

STATE, MIGRANTS AND THE PRODUCTION OF EXTRA-TERRITORIAL
SPACES: NEGOTIATING ISRAELI CITIZENSHIP IN THE DIASPORA

by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my family.

My kids, Amalia and Amitai, who are still too young to read this, but have felt all too often what it means to have 'daddy in school'. I'm sorry for all those missed dinners and bedtime stories and I promise to do my best to make it up to you.

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ABSTRACT

The current research examines the relationship between the Israeli state and its migrant community in the United States. It argues that under conditions of accelerated globalization, the Israeli state has sought to reach out and re-territorialize its migrants' identities in order to strengthen their territory-based Israeli identity and, ultimately, return them to Israel. Focusing on the role played by cultural practices in the process of re-territorialization - which takes place in newly created extra-territorial spaces - it argues that a new type of transnational contract, namely *diasporic citizenship* has emerged that defines the relationship between the state and its citizens abroad. Cultural practices from above (state-produced) re-assert migrants' identities as national subjects and include them in the expanding incorporation regime of the Israeli state. At the same time, cultural practices from below (migrants'-produced) have been instrumental in their quest to (re)-imagine themselves as part of a trans-territorial Israeli nation. The research uses the Israel Independence Day Festival in Los Angeles to examine the extent to which it has become an extra-territorial space where state officials and migrants negotiate their often conflicting notions of Israeli culture, identity, and citizenship. It is this continuous process of negotiation, the research concludes that (re)-produces new types of affiliations between the state and its subjects overseas.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The current research focuses on the relationship between migration-sending states and their trans-migrant communities under conditions of globalization. Specifically, it examines a range of cultural practices states conceive and deploy in order to reach out to their transnational migrants and form/shape their identities as national citizens. The increasing importance of practices aimed towards cultural re-territorialization which, among other things, include the marking of nationally significant holidays (Independence Day, Memorial Day), language instruction, film and food festivals, homeland root-searching expeditions, and youth cultural enrichment programs is commonly attributed to two interlinked global processes. The first is the unprecedented number of international migrants in the late 20th century whose social space transcends the territorial boundaries of the nation-state in which they live and therefore remain intimately involved in the economic, cultural, and political spheres in their country of origin. The emergence of transnational migrant communities (or trans-migrants as they are often referred to) in virtually every country of the world has motivated sending states to step in and reach out to them in order to ensure that they remain firmly connected to the homeland. While the use of economic (providing financial incentives to expatriates' investment in the homeland) and political (granting absentee voting rights) benefits to enhance state-migrants ties has been documented quite extensively, far less attention has been given to the role of transnational cultural practices despite their important merits as the Israeli, Mexican, Chinese, and Indian cases have all revealed. Practices of cultural re-territorialization (or bonding mechanisms) are quite often the most effective instruments

at the disposal of national governments in bolstering and perpetuating the aforementioned trans-national connection.

The second process is the accelerated advancement in transportation and communication systems, both of which allow transnational ways of life and facilitate state efforts in becoming ever-more influential in shaping them. The ease with which contemporary migrants can cross national borders yet remain intimately involved with the politics and culture of their homeland matches that of sending states that can reach out and expose them to numerous cultural practices aimed at re-connecting them to the homeland. Put differently, the means that allow what Harvey (1989) famously termed ‘time-space compression’ facilitate state-led (from above) *and* migrant-led (from below) transnational processes. The former involves the institutionalized efforts of the sending state to reach out to their trans-migrant communities beyond international borders in order to ensure that they remain firmly connected to the homeland, culturally, politically, and economically. The latter entails all those transnational practices undertaken by transmigrant individuals and communities that are aimed at re-affirming (indeed, solidifying) their national identity and assist them in re-imagining themselves as part of the territorialized nation.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine these reciprocal processes and explore the ongoing interaction between states and transnational migrants at various extra-territorial spaces. In particular, it seeks to understand how state-led projects of cultural re-territorialization are articulated and practiced in everyday life and the extent to which

they are accepted, resisted, or flatly rejected by transnational migrants. It further seeks to uncover the everyday physical and symbolic spaces that are produced as a result of these new and intense forms of interaction between the state and its transmigrant communities. By juxtaposing state-led efforts at culturally re-territorializing migrants *and* migrants' own practices of what I term 'self re-territorialization', this study shows how new mundane spaces of interaction are formed and become arenas in which the meanings of national identity and citizenship are negotiated. Examining the profusion of sites and spaces in which states interact with and attempt to shape social identities of transnational migrants, and the nature of this interaction is fundamental to our understanding of the spatiality of the state in a globalizing environment and has several broader implications for state theory (including state-society relations), citizenship studies, and transnational migration theory.

First and foremost, the research exemplifies how the hegemonic grip of the state over social relations, long conceptualized as being territorially bounded, is no longer confined to national borders. Instead, a key argument developed in the course of this dissertation is that the recent revamping of the territorial basis of state power allows it to reach out to extra-territorial human (and other) resources in the name of their national identity and citizenship status. While producing additional spaces in which to re-assert citizens' identities is a key interest of all states, it is particularly the case for those with large transnational migrant population. Producing extra-territorial state spaces (and camouflaging them as sites of cultural production) allows sending states to continue to exert considerable hegemonic power over the everyday lives of first, second, and

(sometimes even) third generation migrants. By trans-nationalizing (or extra-territorializing) the notion of state spaces to include all those sites in which the state attempts to shape social identities, this research opens up new opportunities for researching the state (and its production of social identities) outside national territory.

A second and related theoretical implication concerns the process by which transnational spaces of state-society interaction are formed. As will be argued throughout this research, these new spaces and - ultimately – trans-migrants' identities are not simply state-produced, but rather emerge out of the contested nature of state-migrants' relations. Put differently, I argue that practices of cultural re-territorialization are not plainly consumed by transmigrants in spaces produced and marked by the state. Rather, as chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate, migrants evaluate, contest and alter them in order to ensure that they suit their transnational needs. As Ong (1999) has famously shown, transmigrants are fully aware of the advantages (and disadvantages) associated with their new, extra-territorial status and do not shy away from using them strategically to better their situation. And while the empowered position from which transmigrants operate vis-à-vis sending states in these transnational spaces has often been looked at through purely economic lenses (e.g., to evade national tax regimes), the current research illustrates the extent to which they can be used to produce counter-hegemonic transnational cultural spaces. Thus, for instance, in the Israeli case, whenever a dialogue between state agents and transmigrants failed to produce the desired outcomes for the latter, transmigrants often embarked on their own project of cultural re-territorialization (e.g., the Israel Day Festival in Los Angeles), subsequently forcing the state to adjust accordingly. As chapter 4 shows,

migrants' resistance to negative state-produced discourses and practices catalyzed changes in both and accelerated the emergence of the extra-territorial Israeli citizen. In some respects, then, this research is about the discursive and practical resistance of transnational social agents to state-led efforts aimed at re-shaping their identities.

This research also sheds much needed light on the embodied relations between state and social agents. Evading a broad institutional analysis of state agencies and/or transmigrant organizations, it focuses instead on everyday people and their practices and shows how the active engagement of transmigrants with projects of cultural re-territorialization brings them into daily encounters with official agents of the state. Rather than focusing on migration waves, or transnational communities, I follow recent cultural approaches to mobility (Silvey & Lawson, 1999; Cresswell, 2002) by underscoring the constructed nature of migrants' narratives and the instrumental role they play in positioning themselves vis-à-vis the state. Examining their seemingly mundane encounters with 'the state' reveals the non-abstract nature of the state and the myriad ways by which it produces new spaces and subjectivities. I also argue that for transmigrants, the process of negotiating their identity vis-à-vis the state is very much a personal matter, as the state is not only an abstract idea manifested through traditional symbolic objects (e.g., the flag, the national anthem, or the embassy building); Rather, with the exponential growth in the size and importance of extra-territorial state spaces, the state is personified, embodied in the almost ubiquitous presence of the Scouts' troop leader, the Israeli House coordinator, and the local emissary. These and other incumbents, invariably present in (and often the organizers of) local cultural events, become the 'state in the community', serving as

constant reminders to transmigrants of their rights and obligations towards the homeland. Thus, negotiation over who is an Israeli citizen or what her duties are towards the state at times of crisis cease to be exclusively legal-bureaucratic issues that are tackled in the court of law. Instead, they are negotiated by state agents and transmigrants in the state-supported festival or the weekly meeting of the local Scouts' troop. The non-abstract and personified nature of the state as described in this research further contributes to the blurring of the formerly rigid boundary between state and society (see Mitchell, 1999). In a relatively small ethno-national community¹, it is not uncommon for transmigrants to socialize with state agents, exchange political opinions, and generally form close friendships while at the same time disagree on their rights and obligations towards the abstract 'state' in Jerusalem². These and other types of socio-professional intermingling exacerbate the 'state in the community' situation and often create a challenge for both groups³.

A final theoretical implication of this research concerns the nature and boundaries of (Israeli) citizenship in a global age. Much of the current research on citizenship revolves around rescaling (see Isin, 2000; Isin & Turner, 2002), namely the declining importance

¹ Staff at the Consulate General of Israel in Los Angeles estimated that there are roughly 150,000 Israeli migrants in the metropolitan area.

² It is interesting to note that in various occasions I have heard migrants using the phrase 'state' only when referring to institutions in Jerusalem, but not when describing the staff of the local consulate. This seemingly inconsequential distinction, I believe, is in fact quite important for the myriad ways through which the state is produced and re-produced in transnational space. Seeing the state as being 'there' but not 'here' has significant implications for the level of rigor at which migrants choose to engage with local emissaries. Often convinced that decisions are made in Jerusalem and not Los Angeles (or New York) they are less willing to negotiate locally thereby bypassing state agents in their places of residence, further weakening their position.

³ Despite the general usage of the terms 'state' and 'community' throughout this research, it is important to note that the two are far from being clearly defined. In fact, one of my motives for undertaking this research has been the intent to show the extent to which both the state and the transmigrant Israeli community in Los Angeles (and elsewhere, I would presume) are anything but essential, cohesive entities.

of national citizenship and the shift towards identifications with and membership in other, more or less organized communities. From sexual and environmental through religious and urban to cosmopolitan and global forms of citizenship, a growing body of research documents the important role played by various types of communal memberships (often at the expense of the national) in the process of individual identity formation. Against this background, the current research shows the extent to which national citizenship is transformed, yet continues to play a critical role in individual and group identity. As both state and migrants struggle to make sense of their new relationship, changes to the social contract of national citizenship are inevitable. Being, feeling, and practicing the duties of a national citizen outside state territory are a challenge with which both states and migrants need to grapple. Yet, as chapter 5 shows, while changing practices (including rights and duties) of citizenship are evident among Israeli transmigrants, re-asserting their status as (extra-territorial) citizens of the State of Israel remains a key marking⁴ in their identity. Despite their distance and what I would call a ‘declining sense of civic commitment’ (as reflected, for example, through their apprehensive approach towards their children’s military service), first generation Israeli migrants feel ever more culturally tied to their sending society. And as chapter 6 argues, these mutations in citizenship (Ong, 2006) give rise to multiple spaces in which to practice them. In the Israeli case, citizenship is conceptualized as a transnational pact between the state and its citizens abroad that is practiced through migrants’ participation in various homebound cultural events (whether state or community-sponsored).

⁴ Thanks to Beth Mitchneck who drew my attention to this term.

As excerpts from my interviews conducted in Los Angeles show, the notion that Israeli citizens abroad are expected to attend various cultural events in order to fulfill their now-culturally-defined citizenship duties has been taking hold among both community activists and senior state representatives. Hence, in spite of the increasing importance of the transnational discourse among Israeli migrants (see chapter 4), they often conceive of their citizenship first and foremost in terms of homebound cultural practice. In their multi-layered citizenship⁵ status (nation, diaspora, community), it is the Israeli nation-state that makes the most aggressive attempts to re-incorporate them and offer them new incentives to identify with it. It creates spaces for them and their children in which to feel and practice their Israeli citizenship, even if only for a short period of time every week (e.g., Israeli Scouts). And as some of my informants reveal in chapter 6, neither their local (membership in the Israeli community of Los Angeles) nor their global (being part of the Jewish Diaspora) communities offer them as many reasons to belong as does the national imagined community.

While I am not arguing that the state is the only (or even the most important) entity in the struggle over social identities in a globalizing environment, it is its insistence on maintaining its salient role that this research underscores. As Laguerre (1998:189) reminds us, extra-territorial citizenship centers around the following questions, “What kind of control can the state exert over the transnational citizen’s body? Which state is responsible for the well-being of the individual citizen? And to which state must this citizen pledge loyal allegiance?” In the Israeli case, as will be shown in the coming chapters, it is the sending state that makes the most persistent efforts to exert control over

⁵ See Painter (2000); Yuval-Davis (1999; 2000)

transmigrants and it is projects of cultural re-territorialization (and the production of new and altered spaces of extra-territorial citizenship) that allows it to do so quite effectively.

Re-territorialization in a Global Age

At its core, re-territorialization from above is a political project by which migration-sending states reach out to their expatriate populace by encouraging them to remain involved in socio-cultural and political affairs produced in their country of origin. These projects aim to bolster, I argue, the territorial component in one's identity by luring her to take a more active role in homeland affairs (e.g., homeland politicians' elections campaigns) thereby re-constructing what is perceived to be a weak-(ening) tie between migrants and the territorialized nation. Carving-out extra-territorial spaces allows states better, more direct access to trans-migrants and helps them in the re-assertion of their identities as national citizens. By virtue of being a transnational project, cultural re-territorialization often requires nation-states to restructure their institutional apparatus or at least reorganize it in such a way that would allow them to reach out to their transnational communities in the most effective manner. The establishment of new public agencies (or the expansion of existing ones), deployment of emissaries and other specialized personnel to the cities in which sizeable transnational communities exist, and in general the creation of additional institutional channels to secure better communication with migrants is more often than not part of efforts of cultural re-territorialization.

Thus, for example, following a policy change in the late 1980s, the Mexican Department of Foreign Relations currently hosts a special *Program for Mexican Communities*

Abroad. Focusing on education, sports, culture, healthcare, and business promotion, the program requires close coordination with a host of federal departments, state governments, municipal seats and other public and private organizations in Mexico and the United States⁶. These and other re-territorialization projects inevitably expand and reform existing state spaces by allowing governments to operate beyond their jurisdictional boundaries and attempt to mold social identities and relations extra-territorially. Goldring (2002) sees these projects of re-territorialization as part of a broader process of state-led transnationalism, which he defines as “institutionalized national policies and programs that attempt to expand the scope of a national state’s political, economic, social, and moral regulation to include emigrants and their descendants outside the national territory” (p. 64).

Similarly, in her discussion of the recent efforts by the Argentinean government to reach out to expatriates, Margheritis (2007) claims that the rationale has been to “help recover or maintain nationhood links with expatriates” especially in the aftermath of the 2001 economic crisis. Administratively referred to as the 25th Province, Argentinean migrants (most of whom are highly educated and considered vital human capital by government officials) have been included in the most recent national census and their matters are now handled by a new bureaucratic unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among other initiatives the unit is promoting homogenization of the institutional structure of migrants’ associations, allocation of seats to representatives of the new province and a migration law that would facilitate migrants’ access to information and social services and allow increased levels of tax credits.

⁶ Source: http://zedillo.presidencia.gob.mx/welcome/PAGES/library/od_mexcommunities.html

Other states known for their attempts to institutionalize political and economic relations with migrants are China, Cuba, India, and Haiti. The latter is a particularly interesting case since the first projects of re-territorialization have been established by the Haitian state in the later 18th century in the aftermath of the mass US-bound exodus that accompanied the Haitian revolution. In an attempt to re-capture the hearts and bodies of the departed, the Haitian state has offered “to pay for their trips, provide them with land, and help in their reintegration” (Laguerre, 2006: 50). More recently, state-led reach out to the Haitian diaspora (referred to by Aristide, the country’s first democratically-elected president as the ‘Tenth Department’, an integral part of the state residing outside its jurisdictional territorial boundaries) included the establishment of a cabinet-level ministry to be headed by a (former) member of the diaspora. The Ministry aims to coordinate diasporic contributions to the state through financial remittances, economic aid, and technical support. It further serves as a conduit through which the Haitian diaspora could voice their demands in matters pertaining to national governance (Laguerre, 2006).

At the heart of any re-territorialization project usually lie states’ desire to reap the benefits associated with a committed transnational community. The particular benefit sought after by a state will determine to a large degree the type of project selected. As Laguerre (2006) notes, “a state is involved in extraterritorial units to the extent that it sees a positive return for its population, whether in real or symbolic terms” (p. 44). Thus, a developing, financially frail country (e.g., Egypt, Argentina) is more likely to encourage migrants’ homeland-bound economic investments by providing tax incentives to potential entrepreneurs, while lobbying and other types of politically-oriented hostland support is

often sought by geopolitically turbulent states (e.g., Cuba, Haiti) through co-funding of migrant-led political organizations. It is not uncommon, however, for states to act on different re-territorialization projects simultaneously in order to maximize migrants' potential benefits.

Israel, for example, has over the years used various re-territorialization projects to secure both political (e.g., lobbying for more favorable policies among American policy-makers on Capitol Hill) and economic (e.g., fund raising for post-war reconstruction efforts) support from its US-based Jewish⁷ and Israeli diasporas (see Sheffer, 1986b). With respect to the latter group – the public discourse during the state's first three decades (1948-1977) negated any projects geared towards their symbolic and physical re-territorialization (see chapter 4). During the 1980s and more forcefully in the past two decades initiatives aimed at maintaining ties with migrants – have been funded quite generously by various arms of the Israeli state (the IDF, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, and the Jewish Agency). Like various other migration-sending countries, Israel's state agencies have created new and utilized existing extra-territorial spaces to re-territorialize its diasporic subjects. Book fairs, film festivals, and extra-curricular activities geared towards the second generation have been increasingly funded and organized by the state. The programmatic similarities with other countries (both in terms of their nature and the target audience) notwithstanding, I argue that the Israeli strategy has been fundamentally different than those of India or China in several important ways.

⁷ While the re-territorialization of the Jewish diaspora is beyond the scope of this research, it is important to note that similar strategies have often been employed by the Israeli state to reach out to both communities.

First and foremost, the heavy emphasis placed on the cultural aspect of projects stands out when compared to other countries. Unlike the Argentinean, Mexican or Haitian governments, the Israeli administration conceives of re-territorialization as a means to an end, namely return migration. The biased representation of Israel invariably embedded in many of these initiatives is instrumental in evoking a strong emotional reaction perceived as a necessary step in the 'long way home'. State projects aimed at first and second generation migrants consistently allude to their so-called 'identity crisis' that could only be resolved in the homeland. Secondly, despite an emerging state discourse about the importance of maintaining ties with migrants and the need to construct channels through which they could voice their demands in the national public discourse, in practice extra-territorial citizens are still considered second class citizens, deprived of some of the most basic socio-political and economic rights (e.g., social security, health insurance, voting rights). In this respect, the state is still a long way from seeing the diaspora an integral part of the trans-nation and the territorial component in one's identity is seen as fundamental.

Finally, in contrast to other countries that provide diasporic communities with opportunities to contribute to the homeland by institutionalizing the relations (e.g., through an establishment of a 'council of diasporic communities' as in the Basque case), the Israeli state has consistently refrained from providing any type of institutional support to its communities abroad. As I argue throughout this research, the fear of the extra-territorial existence – coupled with chronic financial crises and short electoral cycles –

has prevented the state from taking any concrete, long-term measures to stabilize state-diaspora relations. In fact, some key community activists I have spoken with argued that the de-institutionalization of the Israeli diaspora has always been the governing principle in the work of state agencies and emissaries. State-funded projects, it was argued, were never meant to assist in constructing a meaningful infrastructure on which a prosperous diaspora could emerge or even voice its demands from the home-state; instead, re-territorialization projects were conceived as top-down, ad-hoc, short-term interventions in the lives of diasporic subjects. Diasporic communities themselves, I will argue, have never been consulted at any stage along the process, yet, should not be thought of as passive recipients of state support. In fact, as chapter 5 illustrates, once re-territorialization projects were implemented by the state, Israeli migrants took an active stance towards them and worked individually or collectively to re-shape them.

As will be emphasized throughout this dissertation, cultural re-territorialization ought not to be seen as a one-sided, top-down process of hegemonic re-assertion of national identities aimed at transnational migrants. It would be misleading to assume that trans-migrants only respond to state-led re-territorialization projects. In fact, as this research clearly demonstrates, communities increasingly capitalize on their transnational status to create spaces of self-reterritorialization in order to secure certain rights from the home-state. As Appadurai (1996: 54-5) reminds us, “Reterritorialization can involve the effort to create new localized residential communities (slums, refugee camps, hostels) that rest not on a national imaginary but on the imaginary of local autonomy or of resource sovereignty”. Thus, for example, the Israel Festival in Los Angeles (see chapter 6) began

as a project of self-reterritorialization aimed at securing a stronger communal tie to the homeland and its people during a period in which the dominant state policy had been 'overt rejection' (see chapter 4). More recently, though, the Festival has become a space through which migrants defend existing and pursue additional cultural rights associated with their extra-territorial status. Increasingly, the state had been inserting itself into this community-produced space in order to deploy its own re-territorialization project, which, as the chapter shows, is quite different in scope and objectives from the community's. The Festival, state-sponsored memorial ceremonies, and other more or less formal venues became spaces of interaction in which state and migrants'-led transnationalism intersect, creating new forms of Israeli extra-territorial citizenship and identities.

In the Israeli case, I argue, projects of cultural re-territorialization carry a special meaning. As the state's *raison d'etra* has been to territorialize diasporic Jewish identities and bodies through *Kibbutz Galuyot* ('The Ingathering of the Exiles'), the dominant public discourse has marked any form of de- and extra-territorial Jewish (and later Israeli) existence as deviant and socially unacceptable (see chapter 3 for a discussion of the discourse around Holocaust survivors and *Mizrahim*). Despite the contemporary seemingly emotion-neutral discourse, which underscores the importance of maintaining the link between the state and migrants, the crafting of cultural projects by the Israeli state is accompanied by an implicit desire to re-territorialize bodies, and *not* simply identities. Tailoring cultural projects to distinctively-defined migrant groups (e.g., artists, scientists, graduate students, business people, and second generation) is instrumental in the state's concentrated effort to cast a wide enough net to capture as many potential

bodies as possible. At the same time, despite vehement denials by state officials interviewed for this research, targeting migrant sub-populations with a fair amount of social capital implies that, from the state's perspective, not everybody is 're-territorialization worthy'. In line with neo-liberal principles of economic efficiency and entrepreneurship, new practices of re-territorialization are designated to attract the 'best and brightest'. As a staff member in the Ministry of Immigrants Absorption in Jerusalem recently told me, "it would be great if they [migrants] all return to Israel, but given that it is unrealistic, we as a public institution with limited resources need to make sure that we pursue the people that could contribute the most to our society and economy".

