **The support of kin and family and the concentration of ethnic groups in geographically defined areas become important bases of ethnic continuity.**

Viewed in this way, ethnic distinctiveness is not limited to unacculturated immigrant groups or to ethnic groups that have experienced discrimination or are economically disadvantaged. Ethnic communities are sustained by informal institutions and networks, are often reinforced by local politics and policies, and are enhanced by extended family connections. The network perspective emphasizes that under some conditions, nation-building reinforces distinctiveness, particularly when there is increased socioeconomic competition among ethnic groups, intensified forms of economic concentration, and residential segregation.

Under some conditions, nation-building results in the total assimilation of ethnic groups through the erosion of community and family based institutions, through residential integration and intergroup marriages, through open market forces and universal schooling, and through state policies that provide access to opportunities and that enforce nondiscrimination. But not always; not for all groups; not as an inevitable by-product of nationalism, and social mobility.

What dimensions of ethnicity have been critical in sustaining ethnic distinctiveness in Israel? Let me touch on to three: education, residential concentration and inter-ethnic marriage.

EDUCATION As the state of Israel expanded demographically and economically, educational levels of the population increased, networks of schools expanded, new academies were established, and opportunities for attending school were extended to

(indeed, required of) all citizens. Public elementary and high schools, colleges, and universities developed to accommodate the needs of an increasing population, to educate the next generation in the political goals of the state, and to address the economic demands of an expanding and more diversified labor market; high levels of educational attainment provided entry into better jobs and access to higher incomes.

Jews from Western countries (Europe-America) have always had higher average levels of education than those from Asian and African countries. The average educational gap has narrowed in Israel between ethnic groups because educational levels have increased for all groups. However, when we focus on the upper end of the educational distribution, those with 13 to 15 years and those with 16 or more years of schooling, higher levels of post-high school education among the Western origin populations have been retained. Almost twice as many European-American origin Jews had 13 to 15 years of education than did Asian-African origin Jews, and three times as many had more than a college education. At the upper levels of education, therefore, the ethnic gap today is about the same for the first and second generations. Thus, time has not eliminated the ethnic divisions in education among Jews. Educational inequalities by ethnic origin have persisted in the face of Israeli policies committed to reduce (if not eliminate) ethnic educational gaps.

Ethnic differences among the second and later generations are therefore not simply a carryover from places of origin but are the result of an Israeli-generated stratification system, reinforced by a complex combination of people and institutions—schools, teachers, family, and neighbors. The evidence available is clearly not consistent with the view that educational and other distinctions among ethnic groups are primarily the result of cultural distinctiveness and proximity to the cultures of places of origin.

RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION The evidence from a series of studies points to an initial residential segregation by place of origin and time of immigration among the foreign born and a continuing segregation by broader ethnic categories among their children. Paradoxically, both residential segregation and integration have characterized Israeli cities in the 1990s. There has been a general decline in the level of segregation of the European-American origin population as upwardly mobile Asian and African origin

families have moved into the higher status core areas of cities. Nevertheless, high levels of European-American concentration remain in the wealthier suburbs of cities and in veteran areas of settlement. Many other segments of the Asian and African origin have become increasingly segregated, often in neighborhoods that are pockets of poverty. Those who have been left behind in the social mobility process have become a hard-core disadvantaged group with a high level of separation from the Western origin population and from the upwardly mobile second generation Asian and African population.

The overall pattern of continuing ethnic residential segregation has become a major source of ethnic continuity for all social class groups not only associated with poverty in large urban areas. This is reflected in the high levels of continuous Asian-African concentration in development towns and Moshavim and in some neighborhoods within cities. There is also considerable ethnic segregation in kibbutzim and in settlement areas on the West Bank. The new immigration from the former Soviet Union has resulted in the development of strong ethnic-based Russian speaking neighborhoods and communities. The same is the case for immigrants from Ethiopia. Government subsidized housing and work-related projects in and around the major cities have resulted in new forms of ethnic residential segregation.

Thus the overlap of neighborhood and ethnic origin is not limited to the immigrant generations or their children and is not confined to areas of initial settlement. There continues to be residential enclaves of ethnic groups throughout the country, some stronger and some weaker. Growing up in ethnic families and neighborhoods, attending local schools with disproportionate numbers of students from similar ethnic backgrounds, marrying persons and joining families of similar ethnic origins, and working with and spending leisure time with family and friends who share similar ethnic cultures reinforces the cohesion of ethnic communities. When residential segregation occurs, ethnic cohesion is stronger; when it is less pervasive, ethnic cohesiveness is weaker.

INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGE Israeli society is family centered, as evidenced by the fact that most marry and few dissolve their marriages. Residential independence is tied to marriage and few people live outside of family contexts. The familistic context of Israeli society implies the importance of family based networks for social and economic

activities. One source of these family networks is the ethnic ties that are formed through marriage.

Intermarriage across ethnic lines reflects the assimilation and integration of populations of different ethnic origins. Isolated ethnic communities that do not have social contacts with each other are unlikely to experience high rates of intermarriage. Inter-ethnic marriages link two different extended families and may be viewed as the breakdown of ethnic family networks and an increase in broader community and national linkages. Increasing levels of interethnic marriages imply greater independence of couples from their family origins and individual choice.

Indeed, intermarriage has often been viewed as the quintessential indicator of ethnic assimilation; at the group level it is associated with the path to the ethnic melting pot. By the third or fourth generation of ethnic intermarriages, the identity and the culture, the in-group interaction and the networks, have become so mixed that ethnic origin no longer is salient.

Although the power of intermarriage to dilute and diminish ethnicity is clear, we should be cautious about over-interpreting intermarriage rates and their changes over time. Although it may seem counterintuitive, intermarriage may actually strengthen ethnic communities over time, if those who leave are the most marginal ethnically and if those who remain are core sources of social and cultural continuity. Some interethnic marriages in Israel have resulted in the formation (and perhaps the reinforcement) of new ethnic divisions among Jews. Intermarriages between Jews of Russian and Argentine origins in Israel or between those of Yemenite and Moroccan origins would fit the newly formed categories of “European-American” and of “Asian-African” that have emerged.

A general review of the evidence in Israel suggests two conclusions: First, interethnic marriages have increased over time; and second, higher interethnic marriage rates among Jews do not, in and of themselves, imply the demise of ethnic communities. In the Israeli context, interethnic marriages do not indicate total ethnic group assimilation, although they are consistent with the re-definition of Jewish ethnicity. After three generations about three out of four marriages among Jews in Israel are within broad ethnic categories—European American and Asian African.

There is every basis for arguing the continuing salience of ethnicity in the next generations because of the overlap of ethnic residential patterns and education and occupation patterns with ethnic origin, along with implications for in-group marriages. Ethnicity in Israel is not simply the reflection of closeness to cultural roots; but it is the lack of socioeconomic equalization among groups that has characterized Jewish ethnic subpopulations. Family and economic networks have served to reinforce kinship ties and ethnic communities based on these ties. Ethnic communities are not simply extensions of past ethnic origins but are based on new Israeli-created constructions, moving beyond the meanings of ethnicity in places of origin. And education, residence and marriage are powerful indicators of ethnic social networks.

Ethnicity and Nationalism: Are Ethnic Groups Transitional?

And to wrap up we can now address our beginning question: If ethnic communities are continuous features of Israel's emerging pluralism, how is national integration affected? In short, does ethnic continuity conflict with national Israeli integration?

New Israeli ethnic patterns have emerged. We have already suggested that residential segregation and educational inequalities and its implication for access to opportunity, are critical in retaining ethnic distinctiveness as are intra-ethnic marriages and a reinforced sense of ethnic self-identity, pride, and culture, connecting ethnic origins and families into networks of relationships. These patterns are almost total between Jews and Arabs and characterize significant segments of third-generation Jews when examined by the two broad Jewish ethnic categories—Western and Middle Eastern. Ethnic institutions reinforced by ethnic family and economic networks that are ethnically based and some local institutions—synagogues, community centers, political interests, health clinics, and leisure-time and cultural activities (sports, music, for example)—that are concentrated among particular ethnic groups. Jewish ethnic continuities persist despite government policies and ideological orientations to deny the salience of ethnicity.

As the 21st century begins, it is clear that these ethnic relationships, whatever their particular nuance, will be different from those of the past. And they represent fascinating analytic parallels to other countries and other times. National integration in Israel is clearly occurring among Jews and is an important national value. Nevertheless,

continued ethnic distinctiveness persists despite the ideology that negates Jewish ethnicity. Israel has become an ethnically pluralistic society that has common national goals. And ethnic conflict among Jews appears to be minimal as many retain their ethnic affiliation at the same time that they integrate into the larger Jewish society of Israel. Israel searches for the way to celebrate ethnic differences and ethnic culture while reducing ethnic inequality—a daunting and challenging value for the future.