Analyzing the politics of extra-territorial citizenship is first and foremost an enquiry into the production of pertinent spaces and the different roles played by transmigrants on the one hand and state agents on the other in the process. As chapter 5 demonstrates, the Festival (and other extra-territorial spaces) is a produced spaces, a 'spatial triad' (Lefebvre, 1991), conceived by state agents, lived and frequented by migrants who reproduce them, but not uncritically, through their everyday spatial practices; they challenge them, question their relevance, and altogether (re)-shape them, insisting on changing them materially from the way they were originally conceived by the state. What the empirical case of the Israel Day Festival in Los Angeles reveals is the contested nature of Israeli diasporic citizenship⁸ and the spatial imaginations concerning state and nation that lie at the heart of extra-territorial lives.

⁸ I follow Michelle S. Laguerre's (1998) definition of diasporic citizenship, "as the situation of the individual who lives outside the boundaries of the nation-state to which he or she had formerly held primary allegiance and who experiences through transnational migration (or the redesigning of the homeland boundaries) the subjective reality of belonging to two or more nation-states" (p. 12-13).

Investigating the production of extra-territorial spaces is of particular importance for several reasons. Firstly, it allows us to see how, in a globalizing environment, a restructuring of (some of their) powers has enabled state apparatuses to re-deploy their hegemonic practices more efficaciously beyond their sovereign territories. Far from withering away, states have been able to reinvent themselves spatially by deploying a wide range of practices aimed at re-drawing their boundaries such that they encompass an additional pool of valuable human and material resources. Reaching out to and incorporating extra-territorial communities into the nation allowed states to gain access and benefit from resources that until recently were thought to have been lying beyond their reach. Secondly, it makes clear that the early conceptualization of transnationalism as a liberating, hegemony-free space in which shifting, in-between identities are the norm ought to be re-visited. While, as this research shows, it is true that transnational spaces do allow migrants a certain amount of flexibility in their engagements with both sending *and* receiving state apparatuses, it would be a mistake to conceptualize them as free, hegemony-subverting agents. In fact, as I will argue in the following chapters, due to the extra-territorial nature of re-territorialization projects, most states are now in a much better position to govern and exert influence (albeit limited) over the process of migrants' identity formation. Public television programs produced for and broadcast to transnational migrants through host-land satellite dishes are just one example of how extra-territorial spaces are formed and monitored by national governments in their quest for better control over social identities. These and other projects show the extent to which states have been able to reinvent themselves in the age of globalization, having once again emerged influential over affairs taking place within *and* beyond their own

territories. Re-territorialization therefore becomes the ultimate state strategy to attempt to 'capture the flows' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) embedded in various forms of transnational mobility.

Finally, given that no capture is ever complete, examining the politics of re-territorialization allows us to understand the often contested nature of the production of (extra-territorial) space. As chapter 5 shows, formation and negotiation of (extra)-territorial identities is never linear, but rather a back-and-forth process of negotiation between the state and its agents on the one hand and individual migrants on the other. The case that will be made throughout this dissertation is that Israeli identity abroad gets defined at the point of interaction between the state's projects of re-territorialization on the one hand, and migrants' practices on the other. Spaces of extra-territorial identities are always venues of negotiation between the sending state and (active) members of the community who – through daily practices – challenge simplistic top-down, nationalistic assertion of identity.

The remainder of this chapter contains a 'road map' for the dissertation as well as short notes on methodology and subjectivity. Chapter 2 contains a broad analysis contextualizing the current study within three inter-related theoretical strands. The first deploys the emerging theory of the (spatial) restructuring of states and state power in the era of globalization. It is argued that in order to remain competitive in controlling existing and seizing additional resources, both human and non-human, many nation-states have had to restructure their hitherto primarily territorial power base. Evading absolutist

territorial boundedness through processes of re-territorialization, rescaling, and re-bordering has been fundamental in nation-states' efforts to re-position themselves vis-à-vis their migrant communities abroad and capitalize on their advantageous transnational status. The second theoretical strand focuses on re-territorialization as a state strategy and its socially constructed nature. It is argued that re-territorialization has traditionally been used by states to homogenize cultural spaces and identities in order to reinforce their control over human and non-human resources. It then proceeds to theorize re-territorialization more narrowly as a discursive and practical state strategy geared towards the 'capture' and fixation of mobile groups - nomads, migrants, and refugees in particular (Creswell, 2006). The main objective is to show that by virtue of being constructed as 'uprooted', mobile groups have been traditionally conceived as entities that pose a serious challenge to the state and the hegemonic idea of a territorial fix (see Malkki, 1992). Their portrayal as counter-hegemonic agents rationalized and facilitated various projects of re-territorialization aimed at fixating them to certain spaces (the state) and identities (the nation)⁹.

Finally, I theorize the reciprocal relations between sending states and transnational migrants in a globalizing environment. Building upon the burgeoning literature on transnational migration and politics (and its critique), I argue that for a variety of economic, political, and cultural reasons, the re-territorialization of migrants and their identities has become a viable strategy undertaken by a large number of migration-sending countries in the recent past. Widely viewed as a resource rather than a liability, transnational communities have become a sought after social group which both sending

⁹ I borrow this formulation from Natter & Jones III (1997).

as well as receiving states attempt to re-incorporate to the nation by mobilizing their support for various projects. Concurrently, it is argued that while some of these re-territorialization efforts are often met with enthusiasm on the part of the migrant community, others encounter resistance and require a lengthy process of negotiation. Cultural re-territorialization projects and the spaces in which they take place - whether a diasporic festival or a series of academic speakers from the homeland – are always contentious, inducing states' and migrants' different interpretations of identity, culture, and citizenship.

Chapter 3, entitled “*State, Territory, Migrants: The Social Construction of Mobility in Israel*”, examines the continued salience of the territorial component in the Zionist ideology from its earliest days. Arguing that the territorialization of the traditional diasporic Jewish identity has been the Zionist movement's most important objective, imperative to its efforts to build a Jewish nation on its historic territory, it shows how mobile groups (Holocaust survivors and Middle Eastern Jews) were portrayed as a challenge to this objective as well as the entire Zionist enterprise. Negating the de- and extra- territorialized was a viable Zionist strategy deployed alongside efforts of territorialization. Taking a historical perspective to Jewish territorial identity, the chapter uses primarily secondary materials and paves the way to the following chapter in which I focus on the changing discourses around Israeli migration..

Chapter 4 deploys a critical discourse analysis methodology to examine emigration discourses in Israel since independence and the varying effects they have had on

emigrants' identities outside the country. Entitled "*From Overt Rejection to Enthusiastic Embrace: Changing State Discourses on Israeli Emigration*", it argues that three distinct, yet sometimes overlapping discourses on emigration have emerged in Israel over the years, each reflecting a different official perspective on emigration as a phenomenon and emigrants as individual actors. The chapter focuses on the extent to which these changing discourses have impacted processes of identity-formation among migrants outside national territory.

Finally, Chapter 5 focuses on the extent to which Israeli migrants in the Los Angeles metropolitan area engage in projects of self-reterritorialization. Entitled "*Practicing Identities: Israeli Migrants and the Production of Spaces of Cultural Citizenship*", this chapter uses interviews with community activists and state agents as well as participant observation to analyze Israel's Independence Day Festival in the San Fernando Valley. It focuses on the nature of the Festival as a self-produced space of cultural citizenship which allows members of the Israeli community to imagine themselves as part of the nation and make legitimate claims on the state. It further demonstrates how the historic failure of the state to produce adequate spaces for migrants to identify with the homeland has led to the emergence of the Festival. Finally, it illustrates how attending the Festival has over the years become synonymous with practicing one's duties as an extra-territorial citizen.

Methodology

Three primary methodological tools have been used in the course of conducting the current research. In addition to semi-structured interviews, I have relied on participant observation and extensive archival research to obtain the pertinent data. In addition, I have used principles of discourse analysis in the course of writing chapter 4. With the exception of participant observation, all tools have been applied in both Israel and the United States.

Semi-structured interviews - a total of eight semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews were conducted with Israeli state representatives in both Israel and the US¹⁰. Interviewees were selected based on their present (and in one case past) involvement with public policies pertaining to emigration from Israel. US-based government interviewees were identified through various official websites (e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry for Immigrant Absorption, Consulates, and Israel Scouts) and selected based on their involvement in the implementation of cultural programs aimed at first or second generation Israeli migrants. With the exception of one (Consul General in Los Angeles), all officials contacted had agreed to be interviewed for this research.

Archival Research – archival data was collected in the course of a month-long visit to Israel. Roughly two weeks were spent in the Knesset’s official archive and central library reviewing and copying official proceedings of parliamentary meetings. In addition to Knesset sessions’ protocols, I have reviewed minutes from weekly meetings of three parliamentary committees, namely Immigrant Absorption, Interior Affairs, and Foreign

¹⁰ Phone interviews were conducted with US-based government officials.

Affairs from 1949 to the present. An additional week was spent at the Central Zionist Archive in downtown Jerusalem and the Hebrew University's National Book House on Mt. Scopus. Both locations contain an invaluable selection of pertinent historical materials, including official memoranda, policy papers and reports, and books. The latter also contains the largest daily newspaper and magazine archive in Israel (both English and Hebrew).

Discourse Analysis - the archival research mentioned above provided me with a breadth of written texts on which to perform discourse analysis. Two sources were particularly important in shedding light on the official state discourse about Israeli emigration (chapter 4); first, microfilms of Hebrew newspapers and magazines from 1949 to the present available at the Hebrew University's National Book House; second, a plethora of government-sanctioned documentation available at the Central Zionist Archives and the National Book House.

Participant Observation - during my 11-year residence in the US, I have been a participant observant in dozens of Israeli state and migrant-produced cultural events throughout the US and Canada. Having taken a more or less active part in events organized in Tucson, Phoenix, Washington DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, Chicago, Boston, Toronto, Calgary, San Diego, Newark, and New York I have had ample opportunities to witness first hand the atmosphere in and impact of these and other spaces on identity. And while they have all undoubtedly shaped my opinions about the nature of the relations between the Israeli state and migrants, I have chosen to include a more

detailed analysis of only one project. Started as a small communal gathering in a local community center in the San Fernando Valley in Southern California, the Israel Day Festival is currently largest annual gathering of Israeli migrants in the world. Drawing between 30,000 and 50,000 people every year, the Festival is the largest scale project of cultural re-territorialization outside Israel. While the Festival itself is only eight hours long, the year-round preparatory process is a key space of interaction between state representatives and migrants. Attending the 2007 Festival (as well as some of its final preparations), which one of my informants described as ‘a surreal space of Israeliness in the diaspora’, allowed me a close examination of the work done by activists, organizers, members of the board of directors, and other dedicated individuals. Further, informally speaking to attendees during the Festival has enabled me to appreciate the range of effects the Festival has been having over what I consider to be the multiplicity of Israeli identities outside Israel.

A Note on Subjectivity

Finally, a word about my own subjectivity is in order as well as reference to its possible effects on the current research. My interest in state-migrants’ relations - the overarching theme of this dissertation - arose years before I even considered researching it. As a young migrant in New York City of the mid-1990s I was immediately struck by the ethno-national *mélange* of the global city and the extent to which groups were retaining and displaying their cultural heritage in their new environments. As an Israeli citizen I was equally dumbfounded by the strong Israeli atmosphere in certain neighborhoods (including the ones I lived in Queens County), but more so by the fact that many of the

contributors to the creation and maintenance of this atmosphere were official representatives of the State of Israel. I quickly became fascinated with the way these and other members of the Israeli establishment worked feverishly to (re)-present – indeed, market - Israel not only to American Jews (their long time target audience), but equally so to Israeli migrants and their families. While I was clearly still not thinking of the implications of this massive involvement in such theoretical terms as state, territory, migration or citizenship, I slowly began to wonder about the interests of the state and the myriad responses of migrants to these projects. In fact, it was in my early conversations with Israeli friends and acquaintances that my interest began to be crystallized. Gradually, I started comparing my own personal and very limited knowledge of Israel, its politics, geography, culture, and society with the vastly different representations rendered by state officials in the context of these new programs. I realized that the two were often incompatible; where images of a united nation were presented, I saw unbridgeable differences; where officials stressed the country's rising GDP and proudly underscored its high-technology achievement, I was reminded of the rampant poverty among minority groups and lower classes, and when they celebrated Independence Day Festival, I noticed that an entire fifth of the country's population, namely its Palestinian citizens, was chronically absent from these spectacles of invented unity. It was during these early and non-academic examinations of publicly-funded projects that I first developed a critical stance towards what I thought were institutionalized and strongly biased spaces of cultural re-territorialization.

My criticism towards these ‘manufactured spaces’ of fake unity and misrepresentation, a key impetus in my desire to pursue this research, will no doubt re-surface once and again throughout the entire manuscript. As an Israeli citizen, a decade-long transmigrant, a geographer, and the father of two very inquisitive second generation migrants, I felt compelled to look more carefully at the process by which these spaces of re-territorialization were constructed by the Israeli state and, more importantly, the extent to which they were challenged by migrant communities. In doing so, I found it extremely difficult to conceal my criticism towards the state in general and its projects of re-territorialization in particular. While I did not object to these projects as a matter of principle, I felt that the gross misconstruing embedded in many of them was simply deceptive and potentially harmful (especially those aimed at second generation migrants). Nevertheless, in my conversations with both government officials and transmigrants, I have tried to be upfront about my own biases towards these projects. To my surprise, the vast majority of migrants I have interviewed were well-aware of these misrepresentations yet felt they were necessary in order for the projects to succeed in re-territorializing Israeli identities and, ultimately, bodies. As one of my informants commented nonchalantly, “don’t you think we know what they [representatives of the state] are trying to do? This whole thing of ‘maintaining the ties with migrants’ is just a code name for trying to convince as many of us as possible to ‘go back home’ as they call it...and of course to do that they must present a rosy picture...its part of the game and we have to play along”. One of the things I discovered in the course of this research is that migrants are indeed willing to ‘play along’, but only to a certain point beyond which they defy the

state-imposed rules and attempt to set new ones. In a sense, then, many migrants have adopted an equally critical stance towards these projects.

A second issue has to do with my long-time tendency to evade *any* organized communal affiliation. As such, despite my fairly long residence in the US, I have never made any serious attempt to get involved in the Israeli or Jewish community in either New York or Tucson. And while many of my friends in both cities were/are of Israeli origin, I have often rejected their pleas that I get more involved in Israel-related and other communal projects. One of my objectives in leaving Israel, I reminded them, was to experience other places and peoples and explore other parts of my identity. Ironically, the current research forced me to change somewhat my behavioral patterns (albeit temporarily) as I often found myself immersed in the all-too-familiar Israeli milieu. Many of my interviews were conducted in Israeli restaurants and coffee shops in Los Angeles where the vast majority of patrons were Hebrew speakers. In addition, most of my hosts during the period of field research were Israeli migrants who generously shared their houses (along with their time and opinions) with me. In fact, in the past eighteen months I formed new friendships with migrants who agreed to be interviewed for this research. In the process of the data analysis I have tried desperately to separate my personal feelings towards these and other migrants from my professional opinions concerning their engagement in some of the practices described. I hope I have been successful.

CHAPTER 2

STATES, MIGRANTS AND THE RE-TERRITORIALIZATION OF IDENTITIES: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

How are cultural practices used by states to re-territorialize their migrants' identities? How do these practices and the ensuing interaction between state agents and migrants produce new spaces of extra-territorial citizenship and identity? These two questions, which provide the framework within which the current research is situated, have become eminently important in an era of increasing cultural/economic globalization and transnational spatial mobility. Their importance stems from the fact that as larger than ever numbers of people migrate from, yet remain inextricably linked to, their countries of origin, their lives become embedded in the changing socio-cultural spaces of multiple national territories. By the same token, these extra-territorial spaces of cultural identity are also significantly influenced by the national policies devised by sending state governments and the subsequent deployment of cultural programs geared towards migrant communities. Programs exposing first, second, and sometimes, third generation migrants to cultural practices produced in the homeland, I therefore argue, significantly contribute to the production of extra-territorial spaces frequented by migrants – and, ultimately – their identities. What I am suggesting is that we think of the production of extra-territorial spaces and identities as a process simultaneously involving transnationalism from above (state-led) *and* transnational practices initiated and deployed by migrant communities themselves. By juxtaposing state-led efforts at culturally re-territorializing migrants and migrants' practices of what can be termed 'cultural self re-

territorialization' we can get a clearer understanding of the mutual relationship between sending states and migrants.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a coherent theoretical framework that juxtaposes theories of state restructuring in the face of globalization and theories of transnational migration. With some notable exceptions (Massey, 1999; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003), the (sending) state has been largely missing from the literature on transnationalism in general and transnational spaces in particular (Pries, 2001). By 'bringing the state back in'¹¹ to theories of transnational migration, this chapter seeks to deepen our understanding of the pivotal role that continues to be played by the state in the production of extra-territorial spaces and identities. In particular, this chapter challenges the long-held theoretical assumption that the nation-state is significantly undermined by global forces of globalization and argues that it has been simply re-adjusting, strategically deploying its resources to re-assert human and material resources long thought to have lied outside its territorial boundaries. It further argues that this strategic state reformation capitalizes on migrants' already existing transnational practices aimed at reconnecting with the sending state and society. The interaction between the state-led and migrant-led re-territorialization practices produce new extra-territorial spaces which this research seeks to explore.

To elucidate this point, I begin by presenting a body of literature that emphasizes the (spatial) restructuring of state power in the era of globalization in order to remain

¹¹ Skocpol, T. (1985) 'Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research', in P.B. Evans et al., eds, *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3-37.

competitive in controlling resources, both human and non-human. Deploying a conceptual framework of state power that evades absolutist territorial boundedness helps me develop the argument that re-territorialization (alongside re-scaling and re-bordering) has been fundamental to states' efforts to re-position themselves vis-à-vis their migrant communities abroad. I then continue to theorize re-territorialization as a social construct aimed at the homogenization of cultural spaces and identities. In so doing, I wish to make the point that – whether in the national or transnational context – re-territorialization is best understood as a social construct which functions at once to arrest the in-group differences (e.g., 'we are all Israelis, despite our different territorial status') and highlight the social boundaries that separate it from the outside (e.g., 'as Israelis, we fundamentally differ from Americans/British/Canadians in the following ways'). In this context I build on Laclau & Mouffe's (1985) theorization of social formation and the process of articulation through which hegemonic entities (e.g., state apparatuses) discursively construct the subject (e.g., transnational migrant) and fixate her identity around nodal points that are limited in scope (e.g., territoriality). In line with their argument regarding the 'openness of the social' and the hegemonic weakness in the face of 'the constant overflowing of every discourse' I conceptualize re-territorialization as an incomplete process of everyday interaction between state agents and subjects in which social formations (e.g., national identity, citizenship) gets deployed and negotiated yet remain forever fragmented and fluid.

I then proceed to theorize re-territorialization more narrowly as a state strategy geared towards the 'capture' of mobile groups (nomads, in/out migrants, refugees). My main

concern is to show that re-territorialization has been used by states as a strategy to ‘tame’ mobile groups who were traditionally seen as uprooted and therefore portrayed as a potential challenge to the state and its idea of territorial fixity (Creswell, 2002). As Chapter 3 shows, since Israel’s *raison d’etra* has been the ingathering of Jewish exiles to one bounded territory (*Zion* or *Eretz Yisrael*¹²), (re)-territorialization has been a discursive and practical strategy from the early days of the Zionist enterprise. Directed originally at diverse mobile groups (e.g., Holocaust survivors, *Mizrahim*¹³), re-territorialization has more recently been deployed towards Israeli migrants in an attempt to suppress their so-called transnational identities and re-instill a stronger sense of national identity. The production of extra-territorial spaces (that is, state spaces outside state territory), I argue, is a pre-requisite for the entire project of cultural re-territorialization as it allows the state to reach out to migrants in their new locales.

The chapter’s last section directly engages with theories of transnational migration, focusing primarily on the quickly emerging literature on transnational politics and, more generally, the reciprocal relations between sending states and transnational migrants. Its main objective is to show that for a variety of reasons (economic, political, and cultural) re-territorialization of migrants’ - and other diasporic groups’ - identities has become a strategy undertaken by some migration-sending countries in the recent past. It further shows how the institutionalization of these re-territorialization projects have led to the emergence of new transnational spaces of interaction in which re-interpretation of key terms like citizenship, loyalty, and identity is unraveled. The chapter concludes with a

¹² Literally, the Land of Israel

¹³ Jewish migrants originating from the Arab and Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

theorization of transnational practices ‘from below’ as migrant-led projects of self-reterritorialization. I suggest that these projects are carried out by transnational migrants who are seeking to re-connect with the homeland, yet refuse to use the routes offered by the state. Thus, for example, as Chapter 6 shows, the Israeli Festival in Los Angeles, a community-led effort to celebrate the State’s Independence Day ‘just like in Israel’ began as an alternative to the formal and hegemonic ceremony organized by the local chapter of the Jewish Federation. Largely bypassing the state and its subsidiaries, the Festival has ushered Israeli transmigrants their quest to secure a space through which to show their support to the homeland while, simultaneously, redefining the duties and rights associated with Israeli citizenship.

Globalization and the Restructuring of State Power

The importance and roles of the nation-state feature prominently in the current debate on the extent and impact of globalization. Early concerns of ‘the end of the nation state’ (Ohmae, 1996) or ‘the withering away’ of the state (Parekh, 1990; Frydman & Rapaczynski, 1994; Mooers & Sears, 1992) and its loss of control (Sassen, 1996) over various socio-cultural affairs (Joppke, 1998; Morley & Robins, 1995; Power & Hewitt, 1998), territorial sovereignty (Rosecrane, 1996), and financial markets (Cable, 1995; Rodrik, 2000) have given way to a more cautious approach that stresses the vitality of the state and its centrality in managing the contemporary socio-cultural and political-economic affairs of the impacts and implications of globalization (Beynon & Dunkerley, 2000, Buelens, 1999; Sassen, 2006) Concurrently, arguments have been advanced acknowledging the fact that the rapid growth of regional economies, multi/trans-national

corporations, and a global civil society are exerting tremendous pressure on the nation-state to share the field of power with them as well as other, equally dominant entities (Evans, 1997; Hirst & Thompson, 1996; Mann, 1997; Weiss, 1997). In a highly interconnected sphere, it has been noted, the nation-state is but one – albeit important – of many organizations pursuing its globally-defined interests. As Castells convincingly argues,

“...the nation-state is increasingly submitted to a more subtle, and more troubling, competition from sources of power that are undefined, and sometimes indefinable. These are networks of capital, production, communication, crime, international institutions, supranational military apparatuses, non-governmental organizations, transnational religions, and public opinion movements. And below the state, there are communities, tribes, localities, cults, and gangs. So, while nation-states do continue to exist, and they will continue to do so in the foreseeable future, they are, and they will increasingly be, *nodes of a broader network of power* (1997: 304; Italics in text).

Playing within a denser field of power notwithstanding, a growing number of globalization theorists contend that in the quest for greater influence in the international arena, nation-states have had to re-invent themselves by selectively re-structuring their institutional and legal apparatuses (Jessop, 1990). Strange (1996), for example, argues that three important shifts have taken place in the re-distribution of state power; first, power has shifted upwards, from less to more powerful states (e.g., those with improved regional and/or global reach); second, power has shifted sideways from nation-states to financial markets and other non-state institutions (e.g., international aid organizations); third, a certain amount of state power has ‘evaporated’ since it is no longer necessary.

Guarnizo and Smith (1998) theorize a fourth, downward shift through which state power as 'leaking' to sub-national entities located 'below' the nation-state. Theorists see these effectively 'destabilizing' forces embedded in the highly localized levels of the informal economy, the sub-national social group and/or the grassroots activist community, all of which constitute potential 'spaces of resistance' (Pile, 1997; Sharp, Routledge, Philo & Paddison, 2000) capable of countering the long-conceived hegemony of the nation-state and its bureaucratic apparatus. They further argue that these sub- or trans-national communities often compete with the nation-state as the ultimate source of individual identification, which further weakens its capacity to govern effectively.

Inevitably, then, in order to remain effective within this new array of highly fragmented power, nation-states were compelled to undergo a massive process of re-structuring, at the end of which they will have re-asserted certain, more or less traditional, functions and renounced others. Held (2000) convincingly argues that we ought to speak of the *transformation* of state power rather than its decline or utter loss. Indeed, he declares that,

"The power, authority and operations of national governments are changing but not all in one direction. The entitlement of states to rule within circumscribed territories (sovereignty) is far from on the edge of collapse, although the practical nature of this entitlement – the actual capacity of states to rule – is changing its shape. A new regime of government and governance is emerging and displacing traditional conceptions of state power as an indivisible, territorially exclusive form of public power. Far from globalization leading to 'the end of the state', it is leading to a range of government and governance strategies and, in some fundamental respects, a more activist state" (p. 394).

The continuing significance and resilience of the nation-state is illustrated through cases of liberal democracies which have continued to steer social and economic policy quite effectively in the face of globalization, re-adjusting as they may, to pressures exerted by global capital. Weiss (2003), for example, vehemently critiques the so-called 'globalization-as-constraint' school, highlighting instead 'the enabling face' of globalization. She puts forward a compelling framework that 'brings domestic institutions back' into the state vs. global forces debate. Her framework is centered on three interrelated arguments concerning the welfare state's capacity to withstand and resist the adverse effects of globalization. First, owing to such traditional policy tools available (still) to most national administrations, especially in the more developed parts of the world, she suggests that - contrary to gloomy predictions by early theorists - states still enjoy significant maneuvering room in their counter-globalization, welfare-related efforts. Taxation and welfare spending, along with traditional tools of economic regulation (e.g., protection of nascent industrial niches) could still be used by states to shield their respective labor forces and economic sectors. Second, she submits that it is precisely 'globalization pressures' (e.g., transnational capital's constant threat to exit) that generate the much needed intervention on the part of national governments. Transnational capital, pollution, and terror are seen merely as 'wake-up calls' to nation-states and their legal and institutional framework. Finally, she contends that the maneuvering room should be seized by national state institutions to "respond to new challenges and accomplish new tasks, thus softening, neutralizing, or exaggerating the potentially constraining effects of global markets" (Ibid, p. 27-8).

In evaluating Weiss's approach one must critique her formulation of the modern state as a set of domestic mechanisms that act in concert and possess an equal will (and institutional capacity) to effectively counter pressures exerted by the forces of globalization. Rather than theorizing the state as an ensemble of cohesive institutions that act in concert and are driven by the same political-economic interests I suggest a conceptualization that focuses on the fragmented, often conflicting nature (and performance) of domestic state institutions and the cultural practices they engage in. Following Jessop (1990), I am advancing a line of argument that sees the state as lacking functional unity and/or organizational coherence in terms of institutional arrangements. While the state is an amalgam of emergent, contingent, contested, and unstable struggles between opposed socio-political forces, "it is through the mobilization and consolidation of 'state projects' (which attempt to integrate state activities around a set of coherently-articulated agendas) that the image of the state as a unified organizational entity ('state effects') can be projected into civil society" (Jessop, 1990: 211). Thus, while the narratives used by various state agents - and the extent to which they deploy often conflicting practices - are clearly a symptom of the contested nature of the state, they ought to be looked at as part of the same national project of cultural re-territorialization, which itself renders the Israeli state with an imaginary unity in the eyes of its diasporic subjects. I now turn to an elaboration of Jessop's state theory as it guides my subsequent articulation of the fragmented functioning of the Israeli state among its diasporic communities.

The State as a Fragmented Set of Agencies: A Jessopian Approach

Bob Jessop's conceptualization of the capitalist state grew out of his critique of earlier Marxist theoreticians, particularly Nicos Poulantzas (1968; 1969; 1978) and Ralph Miliband (1969; 1970; 1973). Arguing that the state is located on 'the terrain of the social formation' and, therefore, an exhausting analysis of its nature cannot stop at economic conditions and class relations, Jessop suggested that "state power is a complex social relation that reflects the changing balance of social forces in a determinate conjuncture" (1982:221). While he did not deny the possibility that state power could be controlled by and serve the class interests of capitalists as Marxist theoreticians have traditionally argued, he emphasized that this is a theoretical possibility that does not always materialize. State power is thus not automatically an instrument in the hands of capitalists, but only "to the extent that it creates, maintains, or restores the conditions required for capital accumulation" (Ibid). More relevant to the current research is Jessop's theorization of the state as a non-essentialized entity lacking any functional unity. His assertion regarding the non-cohesive nature of the state stands in sharp contrast, for example, to Miliband's state-system, a bureaucratic ensemble comprised of the key institutional clusters (governmental apparatus, administrative apparatus, coercive apparatus, judicial, and sub-national entities). "An institutionally-specific form of social relations which constitute itself distinctly from dominant capitalist interests" (1990:141), the state comprises a plurality of institutions whose unit is not pre-given, but is rather contingent upon various political constellations.

Early in his theory Jessop cautions against seeing the state as a set of unified and fixed institutions. The ‘state-form’, an institutionally-incoherent and functionally-disorganized entity attempts to mitigate the conflicting demands put upon it by a wide array of social groups and interests. Hard-pressed to make sense of nascent social (class and other) conflicts and in attempt to render a set of cohesive policies, the state mobilizes what he calls ‘state projects’ in order to project a unified institutional image onto civil society. State projects are carefully-chosen, strategic initiatives (e.g., cultural re-territorialization) conceived by distinct bodies in the state-form – hence their sometimes contradictory rationales and objectives - to reduce tensions among social groups by allowing them to realize *some* of their interests. Jessop notes that these strategic initiatives are *inherently selective* in that they always tend to prioritize certain group interests over other. Thus, mobilizing the state-form towards certain projects but not others not only favors particular social interests while neglecting others, but also re-produces state structures and provide them with additional resources that will be used to subdue subsequent social struggles. Social forces and interests should not in and of themselves be seen as essential and fixed either; rather, are “constituted in parts through the forms of representation and intervention and are themselves objects of political transformation”. It is this flexible nature of social forces (and the constant clash of interests that it produces), Jessop contends, that allows the state to retain its ‘relative autonomy’ from them while reproducing itself as a site, generator, and product of various political strategies. Yet, despite this alleged relative autonomy granted to the state-form in this relational theory, Jessop warns against seeing the state as a separate entity from civil society. As he clarified in a recent article, this amounts to a reductionist theoretical fallacy since

“It assumes there are clear and unambiguous boundaries between state apparatus and society, state managers and social forces, and state power and societal power. It implies that the state (or the political system) and society are mutually exclusive and self-determining, each can be studied in isolation, and the resulting analyses added together to provide a complete account. This reifies and renders absolute what are really emergent, partial, unstable, and variable distinctions. It rules out hybrid logics such as corporatism or policy networks; divisions among state managers due to ties between state organs and other social spheres; and many other forms of overlap between state and society” (2001:6).

Jessop’s theorization of the state as “an institutional ensemble of forms or representation, internal organization, and intervention” (1982: 228) which interpellates and organizes particular social interests while rejecting and disorganizing others by inviting them (or not) to take part in hegemonic projects is particularly useful in examining Israeli state projects of cultural re-territorialization and the extra-territorial spaces of interaction they give rise to for several reasons. First, it provides useful means of analysis of the discursive and practical linkages that exist *among* state agencies at various scales (e.g., Ministry of Immigrants Absorption, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consulate General) and *between* those and other pertinent social forces (e.g., the Council of Israeli Community, Israel Day Festival Board of Directors). These linkages reveal a great deal about the incongruent nature of the discourse – and practices – that guide the work of any of these groups. Thus, for example, the rupture that exists between policy-making in Jerusalem and implementation of local projects by regional coordinators in Los Angeles can be nicely attributed to the different social interests each of these entities attempts to fulfill. Secondly, the inherently blurry boundaries between state agencies and social groups that

the theory highlights is fundamental to what I term ‘the state in the community’ mode according to which no real separation exists between state representatives and migrants at various local diasporic settings. While constructing sophisticated patterns of intervention in the daily lives of Israeli migrants such that its agents blend in the local community, the institutional ensemble that is the Israeli state-form reproduces itself as a structure of formality that stands apart from the community (e.g., delivering speeches at the opening ceremony of the Independence Day Festival secures the Consul General’s position as an incumbent of the state and at the same time embeds him in the community of which he claims to be an integral part) while, simultaneously, interpellates its members and subjects them to cultural hegemonic practices. Public emissaries in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco are the embodiment of this dual statist-social position that Jessop describes. Thirdly, cultural re-territorialization are hegemonic state projects insofar as they serve to strengthen the grip of the ensemble in extra-territorial spaces, interpellate some (‘the best and the brightest’) and reject others (‘those who have nothing to offer’). The fragmented nature of the Israeli community in Los Angeles, I argue, could be partly attributed to these inherently selective state projects to which only a fairly small part of the community is invited. The communal disarray and ‘social openness’ must therefore be analyzed in relation to these state projects. Finally, while Jessop avoids spatial rhetoric, his relational theory is fundamentally spatial in that it takes into consideration the various sites in which hegemonic projects advance and/or limit conflicts “within and among the various branches of the state apparatus” and those in which “management of resistances which counterpose particular interests to the general interest” takes place. In this sense, the relational theory is particularly suitable to an

analysis of the cultural re-territorialization project as a set of symbolic and material state spaces in which state and social agents negotiate the meaning of key concepts such as Israeli (extra-territorial) identity and citizenship. I now turn to a theorization of the changing conditions under which state spaces are produced and maintained under conditions of globalization.

Restructuring State Spaces

Since the mid-1990s, a large number of theoretical and empirical studies have been published that document the effects of state restructuring on welfare policies (Burrows & Loader, 1994; Hamnett, 1996; Pierson, 2001), regions and local states' economic development (Hudson, 1998; Jones, 1998), urban politics (Jessop, Peck & Tickell, 1999), health-care (Kearns & Joseph, 1997) and housing provisions (Milbourne, 1998). Geographers, in particular, have been grappling with a new theoretical framework that articulates power restructuring and its far-reaching effects on the spatiality of nation-states. Arguing that a new, more flexible conceptualization of state power is needed, many (mostly political) geographers have set out to study the spatial strategies utilized by malleable state institutions in response to externally-conceived challenges. Since, as Henry Lefebvre (2004) argued, the state is spatially organized to control social relations, contemporary practices of state readjustment and power reconfiguration are invariably embedded in a process of spatial restructuring. For Lefebvre, states are producing (and are produced) through their relations with three distinct types of space; physical space, or national territory is a material space that is created and altered "by the networks, circuits and flows that are established within it" (p. 84); social space as an array of

interdependent, hierarchically ordered and value-laden social institutions (e.g., family, school, church) that form the basis of a networked society; and mental space which “includes the representations of the state that people construct – confused or clear, directly experienced or conceptually elaborated” (p.85). Spaces produced by the state are political, “organized according to a rationality of the identical and the repetitive that allows the state to introduce its presence, control and surveillance in the most isolated corners” (p. 86).

Under global condition, therefore, political spaces have had to be restructured in order to enable the state to retain, to the extent possible, its control over social relations. As Eric Swyngedouw (1996:1502) notes, “Spatialised interventions are, consequently, one of the strategies where state tactics to control and mediate social relations among individuals, classes, class fractions and social groups in the context of the maelstrom of perpetual shifts in the global economy are played out”. Spatialized interventions become all the more important an instrument at the disposal of central state administrations in a world in which fluid definitions of nation, citizenship and identity are the rule rather than the exception. In addition, the resort to spatialized interventions proves highly effective in a global environment that sees ‘the explosion of spaces’ (Brenner, 2004). Not surprisingly, then, state restructuring entails restructured spatialities, as the latter are instrumental in states’ quest to either assert or relinquish control over human and natural resources.

Broadly speaking, the theorization of the spatial reconfiguration of states and state power has progressed along three main axes (Brenner, 2004), namely the politics of scalar (re)-

construction (Smith, 1992; Delaney & Leitner, 1997; Swyngedouw, 1997; Leitner, 2003; Marston, 2000; Marston, Jones III & Woodward., 2005), territorial re-configuration (Swyngedouw, 1992; Surazska et al, 1997; Brenner, 1997; 1998; 1999; Ansell, 2004) or re-territorialization, and the symbolic and practical demarcation of national borders (Newman & Paasi, 1998; Sletto, 2002; Newman, 2003; Purcell & Nevins, 2005) or re-bordering. Brenner (2004) argues that global capital has precipitated new forms of modern political institutions ('statehood'), the spaces of which have been fundamentally re-configured. He divides these re-structured state spaces along three inter-related axes, namely *re-territorialization*, *rebordering*, and *rescaling*. By re-territorialization he refers to the constantly shifting and dynamic set of institutional strategies that allow state agencies to spread out and extend their control over goods, services, and social groups that were traditionally conceived as situated beyond their jurisdictional reach. Re-bordering is defined as a set of practices – semiotic, symbolic, and political-economic – through which state power is deployed and resisted to (re)-produce socially constructed national boundaries. Finally, the rescaling of statehood refers to a set of flexible strategies through which a new and configured institutional hierarchy is created in order to pursue a range of political and economic interests. These three processes constitute the geography of state spatiality, which, Brenner contends

“must be viewed as a presupposition, an arena, and an outcome of continually evolving political strategies. It is not a thing, a container, or platform, but a socially produced, conflictual and dynamically changing matrix of sociospatial interaction. The spaces of state power are not simply ‘filled’, as if they were pre-given territorial containers. Instead, state spatiality is actively produced and transformed through regulatory projects and

sociopolitical struggles articulated in diverse institutional sites and at a range of geographical scales” (p. 76).

Overall, processes of spatial restructuring have been theorized as attempts made by state institutions at various scales to re-assert some formerly-held spaces and relinquish others in the name of economic efficiency and other political interests. Yet, despite a general consensus over the emerging altered spatialities of nation-states, critiques have been put forward that argue against what some have interpreted as an economic over-emphasis. Marston (2000), for example, maintains that in order to understand the nation-state’s (re)-construction of space and scale, it is not enough to theorize economic production; instead, following Lefebvre (1991), she calls for a more thorough investigation of the household scale and the role played by the re-production of social relations. Similarly, Purcell (2002) critiques the general tendency to interpret state restructuring as following directly from the changes in the global economy, which he attributes to the dominance of regulation theory (and its role in explaining the endurance of the capitalist mode of production despite inherent contradictions). Instead of fetishizing the state’s role as the ultimate guardian of class interests and capital accumulation, Purcell advocates a more careful attention to processes by which the state legitimizes itself in the eyes of its citizens. He notes that, “in addition to economic imperatives, the state is strongly concerned to maintain the political legitimacy of the state-citizen relations” (p. 286); this process of legitimation (a concept which he borrows from Habermas, 1976) is accomplished through the state’s fulfilling of citizens’ main expectations, namely the provision of a basic basket of collective consumption goods, protection of political rights, protection from physical harm, and the production of a sense of cohesive community of

interest. Spatial restructuring, he concludes, is not always a state strategy to facilitate (indeed, accelerate) the investment of global capital in specific places; often, it is carried out in an attempt to strengthen the legitimacy of the regime in the eyes of its primary constituencies by bettering the provision of public goods or services.

Of the three aforementioned spatial strategies undertaken by states, it is re-territorialization that has received the least attention from political geographers¹⁴. With few notable exceptions (O'Tuathail & Luke, 1994; Pringle, 1997; Dianteill, 2002), re-territorialization in general and re-territorialization of identities in particular has been significantly under-researched and, more importantly, misconstrued as a strategy pertaining only (or at least mostly) to economic functions and/or environmental resources. The symbolic and practical restructuring of territories by national governments in order to pursue other, non-economic interests has been therefore poorly documented and understood.

In the next section I do the following: first, briefly sketch the theoretical evolution of the concept of territoriality and its salient role in the social construction of the nation-state; second - based on recent works of critical political geographers (and others) - present an alternative to what is seen as fixed and finite understanding of territory (and territoriality); finally, theorize cultural (and other forms) of re-territorialization as processes pursued by both migration-sending countries and their transnational communities.

¹⁴ A quick survey of *Political Geography* and *Geopolitics*, the sub-discipline's two flagship journals yielded only a handful of articles on territoriality since the mid-1990 (Ackelson, 1999; Ben-Porat, 2005; Cox, 2001; Hudson, 1998; Paasi, 1998).

The Territorial Base of State Power

Territory has long been considered the corner stone of nation-states' claim to legitimate sovereignty (Penrose, 2002). In his classic 'Economy and Society', Max Weber (1976) introduced the term 'political community' to denote a community that is constituted by territory, the availability of physical force for its domination, and social (meaning not simply economic) relations among the people inhabiting the territory. As the most important possession of political communities, territory "...must at any time be in some way determinable, but it need not be constant or definitely limited" and the persons "are those who are in the territory permanently or temporarily" (Ibid, p. 901). The primacy of territory to political communities in general (and to national identities in particular) has since been understood as inextricably linked to states' capacity to pursue their geopolitical interests (Ben-Yehuda, 2004). In fact, it was the clearly-bounded, safely guarded territory that enabled (or at least advanced) the emergence of the current political community in the first place, and was often used by national administrations, or parts thereof, to elicit attachment to the nation or other imagined communities (Anderson, 1991). Yet, for decades, territory (much like space and the state) had been conceptualized as a container within which human interactions take place. It was not until the 1990s that the concept re-surfaced and received a whole new, socially-constructed meaning by critical theorists (Johnston, 2001; Hudson, 1998). Territoriality, the (re)-making of territories, was conceptualized as a viable strategy deployed selectively by political actors in pursuit of domination.

In his pioneering theory of human territoriality, geographer Robert Sack (1983; 1986) defined territoriality as “*the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationship, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area*” (p. 19, italics in text). His definition contains three related aspects; the classification by units of distinguished areas (e.g., the workplace as an area separated from the home); a form of communication by setting a boundary, either symbolic or physical (e.g., posting a sign reading ‘for residents only’ on the entrance gate to a gated suburban community informs others of the territorial boundary); and, an attempt to enforce control over access to a specific zone and its resources (human, natural). Alluding to the social construction of territoriality, Sack argues that territorial relationships are inherently embedded in more or less particular social contexts, and therefore in complex webs of power relations. It is these power relations that ultimately define the nature of territorial behavior and the extent to which various individuals and groups will be granted or denied access to any given territory. In contrast to previous attempts by geographers to conceptualize human territoriality (Gold, 1982), Sack’s definition as a strategy deployed by individuals, firms, and other entities has paved the way to a more fluid, socially-constructed understanding of territory and its usages.

Its conceptual merits notwithstanding, Sack’s theory is of little use in terms of shedding light on the actual power relations within which territorial systems are embedded. While clearly he sees territoriality as part of an overall system of social control of which states are part (and often coordinate), his main interest in surveying historical models of territoriality under various economic systems - from hunting/gathering societies to

capitalism – is exploring the interconnections between forms of social organization and territoriality. Much less is revealed about territorial strategies deployed by social agents in their pursuit of political/economic interests. Surprisingly missing is a conceptualization of territorialization as a salient mechanism through which nation-states have imposed/relinquished control over a wide range of social groups.

More recent accounts of territoriality and state power acknowledge the trans/inter/multi-national nature of postmodern territoriality (Ackelson, 1999; Paasi, 1998). Peter Taylor (1994; 1995) critiques the traditional links between territory and politics and culture arguing that they have led to ‘the politics of absolute spaces’, according to which political power was seen to be concentrated at a single geographical scale. He advances an alternative notion of territorial relativism to denote a distribution of power beyond the state in order to evade the limitations of territorial boundedness. In a more recent contribution, Taylor (2000) argues that the use of territoriality is still by far the most important strategy at the disposal of the nation-state and rejects notions of territorial decline. He does, however, note that processes of economic, cultural and political globalization have caused the ‘territorial container’ to leak, such that the cultural boundaries of the state gravitate towards smaller-scale units, namely devolution to local and other sub-national communities.

In a series of articles in the mid-1990s, Agnew (1994; Agnew & Corbridge, 1995) advocates a theoretical shift away from the ‘territorial trap’, which he defines as “thinking and acting as if the world were made up entirely of states exercising power

over blocks of space that between them exhaust the politico-geographical form of world politics” (2003: 53). The territorial trap according to Agnew is comprised of three interrelated theoretical underpinnings that have dominated International Relations (IR) theories in the post-war era (see also Agnew, 2005). The first one recognizes that clearly bounded territorial spaces are an imperative to the survival of the nation-state. The second argues that a clear distinction (theoretical and practical) needs to be made between states’ domestic and foreign affairs. The third acknowledges that modern states are geographical containers of social and political affairs. Vehemently critiquing IR theorists such as Kenneth Waltz (1979) and Robert Keohane (1984) for their fixed understanding of territory (and therefore of state power), Agnew advocates a new spatiality of territorially-limited power. Applying a Foucauldian notion of power, he argues that in a globalizing environment power should be understood as a social force emanating from an entire network of territorialized states *as well as* de-territorialized social groups and trans-national corporations. While admitting, as many globalization theorists have, that nation-states remain a key player in economic and geopolitical affairs primarily due to their regulative capacities, Agnew contends that the de-territorialized nature of many multi-national corporations, transnational NGOs, diasporic communities, and regional economic associations (to name only a few influential actors in the new global arena) subverts the territorial basis of most nation-states. The global system of power, he concludes, once thought to be exclusively embedded in the territorial-sovereign bureaucratic apparatus of the Weberian state (‘from above’) now increasingly emanates from a loosely connected web of social practices. The result is a non-sovereign, largely de-territorialized conception of power characterized by

“...multiple points at which consent and resistance come into play in expanding and restricting the interplay between states and subjects, *and hence in defining the state’s effective territoriality: how well it dominates its claimed block of space.* The spatial monopoly of power exercised by a state is not and cannot be total when its power derives from that given up by and potentially retaken by others” (2003: 56; Italics added).

The contested nature of territoriality in the globalizing, post-Cold War era is also discussed by Luke (1996). He argues for a disjointed notion of territoriality, “in which complex pluralizations full of many various sites create the places where heteronomous non-statal actions unfold” (p. 504). Despite states’ recurrent attempts to territorialize (or govern, as he prefers to call it) the myriad social practices and functions within their sovereign territories, they seldom succeed as the former leap in and out of national territories, creating effective ‘multitorialities’, non-state spaces that are either ungovernable or governed by other non-state ensembles. As territories “branch into fractal nets, webbing out into many un-stated autonomous spheres of Sovran power” (Ibid), hierarchies of different territorial dimensions and capabilities ensue the articulate a whole new network of power.

Taylor (1996) summarizes this theoretical shift, arguing that globalization marks the end of ‘territorial absolutism’ and signals the transformation from a static notion of territory to one that is prone to constant change. As national interests are never fixed and fail to conform to the whims of any one state agency or social class, so do territorial strategies, which play an instrumental role in bringing about changes at one scale or another. As

Newman (2006: 89) puts it, “Territory is dynamic in the sense that territorial change creates new spatial realities, which are, in turn, fed back into the political and decision-making processes. The construction of settlements, the superimposition of borders of separation, or – on a totally different scale – the allocation of development resources to one region on the expense of another, creates new socio-spatial landscapes, which become rooted in reality”.

The current research follows this flexible conceptualization of territoriality as a state strategy which allows it to pursue diverse geopolitical, socio-economic and cultural resources within and beyond its sovereign space. In a fiercely competitive, globalizing environment, producing and sustaining state spaces (and immersing resources within them, either human or material) beyond state territory is a strategy undertaken by virtually all national governments. The production of extra-territorial state spaces, I argue, is in line with Agnew’s (and others’) notion of territorially-limited power, as it significantly downplays the importance of the territorial basis of state power, underscoring instead its ability to strategically transcend international boundaries and collaborate with de- and extra-territorial groups (e.g., diasporic communities) in order to govern social relations. The primary indicator of success of the nation-state under this regime of flexible territoriality, I argue, is not the extent to which it succeeds in converting additional non-state to state spaces, but rather in its ability to quickly and efficiently reach the coveted resource in these newly converted spaces and re-assert it as legitimate. Thus, in the context of transnational migration, the production of new extra-territorial state spaces is never a project worth pursuing for the sake of acquiring new territories or simply reaching new resources; rather, creating new state spaces is only

worth the effort inasmuch as it accelerates the flow of the pertinent resources – be they migrants themselves, their remittances, or their homebound political support – into territorial state spaces. The key point is that while state interests are always territorial in the sense that they contribute to the well-being of a place-based community (e.g., the nation or parts thereof), their strategies under globalization are often extra-territorial allowing states to operate beyond national borders.

Following Edward Cohen (2001) I argue that states under globalization ought to be thought of as boundary-setting *and* maintaining institutions whose essential role is establishing clearer, more visible boundaries around activities and social groups which it seeks to govern. In an era of fuzzy, socially constructed borders (Paasi, 1998), states' attempts to restore some of their long-held functions are rooted in their capacity to re-territorialize certain people and activities and relinquish (or de-territorialize) others, regardless of their absolute location. In the context of human migration, I see re-territorialization as an attempt to (re)-produce state boundaries around an extra-territorial group whose growing political clout in international affairs is by now abundantly clear (Sheffer, 2003). This boundary reproduction “pre-requires” a process of social construction, by which transnational migrants are depicted as part of the in-group (chapter 4) and often targeted by a set of state-produced cultural practices (chapters 5 and 6). It is this process of socio-territorial construction that I wish to theorize in the following section.

(Re)-territorialization and the Social Construction of the Nation

In the context of the current study, restructured territoriality (or re-territorialization) is defined as a constantly shifting and dynamic set of institutional strategies that allow state agencies to extend or relinquish their control over various goods, services, and social groups based on their changing political interest. Re-territorialization, I submit, is a particularly critical strategy in a globalizing arena since it allows the state to claim authority over those outside its de-facto jurisdictional reach. Once the claim is recognized as valid, state agencies often proceed to formulate policies and programmatic initiatives that would allow them to re-shape extra-territorial identities. Alternatively, by choosing to restrict their 'space of influence', states retain the liberty to renounce responsibility hitherto claimed over human or natural resources. Conceptualized as such, re-territorialization is not concerned exclusively (nor primarily) with state territory *per se*, but rather with the changing relationship between territory, formal and/or effective membership in the nation, and state power. Put differently, re-territorialization is concerned with the changing spatialities of states that enable them to pursue different relationships with different social groups based on their conceived contribution to national interests, be they political or economic. As such, it is inextricably linked to the notion of de-territorialization, as Ó Tuathail (1998: 82) notes, "The problematic of de-territorialization is also the problematic of re-territorialization; it is not the presence or absence of state territoriality but its changing status, power and meaning in relationship to postmodern technological constellations, speed machines and global webs of capitalism".

One key aspect of re-territorialization as a state strategy is the malleability of state agencies and their capacity to adjust to quickly changing global conditions that affect their relations with any given group of people (e.g., labor migrants, ethnic minorities). It ought to be seen as a dual process of both boundary-erasing (e.g., by reaching out to transmigrants in their new places of residence the state undermines the old territorial divide between ‘yours’ and ‘ours’, ‘here’ and ‘there’) *and* boundary-setting (e.g., by producing extra-territorial spaces for transmigrants it links them to the nation, thus setting a new boundary around it). It is through the enactment of this dual, concurrent process that state interests (however broadly defined) remain safely protected by the demarcation of boundaries around what is legitimately ‘ours’, in order to clearly distinguish it from what is not (yet). Re-territorialization is therefore a process of instrumental and reversible approximation that allows states to include and exclude (people), allow and disallow (migration), incorporate and relinquish (control) based on perceived national interests at a given point in time/space.

Re-territorialization must not be understood as a one-sided state project; rather, it is equally important that we examine it from the subjects’ vantage point as well. In the context of human migration, as will be discussed later in this chapter, cultural re-territorialization also translates into the reconnecting of de- and extra-territorialized groups (e.g., ethno-national diasporas) to the more or less familiar cultural traditions of the homeland. As Lull (2000: 115) argues, for diasporic communities, cultural re-territorialization amounts to a process of cultural immersion in which, “popular culture products from ‘back home’, as well as local materials produced in the native language

and reflecting core cultural values from the homeland” become crucial for the inner solidarity of the group. Indeed, whether through the state or by subjects’ daily practices, the success of the re-territorialization project is contingent upon its ability to play down all those significant (e.g., ethnic, class) differences that inevitably exist within the de-territorialized group (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Suppression of differences denotes the rendering of an essentialized group, in which the inherent incongruence in group members’ identities is submerged in the name of a coherent and unified national identity¹⁵.

The linkages between an essentialized national territory and identity are made obvious through the presentation of a historical continuity between the two. To re-territorialize the nation (or parts thereof), it has been argued, states have essentialized the nation as a socially undifferentiated community whose link with the territory has been historical and continuous (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1987; 1991). Yet, as Gupta (1992) reminds us, the social construction of the nation and the re-territorialization of national identity involve the erasure of differences *and* their re-assertion,

“[N]ationalist narratives also acknowledge and sometimes celebrate difference. It needs to be emphasized that shaping union through difference is also a mode of creating subject positions for subordinate narratives. As a reinscription of narratives of community, nationalism does not so much erase existing narratives as *recast* their difference. The recognition that different ethnic groups, different locales, different communities and

¹⁵ Thus, for example, in the case of Israeli migrants in the US, the dominant state discourse downplays any sub-national identity markers such as ethnic origin and economic class and instead underscores the homogenizing trajectory that ‘they are all Israelis’.

religions each have their own role to play in the national project underlines their difference at the same time that it homogenizes and incorporates them” (p. 72).

This process of social formation that oscillates between similarities (or equivalence) and difference and aims to form subjects and limit identities to particular spaces has been neatly theorized by Laclau & Mouffe (1985). Their account - which seeks to explain the practices by which social meaning is constructed as fixed - begins with the assertion that social (subject) formation is a discursive process *par excellence*. By this they mean that it requires no a-priori or essential laws, but rather gets articulated through hegemonic practices. Subjects, therefore, “cannot be the origins of social relations...as all ‘experience depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility” (p. 115). Building on Althusser’s concept of *overdetermination* they argue that the social experience rests on constantly unstable and volatile meanings that cannot be fully captured by fixed categories; instead, the social forever oscillates between differences and equivalence (the denial of real differences). They go further in claiming that the social experience is forever incomplete, can never be fully realized in language and is destined to lie outside of it, in what they refer to as antagonism, namely the limits of the social. Since an ‘impossibility of closure’ is the normal status, namely “neither absolute fixity nor absolute non-fixity is possible” (p. 111) every social identity entertains a plurality of sometimes contradictory meanings that prevents it from being fully realized.

The plurality of meanings embedded in one’s social identity (e.g., in my case – an Israeli citizen, an American resident, a diasporic subject, a transnational migrant) is clearly an undesired situation from the standpoint of hegemonic forces (e.g., the nation-state).

Realizing that a final and total resolution of this plurality is beyond their sphere of influence, hegemonies seek to constitute a partial social unity that lies between the poles of difference and equivalence. Deploying discursive and other practices is the preferred hegemonic strategy to 'limit the social' and fixate it around particular signifiers. These signifiers, which Laclau & Mouffe term *nodal points*, are in fact privileged discursive points of partial fixation that is part of an overall process of *articulation*. Articulation, the authors argue, "*consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinite of the field of discursivity*" (p. 113; italics in text). This incessant process of articulation is never fully realized; Owing to the openness of the social, hegemonic forces are never entirely successful in limiting social identities and are instead forced to form them around partial and always temporary nodal points (race, ethnic origin, citizenship status). Social resistance, in turn, relies upon these discursive gaps to de-center hegemony and limit its influence to these fluid concentrations of power. The discursive construction of social identities (through articulation) around non-hegemonic forms of power is the most important goal of 'the democratic struggle'.

Applying Laclau & Mouffe's subject formation theoretical framework to the case of Israeli migrants, one could argue that the articulation is embedded in a twofold process of discursively constructing the subject. On the one hand, through denial of real internal differences ('equivalence' across social indicators such as ethnic origin, age, generation, occupation) the state attempts to limit migrants' social subjectivities and center them

around a single nodal point, namely territory. On the other hand, stressing the external differences between Israeli migrants and local Jews who lack the essentialized link to territory has allowed the state to widen the gap between the former and the latter, subjects and non-subjects, and paved the way to setting up unique, tailored cultural activities for extra-territorial state subjects. At the same time, the ‘openness of the social’ allows Israeli migrants to de-center the hegemonic grip and re-centering it around non-territorial nodal points. As chapter 5 illustrates, migrants have been successful in re-routing the discursive construction of the Israeli subject from territoriality to practices of citizenship. Thus, by resorting to non-hegemonic articulations of citizenship - that are based on the cultural practices rather than the physical presence in territory – Israeli migrants have managed to disrupt the long-standing discursive formation that marked presence in territory a pre-requisite for citizenship rights. capture or fixate their so-called fluid, transnational identity around a territorial nodal point. Projects of cultural re-territorialization are therefore a strategic tool in the hands of the state to discursively construct an Israeli subject in whose identity the territorial component plays a key role.

An example of this simultaneous erasure and underscoring of differences is the melting pot image, heavily drawn upon in the construction of the American (see Gordon, 1964) as well as Israeli (Smootha, 1978) nation. A salient discursive mechanism that celebrated the birth of the new, fused national subject, it has also been instrumental in delineating the different positions and narratives of the formerly heterogenic groups and in fixating their place in the socially produced ethno-racial hierarchy. In Israel, for example, the melting pot has been criticized as a set of two-edge hegemonic tools used by the Ashkenazi-

dominated state bureaucracy to 'Westernize' Middle Eastern Jews (and thus erase the so-called cultural differences between the two ethnic groups), while highlighting their innate socio-moral inferiority and attributing their lower economic status to it (See Chetrit, 2004; Shohat, 1988).

The creation of a homogenous territory that stands apart from 'other' territories is a social construct that was instrumental in the nation-building efforts. As Anderson (1991) and others (Williams and Smith, 1983; Smith, 1991) have pointed out, the discursive construction of homeland spaces – be they real or imaginary - was a project traditionally undertaken by national movements in their quest to solidify the nation's identity around one, clearly-bounded (and often culturally and religiously significant) territory. Leaders of the Zionist movement, for example, had invested considerable resources to socially reconstruct the link between the Zionist subject, which it saw as a new, and improved version of the diasporic Jew, and *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel), the Jews' ancestral land (Almog, 2000)¹⁶. This and other projects of re-construction often involve the deployment of various socio-spatial instruments (maps, museums, national censuses) aimed at depicting the territory as the nation's ancestral homeland (Bar-Gal, 1993). As Robert Kaiser notes, "Maps and other cartographic representations, motherland and fatherland images, symbolic national landscapes, and national monuments and commemoratives sites all work to nationalize space and territorialize the nation" (2002:232). Re-territorialization is, therefore, as much about political geography, namely demarcating imaginary territorial boundaries around those legitimate peoples and resources as it is

¹⁶ It is against this background that one must understand Theodore Hertzl's (the founder of political Zionism) 1898 book's title *Altneuland* (German for 'An Old New Land')

about cultural geography, the construction of a unified cultural identity, a set of shared meanings with which groups could readily identify and, indeed, perform (Marston, 2004). As Homi Bhabha eloquently argued, “In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative” (1990:145).

The practice of conceptualizing (re)-territorialization as a nation-building strategy aimed at (re)-inserting population groups into the socio-political spaces of one nation-state has encountered significant difficulties under the theoretical frameworks of globalization and transnational migration. In particular, it was argued that transnational migrants’ identities were conceived in sharp contrast to the territorial rootedness and fixity of the national subject whose allegiance to the nation, the state, and the territory were unequivocal (Creswell, 2002; 2006). Much of the literature on transnational migration in the passing decade has focused on the inherent tensions between migrants’ transnational identities and their sense of belonging (or lack thereof) to either territory (Fortier, 2000; Vertovec, 2001). In what follows, I argue that the re-territorialization of mobile groups has been a key state project that ushered in the creation of a territorially-fixed nation. Chapter 3 will further explicate this point, showing how the social construction of mobile Jewish groups (particularly Holocaust survivors and Middle Eastern Jews) as de-territorialized ‘others’ was instrumental in the process of their diasporic identity-erasure and their re-formation as born-again territorialized Zionists.

States and Mobile Groups: Taming the Unruly, Resisting Hegemony

Mobile people (including nomads, refugees, internally displaced, and international migrants) have traditionally been seen as posing a major threat to the territorial-sovereign and static nature of the nation-state. Their 'nomadic' character and inability - or unwillingness - to be rooted in one, fixed place and maintain linkages with one nation-state only was creating significant problems for the pursuit of national projects. The image of nations and cultures as rooted in a particular territory were endangered by these mobile populations whose attachment to places was at best loose. Tim Creswell (1997) argues that mobile groups have long been romanticized by social and cultural theorists as the embodiment of post-modern subjectivities. Nomads, travelers, tourists, migrants, refugees, and other 'placeless' populations were depicted as geographical deviants in that they failed to abide with the 'one place' equals 'one identity' rule. Groups engaging with multiple territories (nomads) or a non-organic territory (refugees) were seen as human aberrations, belonging everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Simultaneously, these groups were theorized as exotic 'others', defying in their existence the exclusiveness and boundedness of state spaces and national cultures. Due to their territorial misfit mobiles have been characteristically described as a significant threat to the wholeness of the nation-state. The latter, with its bounded territoriality and socially constructed image of cultural unity and congruence was seen as "the metaphorical enemy of the nomad, attempting to take the tactile space and enclose and bound it" (Creswell, 1997:364). It was the free-flowing and often unaccounted movements of the mobile group – not mobility altogether – which the hegemonic state was seeking to restrain and channel into properly-designed and monitored conduits.

As Lisa Malkki (1992) so brilliantly shows, the sedentary images (or metaphysics) of nations and cultures get articulated both discursively and through daily social practices. Consequently, uprootedness has been discursively constructed as a disorderly conduct, a moral, medical and political pathology that destabilizes the national (and natural) order of things. Rootedness in a territory has been therefore constructed as the solution to the pathological manifestations of mobility. As such, re-territorialization has long been considered a viable state strategy to impose a clear-cut territorial boundary around a population whose inherent mobility jeopardizes the stability of the nation-state and its institutions. Similarly, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) shrewdly observed that the primary role of states is to ‘striate’ their own space in order to control or capture the flows that take place. Coding, defining, bounding, and limiting smooth – or nomadic – spaces are all effective strategies of re-territorialization aimed at the de-territorialized groups. Migrants, along with rebels, rioters and revolutionaries represent in their account the forces of subordination, human flows that – if remaining loose and undetected – could eventually undermine the long-established hegemony of the territorial state. Re-territorializing these flows is imperative should states wish to maintain their hegemonic grip over the peoples within (and beyond) their sovereign space. There is a need, they conclude, “for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects and objects” (p. 386). Yet, the re-territorializing project of the state is far from being complete; the over-coding of movement, of flows, generates counter-flows, decoded countermovement that evades the state’s reach. Regardless of the nature of the de-coded objects (e.g., money, labor, or property), Deleuze and Guattari assert that the

state's apparatus of capture is never complete and always produces de-territorialized reactions. These unaccounted flows that manage to use the strictly enforced state territoriality are seen as inevitable byproducts that allow nomadic groups to reassert unclaimed spaces within the overall mandated territory.

In a similar fashion, Michelle de Certeau (1984), focusing on the production of urban space argues that people's daily practices of mobility pose a serious challenge to hegemonically planned and geometrically laid out urban spaces. Much like the nomadic resistance of Deleuze & Guattari, de Certeau sees urban pedestrians as the epitome of counter-hegemonic practices that threaten the well-rounded design of the city. A walk through the city is a re-interpretation of the hegemonic order upon which the spatialities of the state are contingent. A daily tactic undertaken by ordinary citizens and capable of undermining spatial order (strategy), walking becomes what James C. Scott (1990) termed 'the weapons of the weak'. Walking, though, alongside dwelling, moving, reading and other consumer practices, falls short of completely transforming the power relationship embodied in urban spaces; instead, they constitute "clever tricks of the 'weak' within the order established by the 'strong'" (p. 40). De Certeau presents a compelling theoretical framework for understanding the strategies deployed by states in their quest to control and channel mobile flows.

The challenge of mobile groups to the immobile state apparatus and its interpretations of space (which these theoretical accounts point to) has not disappeared altogether in the age of globalization, but rather changed tactics and patterns of operation. It is transnational

migrants (as well as internally displaced people and refugees), I wish to argue, that are the new face of threatening mobility under globalization (Creswell, 2002). It is their dual, in between status that presents both a challenge and an opportunity for states as they skillfully craft re-territorialization projects to re-shape their identity and re-connect them with place. The production of extra-territorial state spaces is thus instrumental in fixing transnational migrants' identities and bodies and re-incorporating them into the nation. The fear of fluidity and mobility that may stir migrants – their political support, financial resources, and other more or less tangible contributions – away from the sending state lies at the heart of the politically-motivated re-territorialization project. It is not, as Creswell (2006: 49) argues, “[T]hat the state opposes mobility, but that it wishes to control flows – to make them run through conduits. It wants to create fixed and well-directed paths for movement to flow through”. Projects of re-territorialization aimed at the transnational migrants are instrumental in creating these paths and enclosed spaces to control motilities. In what follows I use re-territorialization as a theoretical framework to explain the changing relations between states and transnational migrants under conditions of globalization.

Re-territorializing the Migrant: State, Practices, and Extra-Territorial Spaces

“The sending state cannot – and in fact does not – disengage itself from the welfare of its citizens (who remain its citizens until they foreswear their citizenship) and it has no way of preventing emigrants from maintaining contacts with the homeland...In other words, the obligations of the sending state vis-à-vis its citizens do not end with their emigration” (Laguerre, 1998:12).

While a large body of literature exists that theorizes receiving states' strategies of incorporating in-migrants (Soysal, 2004; Shafir & Peled, 2002), the politics of diasporic re-incorporation into the homeland in general and cultural re-territorialization in

particular is still in its infancy (but see Habib, 2004; Laguerre, 2006; Sheffer, 2003). Douglas Massey (1999) argues that very little attention has been paid thus far to sending countries' involvement in international migration. Yet, a slowly emerging literature is beginning to recognize some strategies sending states have been deploying in order to 'capture' their citizens abroad and capitalize on their often advantageous political and economic position (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Questions concerning the alleged responsibilities sending states have towards their extra-territorial citizens are currently being grappled with by both theoreticians and policy-makers. No longer seen as a point of origin with which (trans-) migrants sever their ties upon departure, sending countries (and their state policies) are emerging as important sites of production of transnational politics and culture (Castles & Davidson, 2000; Castles, 2004a; Kivisto, 2001; Levitt, 2001; Marden, 1997; Mahler, 2001; Vertovec, 1999).

With the rising volume and importance of transnational migration (Vertovec & Cohen, 1999) and the emergence of new ethno-national diasporic communities (Cohen, 1997; Sheffer, 1986), re-territorialization has been at the center of a broader theoretical debate about the citizenship/territory/identity nexus (Isin & Wood, 1999; Sassen, 1996; 2006; Soysal, 1994, 2000). Since first re-conceptualized as de-territorialized subjects whose socio-political spaces span the territory of more than one nation-state (Basch, Glick Shiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994; Pries, 2001), (trans-) migrants have been often described as presenting the ultimate challenge to the long-conceived tie between territory, (rights and duties associated with) citizenship, and national identity. As the triangular relations were being significantly eroded by individuals who settle outside their country of origin yet fail to become (and/or feel) an integral part of the host society, restructured

territorialities (and spatialities, in general) have become a strategic site through which states exercise their sovereign power extra-territorially. Spaces of citizenship, namely inclusion/exclusion in/from the nation have been seen less as a matter of fixed territorial location (Kofman, 1995; Painter & Philo, 1995). Instead, the definition of the nation as an imagined de-territorialized community that transgresses a single shared territory has legitimized the provision of a wide range of rights to extra-territorial citizens. Civic, political, and more recently cultural rights that were once bestowed only upon territorial citizens were quickly being expanded, it was argued, to include other, hitherto excluded groups. These extended 'incorporation regimes' (Soysal, 1994) have fundamentally altered the territorial scope of citizenship from one that is nation-state bounded to one that has fairly fluid boundaries. The incongruence between territory and membership in the nation renders person-based rather than citizen-based rights.

Others argue that while modern citizenship originated with the nation's territory, post-modern migration patterns (often caused, and always accelerated, by nationalism and capitalism) have de-centered the territorially-sovereign nation-state as the ultimate source of homogenizing 'master identity' and political citizenship (Isin & Wood, 1999). Across the board, the de-coupling of identity, territory and citizenship has been celebrated by early theoreticians as liberating and counter-hegemonic (Bhabha, 1994). Transnational communities (and ethno-national and religious diasporas as a specific sub-category), in particular, defined by some as the epitome of the new de-territorialized global order (Sassen, 1996), have been heralded as social forces of resistance to the exclusive hegemonic narrative constructed by nation-states and capable of producing new spaces of

gendered (McEwan, 2000), sexual (Bell, 1995), environmental (Burgess, Harrison & Filius, 1998) or altogether global (DeForges, 2004) citizenship and non-territorial forms of identity.

Yet, as Katharyne Mitchell (1997) and others (Ley, 2004) rightly point out, much of the literature on extra-territorial (diasporic) citizens has been infatuated with the in-betweenness (Hall, 1990) and double consciousness (Gilroy, 1993), or hybridity (Anthias, 2001; Bhabha, 1994; Hutnyk, 2005; Kalra, Hutnyk & Kaur., 2005) of their cultural identity that evades any one national-territorial anchoring and renders multiple counter-hegemonic narratives. This fetishization of a multi-focal and fragmented diasporic/transnational identity leads to an ‘abstracting away’ of diasporic spaces, Mitchell claims, which culminates in a theoretical neglect of “the actual physical spaces in which these [national] boundaries are crossed and erased” (1997:537). Situatedness, the contextualizing of diasporic subjects and their identities in time and space, she concludes, would reveal a much more nuanced ‘diasporic condition’ that is often undisruptive to the hegemonic order and in some cases even reproduces it. Other critiques of excessively congratulatory diasporic accounts have similarly centered on the overly romanticized depiction of the transnational existence (Agnew, 2005; Brah, 1996; Laoire, 2003; Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996; Werbner, 2002). Still others have suggested that ‘the diasporic condition’ (Clifford, 1994) has, in fact, been utilized by subjects themselves to enhance their political and economic position vis-à-vis sovereign nation-states (Ong, 1999; Portes, Guarnizo & Haller, 2002).

Building on these anti-romanticizing critiques, the current study takes a more nuanced approach to the intricate relations between states and transmigrants and the emergence of diasporic or extra-territorial forms of citizenship. In particular, I argue that neither a conceptualization that sees transmigrants as romantic ‘others’ living on the margins of either nation-state nor one which underscores their capacity to subvert the existing hegemonic order of nationalism and capital accumulation by capitalizing on their flexible citizenship status (Ong, 1999) is satisfactory. Instead, I offer a careful reading of transmigrants as extra-territorial citizens who are never really outside the cultural realm of the state. Neither marginalized nor subverting agents, transmigrants are national citizens *outside* national territory, yet *always within* the cultural orbit of the state. Their extra-territorial status notwithstanding, transmigrants are seen by a growing number of sending states first and foremost as national citizens, and therefore ‘legitimate targets’ of a broad range of re-territorialization projects ranging from the cultural to the political. These carefully-tailored projects, I argue, seek to home-bound transmigrants by crafting a new contract between the state and its extra-territorial citizens. Yet, this contract is far from being fully agreed upon; in fact, a key premise of the current research is the extent to which both state agents and transmigrants themselves continue to re-think and indeed, disagree over the actual content of this new and altered type of citizenship.

By examining the daily spaces of extra-territorial citizenship, the current study seeks to broaden our understanding of transmigrants as state citizens outside state territory. It argues that the de-embodiment of the state in many studies on transnationalism has inevitably led to a confinement of its relations with migrants to official conduits,

concealing the basic fact that projects of cultural re-territorialization are intended first and foremost to *enhance* – not restrict - state-migrants dialogue and interactions. The state produces additional spaces through which to interact with its extra-territorial citizens (and shape their identities) and therefore a micro-level, embodied examination of those interactions is in order. Using Henry Lefebvre’s famous terminology, film festivals, book clubs, Independence and Memorial Day ceremonies and other cultural venues are *conceived spaces* by which the state attempts to reach out to transmigrants and subject them (yet again) to its hegemonic culture. These are spaces conceived by policy makers and other technocrats who allegedly know how to re-connect with migrants. At the same time, for migrants, the users or inhabitants, these are spaces of experience, *lived spaces* that receive their meaning through the spatial practices that occur in them. It is through their daily frequenting of these spaces that users re-define their relations with the state and the nation. Thus, a careful examination of the production of these extra-territorial spaces allows us a better understanding of the contested nature of the dialogue between state agents and transnational migrants over questions of citizenship, belonging, and identity. As Aihwa Ong argues, in a transnational age, (cultural) citizenship emerges out of

“...the cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalence and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging with a national population and territory. Cultural citizenship is a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society. Becoming a citizen depends on how one is constituted as a subject who exercises or submits to power relations” (1996: 738).

Cultural re-territorialization, I therefore argue, has revamped the transnational landscape in that it introduced new forms of cultural hegemony to the lives of extra-territorial citizens. For the re-territorialized transmigrants, just as much as for ordinary territorial citizens, the (sending) state is *always* there, always present, always communicates with them and makes certain demands on their time, money and other (more or less) tangible resources. While its interventions may not be as institutionalized as they are within national territory, they are similarly geared towards governing and making national (and cultural) subjects (Foucault, 1984). The state produces extra-territorial spaces to better control the transnational discourse, shape transmigrants' social identities, watch their mobility, and, generally, make itself visible in their daily lives. In the Israeli case, the state names them ('Israelis Abroad', 'Children of *Yordim*'), monitors their demographic characteristics ('there are roughly 150,000 Israeli citizens in Los Angeles') and urban geographic patterns ('the largest concentration of Israelis in the Los Angeles metropolitan area is in the San Fernando Valley, north of the city'), and more recently it has even begun to entertain them ('the Israeli TV Channel – live America, feel Israel') and mobilize their financial and moral support in times of national crisis.

A key argument of this research is that these interventions in the daily lives of extra-territorial citizens are not intended merely for re-connecting with migrants; rather, they serve as constant reminders to transmigrants that they continue to have particular obligations towards the sending state and society. State-led cultural practices are instrumental in citizenship rescaling as they serve to re-center transmigrants' identities on their membership in the nation-state. Attempting to counterbalance transmigrants'

affiliations in and identification with other, competing communities (e.g., the urban, the cosmopolitan), the state wishes to re-orient their identity towards the national by constantly reminding them of its role in their (past and current) lives. As I show in Chapter 6, cultural citizenship in the Israeli case is a set of rights and responsibilities borne by Israeli migrants by way of their nationality; the former consist of the cultural 'services' provided by the state and its representatives to citizens abroad and the latter includes loyalty towards the state manifested through the consumption of state-funded cultural practices (for a good summary of the discourse on citizenship as rights and responsibilities see Marston & Staeheli, 1994). State-produced practices become a political ritual (Kertzer, 1988) *and* a key site in which citizenship rights and obligations are challenged, negotiated, narrated, and materialized.

As extra-territorial citizens, Israelis abroad benefit from the provision of cultural services by the state just as much as they do from consular services; at the same time, their consumption of cultural services is not morally neutral, but rather carries with it the implication of support for the homeland and its state; the dialectic of re-territorialization takes the form of a contract between the state and its extra-territorial subjects in which the former acknowledges the latter in exchange for its uncompromised support. The territorial divide between Israelis in and out of Israel vanishes as the latter group congregates periodically to practice their citizenship in the form of various ceremonies, parades, and other cultural events. These become the vehicle through which the Israeli state mobilizes its citizens abroad around a set of loosely-defined narratives of national belonging; first among which is the need to remember and treasure the nation's shared

'territorial roots'; they also become spaces for asserting one's extra-territorial citizenship (Fitzgerald, 2000). As Robert Kaiser observes, "Transnationalism and the rising number of people living in diaspora have not undermined the ability of national homeland myths and symbols to territorialize identity and call the nation to action, and may actually have enhanced their potency in this regard, not least among the diasporas themselves" (2002:243).

Not surprisingly, state practices aim to suppress the fundamental differences between Israeli migrants (e.g., class, ethnicity) in order to construct their identity around a single nodal point (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), namely their Israeliness. Thus, for example, evoking the land (*Ha'Aretz* in Hebrew) and the culture (*Tarbut*) that continue to be cultivated 'there' (and, interestingly enough, never 'here') are efficient erasers of the differences that inevitably exist between Israelis in Israel and their co-nationals abroad; thanks to state interventions, for a brief moment, in a designated space, we are all once again 'Israeli citizens', regardless of our residential address.

Finally, underscoring the state's altered role in reaching out beyond its borders to its citizens does not mean that transmigrants are treated as passive subjects. In fact, an important objective of the current research is 'placing the migrant' (Silvey & Lawson, 1999) within a web of relations with the sending state and examining the extent to which she imbues extra-territorial spaces with her own meaning. Efforts at re-territorializing transnational communities must not be thought of as the sole interest of the sending state. In parallel to sending states' attempts to devise political-economic and cultural strategies

to re-territorialize their de-territorialized groups, migrants themselves have taken a decidedly pro-active approach and exerted pressures on homeland state apparatuses to expand their existing incorporation regimes in order to enable them to take a productive part in these new spaces of extra-territorial citizenship. Basch, Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc (1994) attribute the surge in recent theoretical interest in extra-territorial (or diasporic) citizenship to postcolonial states' recurrent efforts to capitalize on their migrants' financial success overseas. From Cuba to the Philippines, economically strained national governments in the developing world have used financial and other contributions made by members of their growing diasporas to boost their frail national economies. Yet, these homeland-oriented investments came at a certain price, as Filipino, Caribbean and other transnational migrants

“...have all at various times *made demands on their home governments for greater incorporation into the political processes of their countries of origin*. In this they have responded to, but also have helped generate, state policies and practices that have implicitly or explicitly defined transmigrants as part of the body politic of their home nation-states. While transnational connections are actualized through the flows of money, material goods, ideas, and ways of thinking across national borders, such connections are reinforced by a language of allegiance and loyalty to nation created by the home states”
(1994: 260, italics added).

These efficacious projects of cultural re-territorialization (or creating ‘narratives of belonging’ as they are sometimes called) are as much socially constructed by home-states (Kaiser, 2002) as they are by extra-territorial citizens themselves. As some have shown (Habib, 2004; Siu, 2001; Toticaguena, 2004), these elaborate processes are quite often

initiated or, at the least, facilitated by the extra-territorial groups themselves; motivated by their quest for belonging (Fortier, 2000), cultural re-territorialization projects embody the structure/agency dialectic that Smith & Guarnizo (1998:11) so aptly describe;

“This process of trans-territorialization raises intriguing questions concerning human agency. The sending states are insuring their own survival by contributing to the constitution of new bifocal subjects with dual citizenships and multiple political identities. Inadvertently, this very process opens up interstitial social spaces which create multiple possibilities for novel forms of human agency. These spaces provide possibilities for resistance as well as accommodation to power “from above.” For example, by accommodating to their newly-legitimated dual status, bi-national subjects are able to enjoy the benefits of citizenship, the opportunities for household reproduction, as well as the costs these entail in two nation-states. They may be doubly empowered or doubly subordinated, depending on historically-specific local circumstances”.

It is these historically- (and geographically-) specific circumstances that the current research seeks to explore. Focusing on the Israeli migrant community in Los Angeles, it illustrates the extent to which transmigrants oscillate between empowerment and subordination, between hegemonic practices that seek to limit and fix their social identities around the nodal point that is the territoriality of the nation-state and those self-initiated cultural and other practices that allow them to open up new possibilities and re-define their affiliation with it. By this I do not mean to argue that national citizenship ceases to be a key marking of identity for Israeli migrants; on the contrary, what I am suggesting is that the ‘enthusiastic embracement’ (see chapter 4) on part of the Israeli state in the last two decades has empowered them to seek alternative ways of relating to

the state from afar. The four decade-long disconnect between the state and its migrants forced the latter to produce their own independent spaces of identity formation (e.g., the Festival), much to the dissatisfaction of the former. Projects of cultural re-territorialization, I argue, are to date the most efficient instruments in the hands of the state to regain control (albeit partial) over the production and maintenance of these spaces of identity. The current research is therefore a first attempt to theorize these processes of extra-territorial identity formation and unpack the complex political geography of the spaces that are (re)-produced throughout.

CHAPTER 3

STATE, TERRITORY, MIGRANTS: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE ISRAELI NATION

In this chapter I review the manner in which historical scholarship has depicted and analyzed Israeli nation-building. In particular, I trace the roots of Zionist thought concerning the link between national identity and territory as reflected in both academic and non-academic outlets. It is imperative to look closely at the process of the territorialization of the Israeli nation, I argue, in order to understand the ways by which de-territorialized groups, including Jewish Holocaust survivors, emigrants *and* immigrants have been socially constructed as ‘others’ in the Zionist nation-building era. Constructing these and other mobile groups as suffering from weak territorial roots either here (Pre-1948 Palestine and later Israel) or there (whatever their country of origin may have been), I argue, has served as a discursive and practical strategy which allowed the re-invention of an Israeli nation whose solid territorial identity ought not to be doubted. The construction of clear social boundaries around those – and only those - immobile groups whose physical attachment to Zionist territory was beyond any reasonable doubt was instrumental in re-asserting the nation’s legitimate right to a fixed, historical territory while simultaneously excluding a considerable number of people whose attachment to territory was lacking. I further argue that the attribution of nomadic, fluid characteristics to migrants and, to a lesser extent, refugees has de-territorialized and disempowered them vis-à-vis the state and the nation as a whole. Thus, for example, despite the fact that many emigrants in the early years of independence were in fact returning migrants merely departing Israel to go back to their countries of origin in Eastern Europe and the Arab

world, they continued to be described as lacking any meaningful territorial identity. The totalizing nationalist discourse within the Jewish community in pre-independence Palestine and later in Israel's early years has discredited any serious attempts to research the possibility of non-Zionist territorial identities. In fact, in countless popular sources migrants and mobile 'others' were likened to Jews of the diaspora (the 'Wandering Jews' as they have historically been referred to) whose unclear territorial identity stands in sharp contrast to the territorially immersed Zionist Jews in Palestine and – later – Israel.

The chapter is divided into three main sections: the first section discusses and analyzes the Zionist political ideology concerning the territorialization of the Jewish diaspora and focuses on the importance of territory to Zionist identity. In doing so, I show the extent to which territory has been a critical part of the new Zionist subject created by political Zionism of the late 19th century. The second section describes and analyzes the mechanism employed by Zionist leaders to territorialize Jews and construct a narrative that legitimates their historic link to the land of Israel. The third section delineates the process by which certain mobile groups, predominantly Holocaust survivors and Jewish migrants from Arab and Muslim countries were constructed as de-territorialized populations lacking the moral capacity and ideological basis necessary for developing roots in the old-new homeland.

Territory in Political Zionist Ideology

The birth of political Zionism is usually attributed to the wide spread of nationalism in Europe of the 18th and 19th centuries. According to this view, the Zionist movement was

established in order to solve the centuries' old 'Jewish Question' in Central and Eastern Europe. The argument advanced by Theodore Hertzl, widely considered the father of modern Zionism, was that despite sincere and recurrent efforts by Jews to 'fit' into the newly created national framework prevalent in Europe, they continued to be mistreated and suffered chronic discrimination at the hands of state and social agents throughout the continent. Its main ideology was therefore predicated upon the notion that the only viable solution to the pervasive problem of anti-Semitism had to involve a self-initiated removal of (at least the majority of) Jews from European nation-states. Closely related was the idea that the process of self-emancipation had to culminate in the establishment of a state or any other form of self-governing political apparatus in a distinct territory. Indeed, the final resolution adopted in the first Zionist Congress in Basel (1897) proclaimed that the objective of Zionism was "to establish a secure haven, under public law, for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel". Even when occasional disagreements arose among leaders of the movement over the nature of the territory, such as in the case of the Uganda Plan, the general consensus remained that a self-governed territory is the only solution that would secure the future of Jewish existence.

By 1917, when the British Government released the Balfour Declaration that formally expressed its support for the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, the World Zionist Organization had already established two key institutions to realize the territorial objective of the Basel program of action. The first specialized agency in the form of the Jewish National Fund was established in 1901 for the purchase of land in Palestine. Headquartered in Vienna, the fund helped purchase significant amount of

Arab-owned land along the Mediterranean Coast, in and around Jerusalem, to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and throughout the lower Galilee. In addition, the first Zionist bank (Jewish Colonial Trust) was incorporated in London in 1899 and entrusted with the task of financing operations pertaining to the purchase (or 'redemption' as they were often called) of lands in Palestine. Owing to these two institutions, by the outbreak of World War I more than 6000 acres were acquired and settled by the Zionist movement.

Bar-Gal (2003) argues that in addition to its land-redeeming tasks, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) had become an important instrument in solidifying the territorial component in the emerging Jewish identity in Palestine by means of education and propaganda. The leading idea behind the Fund's activities had been that a total commitment is required of all segments of the Jewish population to the purchase of additional territory in Palestine. JNF propaganda was designated to reach individuals in both private and public spaces, appearing on stamps, children's toys and games, maps, films, and books. At the center of this all-encompassing JNF culture was its main fund-raising ritual, the Blue Box. The ritual was based on the assumption that the Box itself, habitually placed in spaces of Jewish congregation, would encourage people to donate money that would be used for the purchase of lands in Palestine. Their success made the boxes a symbol of Jewish territorialism,

"The Blue Box ritual...became an almost metaphysical, sublime symbol. The aim of the Blue Box was to link the individual to Zionist values such as nationhood, land, sacrifice, contributing to the community and so on. The ritual, in which a money box became a kind of cultural icon, was not a random process but arose out of the belief of the Head

Office personnel that it was the spearhead, the true symbol of their organization, by means of which they would conquer the hearts and pockets of their admiring public” (p. 105)

The redemption of territory in the Zionist ideology was instrumental to the process of nation-building. In a 1929 speech, David Ben-Gurion, the mythical leader of the Jewish Agency in Palestine and later Israel’s first Prime Minister, clearly made the link between obtaining territory and realization of national aspirations,

“The realization of Zionism means the completion of two fundamental transformations in the life of the Jewish people: first, the transformation of the nation from the Diaspora to an ingathering of the exiles on the homeland; and, the transformation from a nation disconnected from land and labor to one that practices life of labor on the land of our fathers. These two transformations are implicated in one another and cannot take place separately. The Jewish people could not become a people of land and labor in a land that it does not belong to, and no Jewish return to its home is possible unless it returns to the land and life of labor (Becker, 1958: 164-5).

Thus, (re)-claiming the historical territory of the Jewish homeland was both a means and an end in and of itself. It was a practical strategy to allow a growing number of Jewish migrants from Europe to settle in Palestine. At the same time, territory was seldom obtained for the sake of territorial expansion; instead, it was purchased in order to allow the growing Jewish workforce, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, to engage in agricultural labor in order to re-build the tie between the returning people and their land which was severed during 2000 years of diasporic existence. To prove territorial

ownership land reclamation was insufficient; what was needed, Zionists argued, was a creation of a new mode of life, one that depended on engagement with the land. Only by cultivating the land would Jews be able to disconnect themselves from their de-territorialized diasporic past, unite their fragmented diasporic identity around a territory and legitimize their national project as one of territorial reclamation.

Kellerman (1993) argues that Zionism's territorial objective reflected both an existential need (livelihood space), a form of political identity (national-sovereign space), and a cultural-religious importance (space that legitimizes the historical link between the people and the land). He contends, however, that various Zionist factions in the pre and post independence eras interpreted territory quite differently. Thus, for example, Revisionist Zionism headed by the charismatic Zeev Jabotinski supported the idea of seizing maximum territory in Palestine as a way of enhancing political might. Capturing territory in Palestine for Revisionists was not simply a means to an end, namely to facilitate the creation of additional Jewish settlements; rather, in their perspective, the territory of *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel), all of it, was a constitutive element of Jewish identity and as such capturing additional territory ultimately strengthened Jewish resolve and steadfastness. Taking an environmentally deterministic approach to Jewish nationalism, revisionists argued that while social relations and political development were important to the emergence of a strong Jewish nation, they were not nearly as essential as the territory. As Jabotinski flatly argued, the physical and mental characteristics of the various races were mostly determined by "the natural environment – the homeland's landscape, climate, flora, winds... the mental structure of the people are

created only by natural factor” (in Bilski-Ben Hur, 1993:164). Territory, according to Revisionist Zionism¹⁷, was by far the single most important defining characteristic of the nation, both historically and contemporarily. It is for this reason that a different territory could not be suitable for Jewish nationalism, Jabotinski argued, for it was a well-known fact that only when a historic match was evident between the people and the land could the transplanting project succeed (Ibid, 165); in all other cases, a rejection of the people would take place by virtue of their lack of belonging.

Others in the Zionist movement rejected this deterministic interpretation of territory and its linkage to nation-building and argued that the capture of territory must be balanced with a sufficient workforce to settle and cultivate the land. Whether or not the entire territory could be obtained was not the question, Labor Zionists argue; instead, one must consider the availability of human resources to physically occupy and work the land. Since Ben-Gurion and members of his Labor party controlled Zionist institutions in Palestine, territorial policies were often made in accordance with the latter stance. As Kellerman points out, from Labor Zionist perspective, for most of the British period in Palestine,

“The use of presence as a tool for land maintenance meant therefore, that legal ownership (purchase) and political recognition (sovereignty) were not considered sufficient for land attainment; there was a need for a permanent, continuous deed on the territory through

¹⁷ Revisionism was a Zionist philosophy (and later full-fledged movement) which grew out of Hertzels political Zionism. Led by Vladimir Jabotinski, its key objectives included Jewish majority in Palestine, and a more confrontational approach towards both Palestinian Arabs and the British forces in Palestine in order to realize Jewish statehood on both banks of the Jordan River.

settlement. Constant presence by settlements was believed to bring about sovereignty” (p. 41).

Only in the late 1930s, as inter-religious hostilities intensified and British officials suggested the partition of land based on the territorial holdings of each community, did Zionist territorialization’s pace gain momentum. By the breakout of World War II, territorial expansion became the prime Zionist objective. As Kimmerling (1983:56) argues, this approach “dictated the development of a policy of land purchase and settlement to defend the boundaries of the state, to strengthen areas which were ‘weak links’ in the Jewish territorial continuum, and to establish new territorial ‘facts’ – all on the basis of an integrative *territorial conception*”. In line with this approach, so-called territorial redemption continued unabated in Palestine throughout the 1940s as violent clashes between Jews and Arabs became a daily spectacle. Especially on the eve of the 1947 UN Partition Plan territory had become sanctified in the Zionist discourse, not because of its economic value, but due to a strong conviction that the outcomes of the nearing round of hostilities would be largely based on communal territorial holdings.

The ‘territorial conception’ had not subsided in the aftermath of the 1948-9 Arab-Israeli war. In fact, as the young State of Israel was struggling to absorb massive waves of migration¹⁸, its leaders desperately sought territorial solutions that would allow a quick and painless absorption of migrants. One solution presents itself in the aftermath of the war as the scale of Palestinian exodus had become clear. Overall, more than 850,000 Palestinian Arabs were driven out of territories captured by the Israeli military (Morris,

¹⁸ It is estimated that at the end of 1951 there were roughly 1.4 Million Jews in Israel, compared with 650,000 only three years earlier.

1988). Their land tracts, having fallen into Israeli hands, were quickly “de-Arabized”, in order to prevent the possibility of their owners’ return. The Absentees’ Property Law that was ratified in 1950 stipulated that any tract formerly held by Palestinian Arabs who were no longer residing within the boundaries of the State of Israel was considered to have had no legal owners. Shortly thereafter, in 1952, a legislative initiative transferred the ‘no ownership’ status to Israeli ownership, finalizing the ‘Israelification’ of the territory (Kimmerling, 1983).

In the post-1967 war ‘the territorial conception’ made a comeback as both Labor and later Likud-led Israeli governments vigorously settled the occupied territories of the Golan Heights, West Bank, Gaza Strip, and - to a lesser extent - the Sinai Peninsula. The Zionist stance according to which territory comes under effective jurisdiction only when it is settled by Jews has dominated Israeli policy-making towards the recently seized areas. As early as 1974, individuals affiliated with the religious-messianic group of *Gush Emunim* (Block of the Faithful) set out to settle – first illegally and then with governmental permission – in the midst of some of the most densely populated Arab areas in the occupied territories, including Hebron and Gaza. Not surprisingly, on various occasions, members of the *Gush* had likened their settlement activities to those of the first, original Zionist pioneers. They argued that the Zionist territorial fatigue of the 1950s and 1960s had to be overcome by “restoring the pioneering and sacrificial spirit of the past... [That were] guided by ideals of land settlement, manual labor, and personal sacrifice” (Sprinzak, 1986). The ideological zeal of the religious neo-Zionist settlers was intertwined with their strong conviction that the ‘liberated’ territories ought not to be

relinquished even in exchange for a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Newman (2001) eloquently termed their stance 'Territorial Fetishism' arguing that "territory has become the central focus around which their notions of nationalism, State, citizenship and belonging are based" (p. 242).

Its considerable impact on Israeli state and society notwithstanding, the settlers' approach towards territory was just one (albeit important) approach in the post-1967 era in Israel. In the aftermath of the first Palestinian *Intifada* (Arabic for 'Uprising', which lasted from 1987-1991), a small majority among Israelis had been formed that supported 'Territory for Peace' ('Shalom T'murat Shtachim') as the only acceptable formula for reaching an agreement with the Palestinians (and, by extension, with other Arab States). Seeking to de-couple national identity and (parts of the occupied) national territory, Israeli architects and supporters of the 1993 Oslo Accords relied on post-territorial arguments to convince the public that in the age of globalization, regional peace and socio-cultural fragmentation, territory is bound to lose much of its significance in the formation of national identity (Schnell, 2001).

The New Jew: Roots, Territory, Identity

Appearing in late 19th century Europe, Zionism had aspired to realize three major objectives; first, to secure a sovereign territory for the Jewish people of Europe (under the auspices of European powers); second, to radically transform the Jewish mode of economic production, namely to 'proletarianize' their overwhelmingly upper-middle social class by immersing them in mostly primary economic activities; finally, to abolish

the traditional cultural identity associated with diasporic Judaism. In its stead, Zionists sought to create a new, refined Jewish identity. Shapira (1997) argues that Zionism introduced an inherently new hierarchy of Jewish identity. Prior to Zionism, Jewish identity in Europe - and to a lesser extent in other diasporas - had manifested itself along a bipolar range between the traditional (orthodox) and the modern (secular, enlightened) Jew. While both had been fundamentally diasporic identities, modern Jews were seen as more generally educated, secular, critical, and leaning towards breaking out of the Jewish ghetto to assimilate in European societies. Traditional Jews, on the other hand, were still mostly religiously educated, conservative, and supporters of Jewish socio-cultural isolation. The appearance of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century had added a new complexity to this binary identity as it introduced, for the first time in two millennia, the tie between the modern Jew and the Jewish homeland. While Jewish yearning to Zion was clearly not a new idea, it was under the Zionist ideology that this notion received a practical interpretation; for the first time, Jews were strongly encouraged - in some cases were even given the means necessary - to migrate to the homeland. Thus, the long-conceived de-territorialized identity of the diasporic Jew was significantly challenged by Zionist ideas and the ethos of the 'New Jew'.

The ethos of the 'New Jew' was "secular, revolutionary, based on a new set of values, on the tie between the Jew and his historic homeland, on new behavioral norms among Jews and between them and non-Jews" (Ibid, p. 11). The new Jew was to lose his/her diasporic passivity in order to become an active individual whose identity is a derivative of proximity to nature in the historic homeland. Max Nordau, a fervent supporter of Jewish

nationalism and co-founder of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), argued that Jewish degeneration is embodied in their non-productive, bourgeoisie pursuits and disproportionately urban nature. He advocated a 'recapturing' of Jewish dignity by creating a "deep-chested, powerfully-built and keen eyed" Jew to replace the weak and decadent diasporic Jew" (Mosse, 1992).

It was hardly surprising therefore, that territoriality became the most salient feature of the new Jewish identity. As Zionist leaders advocated Jewish emancipation through migration to Palestine and financial assistance was offered to new arrivees, it became clear that the traditional-modern dichotomy was no longer applicable. Instead, the territorial Jew, the settler, the pioneer (and, later, the fearless Sabra) had soon become the ultimate embodiment of the New Jew whose unmediated relations with the land of his fathers is no longer an unfulfilled desire but a daily reality. A new dichotomy juxtaposing the old, diaspora-residing, de-territorialized and uprooted Jew on the one hand, and the new, deeply-rooted, territorialized Jew on the other, was born.

Almog (2000) and others have shown that the territorialization of Jewish identity required a massive effort geared at both the celebration of a renewed Jewish presence in the homeland *as well as* the negation of Jewish life in the diaspora (*Shelilat HaGalut*), in Europe and elsewhere. Both should be understood as Zionist strategies aimed at the construction of a new Jewish identity. The social construction of a new territorialized Jewish identity required a parallel undermining of the old Jewish identity which still flourished in the diaspora. Identifying the de-territorialized Jew as Zionism's 'other'

enabled Jews in Palestine to see themselves as a chosen few, the torch-carriers of Jewish territorial nationalism. Constructing the discursive boundaries between the two groups was a major geo-territorial and cultural Zionist project that required a sustained effort to elevate the first and negate the other. In what follows I discuss the social construction of Jewish territorial identity.

The Zionist as a Territorialized Jew

The territorialization of Jewish identity may well be described as a modern process of social construction. The symbolic yearning of diasporic Jews for the Land of Israel notwithstanding, pre-Zionism Jewish identity was never contingent upon the notion of shared territory. As Newman (2001:239) points out, “Thus while territory did not play any role in the daily life experience of hundreds of Jewish communities scattered throughout the world, it did play a role in the formation of a single identity that went beyond the confines of religion, and which, at the end of the nineteenth century, provided an important component of the growth of Jewish territorial nationalism - namely Zionism”. Zionist narratives had emphasized the Jews’ historic right to the land, yet at the same time used myriad territorial practices to give contemporary meaning to and legitimize their right.

Territoriality has been the most fundamental tenet of Zionist ideology and as such was manifested at the very outset. As early as 1897, attendees at the first Zionist Congress in Basel declared that Zionism’s sole objective was “to establish a homeland for the Jewish people, guaranteed by international law, in the land of Israel”. The means by which to

secure this goal were several and included “settling the land of Israel by farmers, artisans, and merchants”. As obtaining and settling a specific territory became the single most important objective of Zionists during the first three decades of the 20th century, an entire discourse evolved to facilitate it by constructing a two-pronged narrative focusing on the relative emptiness of the territory *and*, consequently, the need to redeem it from its chronic underdeveloped condition. The determined Jewish pioneer who ‘makes the desert bloom’ by working the land had soon become a powerful image representing the entire Zionist endeavor.

Zionist discourse had deeply romanticized (sometimes eroticized) the physical landscape of Palestine. Almog (2000) argues that Zionists integrated highly romantic-ideological notions into youth education in order to captivate their minds and strengthen their sense of territorialized identity. One such construction was the design of an entirely new field of study, ‘knowledge of the land’ (*Yediat HaAretz*). Designated to strengthen the link between practical geographical and historical knowledge and national sentiments, *Yediat HaAretz* was part of the curriculum in all Zionist educational institutions. It emphasized an unmediated, first-hand experience with the physical and cultural landscape of the country through occasional field trips, performance of light agricultural projects (in the schoolyard or elsewhere), participation in farm works, as well as attendance in organized work camps in Kibbutzim during holidays and summer vacations. To know the homeland, Zionist leaders argued, one had to be fully absorbed in its physical terrain and cultural landscape, be familiar with vegetation, climate, mountain ranges, and Jewish holy sites. Knowledge of the history and geography of the homeland was seen as a

prerequisite to appreciating its entirety and love it unconditionally. As Almog notes, “In Hebrew, ‘knowledge of the land’ bore a connotation parallel to the Biblical sense of ‘knowing a woman’” (Ibid, p. 162).

Among the most important territorial practices included in the new field of *Yediat HaAretz* were the annual field trips and nature hikes. In addition to preserving a high morale among youth and military cadets, hikes were considered especially effective as they allowed the younger generation to ‘explore the land by feet’ and ‘feel it’ rather than just hear or read about it. Walking the land was also intended to strengthen young people’s sense of unity and solidarity with their co-nationals by visiting Jewish settlements in peripheral and sometimes hostile regions to boost the morale of their members. ‘Feeling’ the land by feet ought to be seen as a key sign of territorialization in an era of fuzzy and constantly changing ethno-national boundaries in Palestine. The constant presence of Jewish youth in the ‘grey zones’ of British Palestine was an act of territorial reclamation that re-produced the notion of ‘our right to this land’.

Their secular, modernist orientation notwithstanding, Zionists relied extensively on the Bible and other Jewish texts and many of their practices were inspired by the Biblical myth of the Jewish people’s right to the land. By selectively emphasizing certain Jewish holidays (e.g., *Sukkot*, *Shavuot*) that are based on the tie between man and nature and mark the various phases of the agricultural season, leaders of the Zionist movement sought to bridge the gap between Jewish history and present. New interpretations were given to traditional religious ceremonies that highlighted the importance of the natural

environment. Thus, for example, the feast of *Tu BeShevat* (Hebrew for the fifteenth of the Jewish month of Shevat) long ignored by Jews in the diaspora received an entirely new meaning within Zionist framework. The holiday marks the beginning of the New Year for trees and had become a major celebration in Palestine during which mass tree planting ceremonies were conducted by school children. As Almog (2000:53) describes,

“The ceremony of planting trees on *Tu B'Shvat*...was an impressive communal festival that symbolized the conquest of the land and an eternal covenant with the soil of Israel. A small child, dressed in a white shirt, blue pants, and cloth cap and planting a sapling, was performing the primary precept of making the wilderness bloom. He thus entered the covenant with the land and with the pioneer community”.

In addition to the use of grand narratives about the link between the people and the land, Zionism, like many other nationalist projects had operated to territorialize Jewish identity in some mundane, seemingly unimportant ways (what Michael Billig, 1995 termed ‘Banal Nationalism’). Thus, for example, the practice of giving Palestine-born Jews Hebrew names was popularized in the pre-state era. Names were carefully selected to reflect the link between Jews and their homeland and distinguish native Palestinian Jews from diasporic Jews. In some case, Jews migrating to Palestine chose to Hebraicize their names as part of a Zionist conversion ceremony that would free them from their diasporic past. Following a resurrection of general Biblical names (e.g., David, Saul, Isaac), Zionism had popularized names of heroic figures in Jewish history (Yiftach, Gideon, Yoav, Ehud). At a later stage, names commemorating places (*Yarden* = Jordan; Golan;

Kinneret = Sea of Galilee), plants and trees (*Dafna* = Laurel; *Erez* = Cedar), and agricultural practices (*Katzir* = Harvest) were introduced.

Various Israeli geographers (Cohen & Kliot, 1992; Azaryahu & Kellerman, 1999) have focused on place-naming as ideological practices aimed at re-territorializing Jewish/Israeli identity and re-producing an imagined national past. Azaryahu (1996) shows how street names were used by Zionists to construct a shared past of the Jewish people. He argues that commemorative street names were territorial hegemonic practices used to implicate a national narrative of the past in contemporary spatial order. At the same time, commemorative names designate “a specific setting and location in numerous narratives of the city”, allowing their negotiation and re-interpretation at different historical periods.

Overall, territorial practices were designated to embed the returning Jew in the physical and cultural landscape of his historic homeland. They allowed Zionists to construct a sense of attachment to the land and create an imaginary link between historic and contemporary Jewish presence in Palestine/Zion/*Eretz Yisrael*. At the same time, over-emphasis on the link between the Jew and his/her land was instrumental in signaling to the Arab community (as well as British colonizers) the Zionist determination to remain in Palestine for the long run. Finally, territorial practices were important in the construction of a new Jewish identity that is based on a new mode of production; no longer a fragmented, rootless group of parasites who are at the mercy of non-Jewish authorities,

but rather a deeply-rooted, productive and unified community taking matters into its hands.

Shelilat HaGalut: Diaspora as the Anti-thesis of Zionism

Shapira (1997: 32) describes *Shelilat HaGalut* as “an abstract concept that defined the place of the Jew in the world according to Zionist approach, opposing the diasporic reality and seeking to transform the Jewish state of mind into a territorialized nation”. As such, negation of the diaspora was first and foremost concerned with the diasporic condition. To Zionists, the Jewish diasporic condition was seen as a vicious and eternal cycle of disconnect and dependency; disconnect from Jewish territorial roots in the homeland and dependency upon non-Jewish societal and governmental forces. Ben-Gurion, himself a diaspora-born Jew who migrated to Palestine in his early twenties, expressed this dual notion as follows: “The meaning of diaspora is dependency; physical, political, spiritual, cultural, moral, and intellectual; it is the type of dependency that is the result of life of alienation, of being a minority, of being homeless, and of being disconnected from our roots, our territory, our labor, and our communal creation” (Becker, 1958:78).

Zionists across the board treated the diaspora as a state of mind rather than a mere location or a place of residence. In fact, the sheer use of the term diaspora as a homogenized, undifferentiated space (despite the enormous differences that characterized various Jewish communities outside Palestine) was instrumental in creating a boundary between us, here in Palestine and those Jews, over there, outside Palestine. Diaspora Jews

were discursively constructed as de-territorialized others, while at the same time continued to be looked at as potential Zionist settlers. In this spirit, Ben-Gurion divided the Jewish diaspora into two major groups - based on their territorial prognosis, namely whether migration to Palestine/Israel is currently considered as an option by the majority of its members - "a diaspora that does not see itself as a diaspora and therefore has no intentions of migrating to Israel, and a diaspora that cannot and does not want to remain in place, since their life is miserable and unexpected and they are eager to migrate" (Ibid, p. 80). The need to distinguish between these two types of diasporas and the ambivalent approach taken by Zionists towards them was particularly evident in speeches delivered during and shortly after the Holocaust. Thus, in 1945 Ben-Gurion declared, "The diaspora needs us and we need the diaspora; it's not only our task to help them, but it is also their task to help us. And not only can - and must - we save the diaspora, but the diaspora can and must save us, because both of us are in great danger" (Becker, 1958:80).

But despite these and other attempts to sympathize with European Jews in their difficult hour, influential Zionists had held that it was ultimately the diaspora - and anti-Semitism as a chronic diasporic condition - that was responsible for the social ailments that have befallen the Jewish people there. Often ignoring the great achievements Jews have accomplished in their countries of residence, Zionists emphasized the abnormality of the diasporic condition and argued that the only viable solution involves the creation of a healthy, territorialized nation. Zeev Jabotinski, for example, crudely declared that Zionism must normalize the Jewish people, for their lives in the diaspora have been

“abnormal and unhealthy”, “fragmented” and marked by “disorganization and carelessness”.

Zionist discourses of the Jewish diaspora repeatedly equated their fluid identity and fragile citizenship status with the absence of territory and lack of strong roots in their countries of residence. Regardless of the level of material and spiritual comfort enjoyed by Jews in some European societies and in the United States, Zionists were convinced that they were second-class citizens. As Ben-Gurion argued in 1953,

“Diaspora Jews are - to a lesser or greater degree – all victimized, as Jews and as citizens. Even under the most liberal regimes that practice equal citizen rights, Jews do not have the natural freedom that other, non-Jewish citizens have...Disconnected from the Jewish public, cut off from his people’s culture and history, surrounded by foreign and assimilating atmosphere, subjected to laws, regime and mentality that are determined by the non-Jewish majority, - the Jew cannot be Jew as much as the English is English or the American is American” (Ibid, p. 82).

Aharon David Gordon, a leading ideologist in Ben-Gurion’s faction of Labor Zionism harshly criticized diaspora Jews as “a parasite people [who] have no root in the land, no soil under [their] feet; not only economically speaking ...but also in spirit, in thought, in poetry, in literature and in good traits too, in ideals, in lofty human aspirations” (in Sternhell, 1995:62). These opinions were hardly exceptional in the pre-independence Zionist discourse in Palestine. Almog (2000) argues that the notion of anti-diaspora was so central to the creation of the Zionist ethos of a new Jew it was integrated into its regular educational curriculum. Renouncing and stereotyping diasporic Jews and their

way of life was instrumental to the formation of a Zionist identity since it “sharpened the boundaries of the Zionist national religion and stressed its superiority over traditional Jewish religion” (p. 76). The creation of the New Jew was seen as anchored first and foremost in the cultivation of a territorialized Jewish identity.

The discursive construction of a territorialized Zionist Jew was also aided by the ‘othering’ of two additional groups arriving in Palestine in large numbers between 1946-1954. While greatly differing in social and economic status as well as cultural capital, both *Mizrahim* (literally ‘Easterners’, referring to Jews originating in Arab and Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa) and Holocaust survivors were narrated as uprooted, dependent communities that needed to be territorialized as part of an entire process of cultural development. Cultural development was to include a systematic erasure of all diasporic characteristics (e.g., foreign names and rituals) and the assignment of new, territorialized signifiers.

Human Dust: Holocaust Survivors in the Zionist Discourse

The earliest encounters of Palestinian Jews with Holocaust survivors had taken place on European soil as World War II was drawing to an end. As early as 1945, soldiers of the Jewish Brigade that participated in the liberation of concentration camps and envoys of the Jewish Agency had submitted detailed reports about the physical and mental conditions of the survivors. Many of these Zionist observers had taken a harshly critical approach towards the survivors depicting them as “a formless, faceless mass”, “human debris,” “a huge community of beggars,” degenerate, backward, diminished not only

physically and psychologically but also morally” and as individuals who “had lost their self-respect, all faith in their fellowman and in altruism, to the point of cynicism, nihilism, and lawlessness” (Segev, 1993:116). While empathizing with Jewish survivors, Zionist envoys had clearly distinguished between ‘their struggle’ and ‘our struggle’, developing a demeaning image of the survivors. As Yablonka (1999) shows, in the envoys’ jargon,

“Holocaust survivors were considered inferior to the Jews of the *Yishuv*¹⁹, not only with regard to their ethics, but also because it was ‘taken for granted’ that much concentrated mental and emotional effort would be required for the survivors to integrate successfully into Israeli society, although a similar effort was not required of this society itself. Also, the Holocaust survivors were not seen as a group of people with independent thoughts and ideas, with a will and initiative of their own; rather, they were increasingly viewed as an object of doubtful quality, a subject for debate, some sort of body which needs to be led, directed and organized” (p. 57).

In the late 1940s, hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors had arrived in Palestine, seriously challenging the Zionist ideological discourse in several important ways. As diasporic Jews, they were immediately identified as predisposed to the same social ailments presented earlier, namely fluid identity, weak morale, and unrootedness. Moreover, their un-heroic behavior and passivity during the Nazi mass massacre was at odds with the discourse of armed resistance prevalent in late 1940s Palestine as the Jewish community was already deeply engaged in bloody clashes with local Palestinian Arabs. Shapira (1997) argues that during World War II, the Jewish community in

¹⁹ The Jewish community of Palestine

Palestine had been far more preoccupied with the unfolding of the fighting in Europe than it had with the gory details of the Jewish Holocaust. Whereas the former provided images of heroic resistance to the Nazis and their allies, anchored in a global myth of good vs. evil, the latter was seen as local, particular and even boring. The only notable exception had been the great interest taken by Zionists in Palestine in the 1943 uprising of the Jewish Ghetto of Warsaw. The month-long organized resistance that was carried out by several hundreds Jews and ultimately crushed by the Germans had subsequently become emblematic of the Jewish spirit and endurance. The uprising and its leaders had been quickly territorialized, 'Zionized' and portrayed as uniquely distinct from the mass Jewish diaspora amongst which they lived. Zertal (2005) identifies two strategies used to construct the discursive split between Ghetto rebels and other, non resisting European Jews, "First, by cloaking the rebels in the mantle of Zionism and transforming them into *Palmach*²⁰ fighters, accidentally snared in the spheres of diaspora; and, conversely, by rejecting the conduct of the Jewish masses and the elderly leaders...for failing to stand up and rebel" (p. 30-31). The re-territorialization of the Warsaw Ghetto rebels had ushered in their becoming part of Israel's national heroic mythology while at the same time re-affirmed Zionism's negation of the de-territorialized diasporic existence.

The image of Holocaust survivors (and European Jews during the war in general) as a flock of sheep passively led to be slaughtered, took hold among Zionist Jews in Palestine. Zionist writer David Frishman labeled survivors 'human dust', simultaneously capturing

²⁰ Hebrew abbreviation of *Plugot Machatz* (literally 'striking companies') of the "Hagana" – the underground military organization of the Jewish community in Palestine (Source: http://www.palmach.org.il/show_item.asp?itemId=8096&levelId=42798&itemType=0); last accessed February 19, 2007.

their status as displaced people and reasserting their identity as “people without spine, without personality who were blown hither and hither by the wind” (in Almog, 2000:87). Ben-Gurion himself called survivors “A mixed multitude of human dust without a language, without education, without roots and without any roots in the nation’s tradition and vision” (Ibid, p. 88). Many survivors, especially those arriving in Palestine shortly after the war, still suffered from weak bodies and fragile spirits. Often, Palestine-born Jews had come to attribute these physical and mental scars to life in the diaspora itself and *not* to the atrocities committed by the Germans.

Fears among Zionists in Palestine that survivors were not adequate human material for the Zionist project peaked in the late 1940s as the Jewish community in Palestine was on the brink of a full-fledged war with Palestinian Arabs. As Segev (1993:120) notes, among leaders of the community “There were those who said that survivors were liable to ‘poison’ Zionism, democracy, and progress and to obliterate the country’s socialist agricultural foundation, until it became one big Tel-Aviv”. Their frail appearance and diasporic past (still visible through their foreign-sounding names and accents), combined with their tendency to settle in urban centers had become dominant aspects in the Zionist discourse about Holocaust survivors. The latter rendered a group unfitting for the Zionist enterprise and -more importantly - unwilling to abandon the old habits of the diaspora in order to become true territorialized Jews.

More recent historical accounts show that despite being fixated in the national memory as ‘human dust’, most Holocaust survivors were much more resilient physically and

mentally. Yablonka (1999), for example, argues that compared to any other sizeable migrant group arriving in Palestine/Israel after the war, survivors were significantly younger and more educated. In addition, their small-size families (over 80% had either no children or one child only) made them a valuable human resource to the embryonic state. Yet, it was precisely their advantageous demographic profile that often played against them in integrating into Israeli society. Their strong urban tradition and overwhelming rejection of agricultural-communal lifestyle in the new country had resulted in a disproportionate settlement in large cities, further contributing to their image as diasporic Jews - eschewing a connection to the land and shying away from hard physical labor. Moreover, compared to other population groups, Holocaust survivors were many times more prone to emigrate from Israel in the first decade after independence. Discouraged by their uneasy absorption process in Israel and aided by their cultural capital and extended social networks abroad, survivors comprised more than half of Jewish emigrants in 1946-1956.

Overall, the Zionist discourse concerning Holocaust survivors as diasporic Jews lacking the proper morale, spirits and attachment to the land had played an important role in the social construction of Jewish territorial nationalism in its formative years. Their horrific experience notwithstanding, survivors embodied the colossal failure of any diasporic form of Jewish life and strengthened Zionists' conviction in the moral superiority of their territorial solution. Representing de-territorialized subjects - even in the aftermath of their migration to Israel/Palestine - survivors were the 'others' against which Zionism continued to preach and practice its territorial conception. Survivors' demographic

profile, including their middle-class pursuits and under-representation in the agricultural sector, were used as the 'constitutive outside' against whom Zionists continued to preach rural collectivist settlements and material simplicity.

From Unknown Lands: Mizrahi Jews as European Zionism's 'Others'

A second group of immigrants/refugees that arrived in Palestine in the first decade of independence comprised of Jews from the Arab/Muslim Middle East, including Iran, Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Yemen, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey and Syria. Lissak (1999) estimates that between 1948 and 1954 roughly 370,000 *Mizrahi* Jews (or *Mizrahim*, literally Easterners) had migrated to and settled in Israel. Much has been written about the encounter between *Mizrahim* and *Ashkenazim* (Jews of European descent) in the 1950s and the escalating ethnic tensions between the two groups in the following decades (see for example Ben-Refael, 1982; Deshen & Shokeid, 1984; Peres, 1971). Most of these scholarly studies essentialize the encounter as binary, between the European-originating, culturally superior Zionists and the uprooted, economically deprived, and educationally challenged Jewish refugees from the Orient. In addition, the hegemonic Zionist narrative portrays *Mizrahim* as the exotic sons of the Jewish people who were salvaged by their European brethren from their poor and hostile Arab/Muslim environment.

In the past two decades, a radical body of *Mizrahi* scholarly literature had emerged both in Israel and elsewhere that has sought to deconstruct the traditional Zionist narrative concerning the immigration of *Mizrahim* to Israel in the 1940s and 1950s and provide a

more balanced *Mizrahi* historiography (Chetrit, 2004; Hever, Shenhav & Motzafi-Haller, 2002; Shenhav, 2006). A key issue that has taken up by many post-colonial theoreticians is the extent to which *Mizrahim* had indeed been suffering systematic discrimination and socio-political exclusion in their countries of origin. To many, the failure of the Zionist movement to gain wide popular support among Jews of the Arab Middle East constitutes solid evidence that the vast majority of *Mizrahi* Jews was comfortably integrated in Arab societies and, therefore, harbored no plans to migrate to Palestine. In fact, in this new *Mizrahi* narrative, it was the Arab defeat in the 1948 war and the consequent rising nationalist sentiments among Arabs that eventually forced Jews to move to Palestine/Israel. Were it not for Jewish nationalism in Palestine, various Mizrahi intellectuals contend, Jewish communities in Arab societies (some of which had existed more than a millennium) would not have been annihilated. Narrating Jewish life in Arab lands as one of duress and migration to Israel as an act of enthusiastic absorption of the Zionist territorialized agenda, the argument concludes, had been instrumental in subjecting *Mizrahim* to the hegemonic order in Israel, rationalizing their disadvantageous socio-economic status, and reinforcing Zionism's image as savior of diasporic Jews everywhere.

Ella Shohat (1988; 2003) argues that the portrayal of *Mizrahim* as lacking roots and emerging out of nowhere was instrumental to Zionist hegemonic discourse. By intentionally ignoring their rich historic roots in Arab lands, hegemonic discourse in Palestine/Israel had rendered a picture of a ruptured community that could, indeed should, be re-territorialized, dismantled, and finally re-invented to fit the mold of the

national Jewish subject. Both displacement and dis-rememberment were imperative strategies of rendering a hollow *Mizrahi* identity, quickly to be filled by Zionist agents of socialization. Ashkenazi-Zionist schools, youth movements, and communal settlements were part of the all-embracing hegemonic, so-called melting-pot apparatus conceived to shred the remnants of *Mizrahi* Jewish identity as developed during centuries of living among Arabs. At the same time, their historic-geographic absence served Zionist leaders' aspirations to belittle (eliminate, if possible) any diasporic experience, let alone those that had taken place in underdeveloped societies. The combination of diasporic history and Arab cultural heritage, Shohat argues, had been a major challenge to the official Zionist narrative and needed to be dealt with in the context of the embryonic state. The solution was a systematic misrepresentation of historiographical and cultural *Mizrahi* identity. As Shohat writes,

“Within the Zionist view, Jews from West Asia/North Africa arrive from obscure corners of the globe to Israel, the Promised Land, to which they have always already been destined. In this way, *Mizrahim* could be claimed as part of a continuous Jewish History/geography whose alpha and omega is in the Land of Israel, a land that the Zionist movement purported to represent” (2003:52).

Inventing the *Mizrahi* geo-territorial and historical-cultural ruptures further legitimized Zionists attempts to uplift them from their chronic conditions of underdevelopment by settling them in isolated communities - ironically called ‘development towns’ – in the periphery (see also Yiftachel, 2000; Yiftachel & Tzfadia, 2004). Rewriting *Mizrahi* history and geography as one underlined by redemption reinforced Zionists' self-image

as saviors of the Jewish people in the diaspora and legitimized their systematic confinement to the socio-cultural, economic and political margins in Israel.

A salient feature in the hegemonic narrative of *Mizrahi* migration to Palestine/Israel is the passivity on the part of the migrants. The lack of *Mizrahi* agency and the fact that the act of migration is described as not requiring a special effort on the part of the individual migrant reinforces an image of an unimpressive voyage. In contrast to European Jews who had to overcome a range of hurdles (some physical, like the Mediterranean Sea), *Mizrahi* migration is narrated as un-heroic, almost normative insofar as subjects are *brought* to Israel. Thus, for example, the massive airlifting of Yemenite Jews in 1950 by the Israeli Air force was called ‘Operation Magic Carpet’, simultaneously evoking an Orientalist notion of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* and referring to migrants’ effortless transfer to the Holy land.

Shenhav (2006) argues that the close proximity of the *Mizrahi* diaspora to the homeland created a special problem for the Zionist narrative concerning Jews of the Middle East. Many *Mizrahim* interpreted their move to Palestine/Israel merely as an act of mobility *within* the same Arab/Muslim space, which stretched from Morocco to Iran. Hence, *Mizrahi* diasporic experience was neither one of displacement nor rupture, owing to the fact that they were simply moving within the same physical and cultural landscape. As political boundaries between the states of the predominantly Arab Middle East were still quite fuzzy in the 1940s, the immigration to Israel was seen by some *Mizrahim* as amounting to substituting one Arab space with another. Conceptualizing *Mizrahim* as

Arab Jews - a category that sees them as Jews by religion yet Arabs by culture and national affiliation - allows Shenhav to argue that the dismantling of this category was imperative to Zionism. The process involved de-Arabizing of *Mizrahi* Jews in order to fit them into the all too familiar mold of an underdeveloped, under-cultured diasporic group. Their sense of natural, uninterrupted belonging to the broad Arab Middle Eastern space (of which Palestine had been part) contradicted and significantly challenged the Zionist narrative concerning their lack of history, geography, and culture. In fact, as Hever (2002) notes, *Mizrahi* (migration) spaces were problematic insofar as

“They needed no others, neither Diasporic-Ashkenazi nor Orientalist-Arab [to constitute themselves]. In order to characterize and define the ‘here’, [Mizrahi space] needed not erase nor suppress the ‘there’. It constituted a continuous space that is a site of resistance against the hegemonic demand for self-erasure...and a site of alternative identity, which does not require an abandonment of old identities” (p. 211; translated from the Hebrew).

Conclusions

The Zionist movement’s primary objective had been to construct a robust and productive Jewish nation, deeply rooted in the territory of the Land of Israel. Jewish nationalism was contingent upon the social construction of a continuous, uninterrupted, and homogenous (de-Arabized, un-diasporic) space in which a fixed, singular, manufactured territorial Jewish identity will prevail. The construction process involved a simultaneous two-step strategy, namely the creation of a new territorial Jewish identity, and consistent attempts to de-construct (indeed, dismantle) the old identity prevalent among diasporic Jews. The former step had centered on the restoration of the historic link between the Jewish people

and the land; territorial practices were instrumental in this process. The latter step involved a discursive project of *Shelilat HaGalut* (Negation of Diaspora) designed to discredit cognitive and behavioral patterns associated with the diasporic mode of experience. Negation of the diaspora, and the social ailments that had accompanied it, were primarily attributed to the absence of sovereign Jewish territory. Weak physical and emotional capacities and compromised morality were explained against the background of the loose form of existence practiced by diasporic Jews. Deploying anti-Semitic notions of Jewish greediness, national disloyalty, and economic 'free riding', Zionists sought to undermine the traditional basis of Jewish life in the diaspora and offer a territorial alternative. Jewish territoriality was to replace the rootless spaces of the diaspora and elevate Jews to the desired level of a full-fledged nation.

As I have argued, the systematic discursive negation of diaspora-originating groups did not come to a halt with their territorialization. Instead, the arrival of migrants in the territory of Palestine/Israel was quite often the beginning of a more refined phase of identity de-construction. Treating Jewish diasporic identities as fixed, essentialized entities that must be eradicated in order to be re-constructed, Zionists had - figuratively and metaphorically - undone de-territorialized identities of migrants. The mobility associated with the diaspora, whether in Europe or the Orient, was seen as immanent socio-cultural threats to the rooted territoriality of the new Jew. Therefore, beginning in the 1940s 'un-diasporizing' process was imposed upon all mobile groups as a way to purify them of any diasporic residue. This ethno-cultural purification process was

instrumental to the Zionist enterprise as it fixed the nascent Israeli nation around a single socio-territorial identity against which all future groups would be constructed.

CHAPTER 4

FROM OVERT REJECTION TO ENTHUSIASTIC EMBRACEMENT: CHANGING STATE DISCOURSES ON ISRAELI EMIGRATION²¹

Introduction

Migration scholarship has long recognized the critical role played by states, through their political institutional apparatuses, in facilitating and discouraging human mobility. However, despite much theorization of migration policies formulated and enacted by receiving states (Bartram, 2004; Castles, 2004b; Freeman, 1995; Martin, 1994) relatively little has been written about the extent to which sending states' policies succeeded in effecting patterns of out-migration (Sayari, 1986). As Massey (1999, p. 303) convincingly argues, "...to the extent that state policies have been mentioned at all, attention has focused primarily on immigrant-receiving countries". The inevitable result, he concluded, was that "[Sending] state's role either in promoting or limiting international migration is poorly understood and lacks adequate theoretical underpinnings" (Ibid).

In an attempt to fill this theoretical gap, recent years have witnessed a flurry of studies theorizing migration from the sending state perspective (Biao, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2005; Levitt & de la Dehesa, 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Panossian, 1998). Scholars have generated much needed accounts of the wide range of transnational socio-cultural (Levitt,

²¹ This chapter is an earlier version of Cohen, Nir (2007). From overt rejection to enthusiastic embracement: changing state discourses on Israeli emigration. *GeoJournal*, 68(2/3), 267-278. I wish to thank David A. Plane and Beth A. Mitchneck in whose graduate seminar this paper originated. I further acknowledge their helpful critique in the process of writing and refining the manuscript.

2001; Mahler, 2001; Ong, 1999; Vertovec, 2004) and political (Itzigsohn, 2000; Smith, 2003) practices whose performance fundamentally altered social relations among various groups within countries of origin. Others have clearly shown that sending state policies often had meaningful effects on emigrants' legal status (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1987), will to return, assimilation, and levels of social and economic mobility (Heisler, 1985; Ilahi, 1999) in their new environments. Yet with few exceptions (Martinez-Saldaña, 2003; Panossian, 2003), sending states' relations with their emigrant populations were examined within the highly formalized politico-legal arenas and their effects measured by examining the formulation and enactment of migration laws and policies (Fitzgerald, 2006). Much less attention has been paid thus far to the discourses surrounding – often preceding – the making of the so-called *politics of migration* (Cohen & Layton-Henry, 1997; Freeman, 1995; Geddes, 2003). When mentioned, discourses about migration were often examined in the context of receiving countries to assess degrees of openness and likelihood of assimilation of incoming migrant groups (Chock, 1995; Jacobs, 1998). Discourses surrounding migration in countries of origin have been significantly under-theorized, leaving a substantial gap in migration literature.

This paper deploys a critical discourse analysis methodology (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1993) to examine the emergence of three (sometimes overlapping) discourses on emigration in Israel. It argues that discourses have often been strong predictors of subsequent changes in state policies - and other programmatic initiatives - aimed at Israeli citizens abroad. It further examines the linkages between the various discursive phases and processes of (trans-) national identity formation among

emigrants. By juxtaposing the discursive construction of emigration (and its linkages to nation-forming political strategies in Israel) and the effects they have had on emigrant identities in their new cities of residence the paper contributes to the emerging literature on transnational politics (Fitzgerald, 2005; Itzigsohn, 2000; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2001).

In investigating the various phases of the discourse the article addresses the following questions: (1) how has the Israeli state discursively constructed the emigrant in light of the changing political dynamic within Israel? And, (2) has – and if so, how - this construction process effected Israeli migrants' concept of national identity?

Theoretical Framework

States' relations with their citizens abroad have been traditionally discussed from the sending states' perspective and in the context of labor-migration flows from less to more developed countries (Portes, 1978; Stark & Bloom, 1985; Todaro, 1969). Migration scholars tended to highlight types of assistance rendered by sending states to their labor migrants (Massey, 1999). The institutional support provided by remittance-hungry states for their laborers abroad was deemed critical in facilitating the desired financial transference and, by extension, the country's economy. Douglas Massey (1999) identifies a sending-country migration policy gap in the literature and argues that little has been written about the mechanisms of regulating, administering, and facilitating migration and return migration in countries of origin despite their important effect on flows in both ways. Accounts of state-emigrant relations, therefore, appeared to have been primarily

economic in nature and overwhelmingly one-sided, depicting emigrants as passive recipients of homeland governmental aid.

The transnational approach to migration (Schiller, Basch & Szanton Blanc, 1992; Kivisto, 2001; Vertovec, 2001; 2003; 2004) emphasizes more balanced, two-sided relations between sending states and emigrants (or trans-migrants as they are often called) in which continuous interaction takes place in more or less formal channels between the former and the latter (Ong, 1999; Portes et al., 2002; Taylor, 1999; Yoo, 2000). Itzigsohn (2000), for example, analyzes the emergence and institutional structure of Dominican, Haitian, and Salvadorian transnational politics²². Despite key differences all three diasporic communities were found to have been significantly involved in the politics of their sending countries. Simultaneously, Itzigsohn identifies a pattern of continuous meddling by sending countries' institutional apparatus (including political parties) in diasporic communal affairs. Similarly, Basch et al. (1994) note that in the Filipino and Caribbean diasporic communities,

“Transmigrants have all at various times made demands on their home governments for greater incorporation into the political processes of their countries of origin. In this *they have responded to, but also have helped generate, state policies and practices* that have implicitly or explicitly defined transmigrants as part of the body politic of their home nation-states. While transnational connections are actualized through the flows of money, material goods, ideas, and ways of thinking across national borders, such connections are

²² Transnational politics is defined "as a realm of recurrent and institutionalized interactions and exchanges between, on the one hand, immigrants and their social and political organizations and, on the other hand, the political institutions and the state apparatus of the country of origin" (p. 1130).

reinforced by a language of allegiance and loyalty to nation created by the home states”
(p. 260; italics added).

The growing numbers of studies on sending states’ involvement with their diasporic communities (and vice versa) notwithstanding, gaps still exist in our understanding of how these relations play out under different political regimes and economic circumstances. As Nagel and Staeheli recently noted,

“It would be useful to evaluate more fully the role of sending governments in transnationalism. It seems that much of the literature that addresses this issue focuses on states that attempt to foster linkages with *émigrés* and to bind them to the country of origin. Yet these actions and their effects are surely dependent on the nature of the state....Discussions of transnationalism and post-nationalism, therefore, need to consider a range of relationships between the state and its *émigrés* (2004: 20).

Inasmuch as state-emigrants’ relations take place at different socio-political spaces and under varying economic circumstances it is imperative that we examine the continuously changing patterns of (mutual) intervention. The Israeli experience makes an ideal case study for several reasons; first, as Jewish in-migration is the state’s *raison d’être*, emigration has always been a highly controversial subject although not a well-theorized one; second, Israel’s tumultuous geo-political conditions have had considerable effects on the state’s relations with its emigrants and thus make it a fertile grounds for the study of state-diaspora relations over extended time period; and finally, despite recent programmatic initiatives that recognize (once-shunned) emigrant concentrations as full-

fledged diasporic communities, Israel still has not formulated an official policy towards its diasporic citizens.

Israeli Emigration: Key Trends and Figures

Israeli emigration is as old as the state's independence. Outflows from the Jewish homeland began shortly after the establishment of the state in May 1948, yet their volume and composition have varied considerably over the years (Cohen & Haberfeld, 1997; Della Pergola, 2005; Herman, 1988; Herman & LaFontaine, 1983). In the first decade after independence (1948-1958), an excess of 100,000 citizens left the country, many of whom were recent Jewish immigrants returning to their countries of origin in Eastern Europe (particularly Romania and Poland), Western Asia (Turkey and Iran), and North Africa (mainly Morocco and Tunisia)²³. However, the percentage of Sabras (Israeli-born Jews) among the departing has steadily risen over the years, quickly increasing the numbers of Israeli emigrants to Canada, the US, France, and South Africa. Despite a severe economic crisis, it was found that economic considerations were not the most important push factor among emigrants in this early period. Instead, ethnic discrimination among Mizrahim (Jews originating in Arab and other Muslim states) alongside more general feelings of social exclusion and isolation experienced by newcomers were quoted as the major emigration driving forces (*Zemanim*, 10/19/1953).

²³ The Minister of Interior estimated that in Israel's first five years of independence (1948-1953) roughly three quarters of emigrants were Jewish immigrants and only one quarter were Israeli-born Jews (Protocol of the Proceedings of the 197th session of the 2nd Knesset, 02/25/1953, p. 817).

Economic and political turbulence of the 1960s accelerated emigration and, as it drew to an end, the Minister of Immigrant Absorption reported that a total of 180,000 Israelis had emigrated since the establishment of the state²⁴. Yet, the decade following the 1973 war saw the most massive numbers of Israelis leaving the country (see Figure 1). The 1980 Lahis Report²⁵ estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 Israelis were living in the United States alone²⁶, primarily in the New York and Los Angeles metropolitan areas.

More recently, the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption estimated that 760,000 Israeli Jews have left the country over the years. The vast majority of whom (60%) are believed to have settled in North America (mostly the United States), with other major concentrations include Europe (25%), Oceania, South America (predominantly Brazil and Argentina), and South Africa. Roughly 20% of the total emigrants are children under the age of 18 (Alon, 2003).

Emigrants from Israel conform to many of the socio-economic patterns exhibited by other groups originating in industrialized nations. Gold (2002) notes that Israeli emigrants bear important similarities to other groups in terms of their educational and professional skills

²⁴ Minister of Immigrant Absorption Nathan Peled in response to a query by Member of Knesset, R. Arazi in *Divrey HaKnesset*, 12/14/1970, p. 485 (Hebrew).

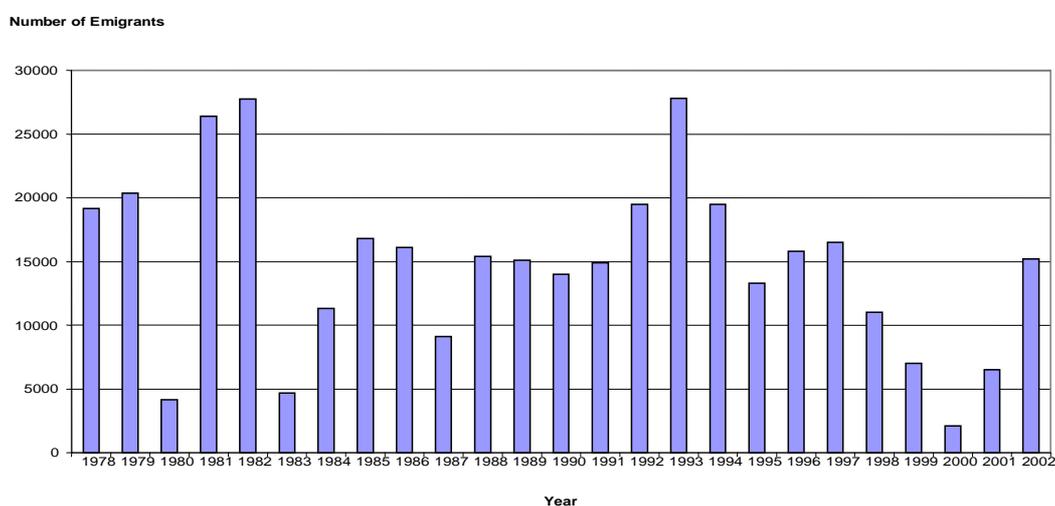
²⁵ Shmuel Lahis, the Jewish Agency's General Manager accompanied the Israeli Vice Prime Minister (Simcha Ehrlich) on 'a tour to study Israeli emigration' in New York and Los Angeles. His findings from the 10-day 1980 tour were published the following year in a report bearing his name.

²⁶ In a 1982 interview in the *Jerusalem Post* Lahis was asked how – in the absence of reliable data – he arrived at these figures. His reply was, "There was no argument about the claim that there were at least 300,000 *yordim*. Everyone in the US insisted that the figure was closer to 500,000. But because no one really had proof, I resorted in my report to the range of 300,000 to 500,000" (in Goel, Y. (1982) "The Numbers Game" *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, June 11, 1982, p. 8).

(mostly white collar, highly skilled occupations), eventual cities of settlement, rates of residential concentration and other socio-economic attributes such as age, social class, and family structure (see also Gold & Philips, 1996; Ritterband, 1986) .

Figure 1: Estimated Emigration from Israel (Total Population, 1978-2002)

[Source: Lustick, Ian (2004). "Recent Trends in Emigration from Israel: The Impact of Palestinian Violence". Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Israel Studies (AIS), Jerusalem, June 14-16].



The State and the Discursive Construction of Israeli Emigrants

Similar to other groups of international migrants (Toticaguena, 2004, Panossian, 1998; Gutierrez, 1999), Israelis had over the years uneasy relations with both their left-behind co-nationals and their sending state, both of which had been at times highly critical of their move. This paper divides Israeli state-emigrants relationships into three phases and argues that each has been characterized by a distinct set of characteristics and dominated by a different public discourse within Israel. In the first phase (1948-1977), termed 'Overt Rejection', highly critical stances were embedded in the discursive construction of

emigration as a social problem (Har-Even, 1989) and emigrants as national delinquents. The second phase - 'Cautious Rapprochement', lasting roughly from the late 1970s to early 1990s - witnessed a series of discursive ruptures culminating in the adoption of a more lenient official approach towards emigrants. Finally, a radical discursive shift in the conceptualization of Israeli emigration took place in the mid-1990s. Termed 'Enthusiastic Embracement', this phase has been characterized by a large number of state-initiated and funded programs embarked upon as part of a discursive expansion of Israel's incorporation regime (Shafir & Peled, 2002; Soysal, 1994) to re-assert its citizens abroad.

Migration discourses in Israel, I therefore argue, have always been used as political strategies aimed at demarcating the boundaries of the nation. The discursive construction of emigrants has been critically important to processes of national identity formation in and out of Israel; emigrants were instrumental in the state's attempts to clearly distinguish between 'us' 'here' (in Israel) and 'them' 'there' (abroad). As part of this strategy and in line with changing socio-economic and political conditions in Israel, emigrants were 'constructed' differently at different times. These discursive changes, I contend, have had a major effect on both the public image of emigrants in Israel as well as the sense of national identity experienced by emigrants themselves.

Overt Rejection: The construction of migrants as social deviants (1948-1977)

In the first three decades of independence migration of Jews from Israel had been overwhelmingly dealt with from the standpoint of the sending state (Lamdani, 1983; Shokeid, 1988). Out-migration was conceived as a major threat to the existence of both

the Jewish state and society, second in importance only to the always-present fear of Arab neighbors' invasion. Arguments against Israeli migration often quoted the damaging effect it had on both the state and society. Sobel (1986, p. 41) explains that, "In a country where the factor of a real physical threat to its continuance is present, every loss through emigration and every decline through lack of immigration or lowered birth rate is rightly conceived of as threatening."

Goldscheider (2002) notes that concerns over rates of emigration were largely and intentionally exaggerated. He argues that inflated estimates ought to be examined against their 'deep-rooted ideological contexts' (p. 61), namely fundamental Zionist assertions about the important links between territory and nation-hood. While certainly a minority, state officials who advocated a more realistic outlook on emigration did voice their opinion, but it was almost always in the seclusion of marginal parliamentary committees. In the absence of a real political debate (Sabar, 2000), let alone the making of pertinent policies, the emerging discourse on emigration in the young state was mostly confined to party-affiliated newspapers. In the vast majority of these accounts emigrants were construed as selfish individuals, antagonistic to both state and societal interests. Derogatively nicknamed *Yordim* (Hebrew for those who descend), Israeli emigrants were denounced as enemies of the Zionist enterprise and accused of profoundly debilitating the nation and its nascent identity (Hacohen, 2003). The following is a typical portrayal of emigrants in the highly ideologized press of the young state,

"You can sugar-coat emigration as much as you want, the act itself will forever remain a disgrace and emigrants are worthy of our scorn and not the so-called explanation of the

‘objective’ psychological, social and economic motives that made them leave... [They] have emigrated not because of all of these reasons, but only because they were very weak, culturally hollow human beings who lacked any elementary human pride...’²⁷

During this phase of *overt rejection* emotions often ran high as public officials decried those who had given up on the newly created Jewish state and consciously (if unjustifiably) decided to emigrate. Perhaps the most famous, but certainly not the only, statement made by an incumbent politician during this stage about emigrants was that of Yitzhak Rabin. Denouncing emigration in a 1976 televised interview, the then Prime Minister referred to emigrants as *nefolet shel nemoshot* (Hebrew for ‘the fallen among the weaklings’). Emigrants were also frequently accused of being socially and morally irresponsible and their act was seen as threatening economic productivity and communal cohesiveness, which, some argued, could eventually lead to the total demise of the Zionist project²⁸.

The discourse surrounding out-migration reveals the enormously fragile nature of budding Israeli national identity. As a relatively new phenomenon, emigration was a socio-cultural anomaly state agencies were unsure how – or whether - to tackle. The notion that emigrants were renouncing their Israeliness stood in sharp contrast to the solid and deeply rooted national subject (pre)-state agencies had been striving to construct since early Zionism in the late 19th century. Interestingly, the discourse in this period bore

²⁷ Bar-Yosef, Y. [Salchanut Muzara Bemiktzat] A somewhat strange forgiveness. *Davar*, 12/17/1957 (Hebrew).

²⁸ Leket, Y. (1980) *Neged HaYeridah* [Against the Emigration]. *LaMasbir: HaHistadrut HaKlalit shel HaOvdim B'Eretz Yisrael* [General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel] (Hebrew).

uncanny resemblances and often blended with the traditional anti-diasporic trajectory aimed during pre-statehood towards Jews of the Diaspora (Shapira, 1997). Almog (2000, p. 77), for example, argues that in the pre-statist Zionist discourse in Palestine “the Diaspora Jew was described as the diametric opposite of the pioneer of the Land of Israel”. Thus, Israeli Jews who voluntarily chose to leave the country were portrayed in similar terms as Diasporic Jews, namely lacking a sense of communal responsibility, greedy, and pre-disposed towards immediate gratification.

With very few exceptions (Cohen, 1959), this phase of intricate relations has seen the state taking no real interest in emigrants. The written press in Israel of the 1950s and 1960s was full of accounts ‘diasporizing’, criminalizing²⁹ and in general devaluing³⁰ emigrants. A collective mass of fleeting bodies, emigrants’ social identities were systematically repressed so as not to ‘legitimize’ emigration or render their motives ‘justified’. Thus, by removing themselves from Israel’s physical space, emigrants had also lost their rights to take part and influence the production of any meaningful public spaces within and sometimes outside Israel. Overwhelmingly, emigrants were discursively constructed as floating, placeless agents whose act bordered on mental illness. Narrated by the state or its representatives in the publicly-owned media, emigrants were denied a place in the nation.

²⁹ Steuchinski, A. [Matzavam Shel Hayordim MeYisrael] The conditions of Israeli emigrants. *Davar*, 2/3/1953 (Hebrew).

³⁰ Aviel, Y. [Yordim “Yerudim” BeOstryia] Morally diminished emigrants in Austria. *HaBoker*, 1/4/1955 (Hebrew).

‘Cautious Rapprochement’: Emigrants as rational decision-makers (1977-1992)

As economic and political realities in Israel changed towards the late 1970s so did the discursive construction of emigration. The swift victory of the 1967 war in tandem with the military fiasco of 1973 (and the subsequent socio-political unrest) shattered many Israelis' deep-rooted beliefs in the integrity of their leaders and the stability of their state system. For many citizens, these dramatic events proved that Israel - the epitome of the Zionist project – was no longer the small, frail Jewish state whose existence they were led to believe they had been fighting. Consequently, the fear of dwindling human resources, once a cardinal anti-emigration argument, has all but lost its appeal. In fact, by the early 1980s, references to macro-level explanations and/or consequences of emigration (e.g., economic productivity, social cohesion) were few and far between; instead, the discourse has almost entirely shifted to micro (e.g., household), mostly economic motives and effects of emigration (Elitzur & Elitzur, 1973; Fein, 1983). Gradually, emigrants were seen as economically driven, rationale agencies that make individual and household decisions based on a wide array of practical considerations. This discursive shift, I argue, must be understood against dire economic circumstances, emerging trends of social and cultural atomization within Israeli society and the growing criticism towards the political and military apparatus, both of which prestige suffered major blows in the aftermath of the 1973 War. Bottom-up interest in emigration as a viable economic strategy was beginning to build and the need to better understand it.

Alluding to the traditional lack of public attention towards Israeli emigration, Sobel (1986) notes, “not dealing with an issue of weight and importance does not lead to its

going away, just as approaching it head on does not assure resolution” (p. 5). Thus, he argued, there is a pressing need “to shed some light on the *why* of these concerns and to explain some of the key factors underlying the emigration phenomena” (ibid). In a similar fashion, Ra’anana referred to emigration as a phenomenon, “the existence of which everyone admits, but no one discusses” (quoted in Sabar, 2000:3).

At a more personal level, this stage, which I termed *limited acceptance*, had been characterized by an ever-growing number of emigrants. By the late 1970s unofficial estimates put the number of Israeli citizens abroad at more than 200,000 (Levavy, 1977). The rising number of departures gave rise to a largely bifurcated discourse; on the one hand, emigration as a phenomenon was still mostly discouraged in public; on the other hand, there appear to have been budding signs of reserved popular acceptance – and even encouragement of – emigrants as individuals. The dilemma is clearly expressed in the words of Shmuel Lahis of the Jewish Agency,

“It is easy to criticize the fact that one is sick and has a fever, but let us examine the reasons for the disease... [Let us] determine what made some of these people leave Israel and what kind of crisis did they experience. And - believe me - I know it was for many a crisis. I am not defending emigrants, but I do know that they have all suffered major crisis... [We need to] find the balance between ostracizing and excluding them on the one hand and [refrain from] legitimizing their act on the other hand...When you ostracize somebody you make your life much easier. But we must not let ourselves forget that it is partly our responsibility; Israel has a responsibility towards the diaspora, let alone Israelis who emigrated”³¹

³¹ Proceedings of the Parliamentary Committee on Immigrant Absorption, 2/15/1983, p. 10 (Hebrew).

The ambivalence expressed by Israeli officials has not gone unnoticed by emigrants. As Meyers (2001: 81-83) argues, emigrants themselves adopted this irregular trajectory which sees emigration as a problem yet expresses sympathy towards individual emigrants. Analyzing 1980s articles appearing in *Israel Shelanu* (Our Israel), a New York-published Hebrew newspaper, he notes, “While, on the political-declarative level, the newspaper denounced the phenomenon [of migration] in accordance with the official Israeli line, it did not condemn individual immigrants, but rather identified and sympathized with them”.

These popular more favorable attitudes towards migration in general and individual emigrants in particular could not be completely ignored by state agencies. By the early 1980s, a flurry of state-sponsored studies reflected the slowly changing discourse about emigration. To the extent that it was still used, the ‘blame’ for emigration was now equally distributed between emigrants and the state. The latter, it was argued, failed to provide the former group with the appropriate skills necessary to compete in a tight labor market such as Israel’s. Consequently, emigrants were discursively constructed as loyal Israeli citizens whose wish to lead a quiet, comfortable life was not granted. Far from being ‘the fallen among the weaklings’, emigrants were depicted as successful and economically productive individuals whose talents were not being fully utilized in Israel due to its small labor market and limited opportunities.

In sharp contrast to the previous discourse, in which the social identities of emigrants were suppressed by state agencies and effectively subordinated to a single, overarching,

and territorialized Zionist national identity, by the mid-1980s a discursive rupture had taken place which permitted, indeed encouraged, a careful examination of the 'faces behind emigration'. These initial signs of the disintegration of a single, cohesive national identity, I argue, forced the state to rethink its spatial strategies and introduced new meanings to Israeli identity. Thus, the discourse in this stage gradually shifted from the national to the local, from the general to the particular, and from collective to individual responsibility.

The (still) conditional acceptance of migrants by their left-behind co-nationals aided them in their quest for re-incorporation into the Israeli nation. As Israel's (once single) national identity slowly crumbled, emigrants were no longer seen as social outsiders; their de-territorialized status notwithstanding, emigrants were thought of as 'citizens without the right to vote'. Simultaneously, the apologetic tone that in the past accompanied emigrants' expressions has all but disappeared as many began to re-assert their national identity in a way that is congruent with their new geographic location. Emphasizing a de-territorialized national identity has been strategic in emigrants' attempts to depict diasporic communities as a natural extension of the nation-state. Yet it would take some time (and many socio-political changes within Israel) before the state is ready to embrace them and recognize their move as legitimate and them as an integral part of the nation.

Enthusiastic Embrace (1990s and beyond): An emerging cultural diaspora?

The roots of the third and final stage in Israeli state-emigrants relations can be traced to the early 1990s. An emerging Israeli-Palestinian peace process along with a stronger than

ever national economy gave rise to a transformation in public attitudes and policies towards Israeli emigration. For the same reasons, this phase, which I termed *enthusiastic embracement*, had also been characterized by a substantial number of returned migrants, estimated between 10 and 15 thousands annually in 1992-1995 (Alon, 2003).

Once again, regional and international events have significantly contributed to a new theorization of international migrants, namely transnationalism (Bailey, 2001; Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Massey et al., 1998; Vertovec, 2003). In the Israeli context, transnationalism was mobilized to refer to the existence of Israeli diasporic communities in North America and Western Europe (Cohen, 1999; Cohen & Gold, 1997; Gold, 2002; Lahav & Arian, 1999). Emigrants were theorized as Israelis on the move whose time-space axes as well as national identities were spanning more than one nation-state. Owing to transnational migration theory, Israeli emigrants were thought of as bridging the ever-shrinking gap between Israel and their cities of residence. The physical distance between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem on the one end, and Los Angeles, London, or Toronto on the other has shortened not only as a result of the advances in transportation and information and communication technologies, but, more importantly, because migrants in these and other global cities were seen as floating agencies who engage in multiple transnational strategies, benefiting from the advantages of both places and hybridizing their cultural identities as a result.

This shift has not gone unnoticed by the Israeli state; as transnational Israelis were becoming ever more apparent in the economic, political, and cultural landscape of such

cities New York, Toronto, Miami and Sydney, so were their relations with the homeland state – and, consequently, their own identities - being negotiated and constantly reshaped. The discursive construction of emigrants as simultaneously Israeli *and* global citizens in the most influential Western urban centers became one of the underpinnings of this period. Israel's emigrant communities were increasingly seen as an indispensable resource strategically positioned to link the holy land with the lands of multiple opportunities. On its part, the Israeli state was constantly looking for ways to capitalize on its emigrants' success abroad and drum up their support for various national causes. Global cities soon became spaces of state-diaspora negotiations on the meaning of national identity and loyalty.

The quickly warming relations notwithstanding, it is important to note that significant differences continue to exist in the state's perceptions towards various groups of emigrants. Some have attributed this differentiated stance to narrow, politically motivated sectarian interests. Thus, Yuri Stern, a Member of Israel's Knesset, argued in a recent discussion on absentee voting that despite major progress made in official attitudes towards emigrants the state's approach is still plagued with hypocrisy. He was especially enraged by the inconsistencies in public policies towards different emigrant groups based on their present level of economic success.

“We all know that these pseudo-ideological statements [by politicians objecting absentee voting] are hypocritical. It is a well-known fact that politicians socialize with emigrants whenever they are abroad. They even raise funds among wealthy emigrants. It is all about personal status. If he is a criminal then he is a ‘yored’, a lousy emigrant; but if he built

the tallest building in New York or won some prestigious film award then he is *an Israeli residing in New York* or *residing in Los Angeles*, that's how he is portrayed in the media"³² (*Italics added*).

Similarly, a 1990s skilled labor shortage in Israel's booming high-tech industry prompted the government to embark on a massive transnational campaign to recruit Israeli professionals residing abroad³³. Full-page ads in US editions of Israeli newspapers inviting scientists to state-sponsored professional recruitment fairs in San Francisco, Seattle, and New York were a daily spectacle. Lucrative compensation packages and extended socio-economic benefits tailored to the specific needs of returning Israeli families were some of the strategies devised by state agencies to attract emigrants. Nationalist rhetoric was often used to appeal to what was defined as emigrants' strong psycho-cultural bond with their country of origin. Israel's cultural diversity, sense of community, and prospering national economy were recurrent themes in many of these ads. The idea was to appeal to young, professional emigrants and their families by portraying Israel as a communal space that stands in sharp contrast to the alienated suburban neighborhoods in global cities.

The outbreak of regional violence in 2000 and the subsequent downturn in Israel's economy have solidified the changing discourse on emigration. Emigrants were often constructed as a potential human pool into which the state might tap during periods of

³² Proceedings of the Parliamentary Committee on Immigrant Absorption, 2/10/1997, p. 24-5 (Hebrew).

³³ *Metzapim Lecha Babait*, [Waiting for You at Home] (2005). (The Department for Returning Residents, Jerusalem: Ministry for Immigrant Absorption Press). (Hebrew)

security instability and economic depressions. At the same time, public officials repeatedly admitted that the state must do its utmost to make itself worthy of its lost citizens. The chairwoman of the Parliamentary Committee on Immigrant Absorption recently urged the government to “focus on solutions [for emigration] like budget allocation towards organizing in-migration campaigns, improving absorption and making Israel a more attractive place for scientists and high-technology professionals”³⁴.

In line with this official proactive approach towards its emigrants a variety of state-funded, reach-out programs were initiated that targeted emigrants. The ‘*Bo HaBayta*’ campaign is one recent example. Hebrew for ‘Return Home’, *Bo HaBayta* is a public-private initiative to populate communal settlements with young, professional Israeli families. The program’s marketing campaign appealed to Israeli emigrants in order, “to absorb families in a familiar, supportive setting in order to enable them a more ‘easy landing’ in Israel”³⁵. Against background images of blooming fields and smiling toddlers, emigrants were called upon to return home to “...fulfill their dreams, aspirations and abilities when close to their family and friends...in an ‘enabling environment’, in a supportive community”. Meaningful community life was to substitute the alleged urban alienation experienced by Israeli emigrants in various global cities.

While actively appealing to emigrants’ feelings of national pride towards Israel’s strong economy and solid technological industry, the state also strives to re-vitalize its

³⁴ Proceedings of the Parliamentary Committee on Immigrant Absorption, 12/20/2004 (Hebrew).

³⁵ *Bo Habayta* website [http://bohabayta.com/portal/home/default_Eng.asp]; last accessed on 09/01/2006 (Hebrew).

relationship with those who have no intentions of ever returning to Israel. Realizing the political and economic benefits of well informed and loyal transnational communities, the Israeli state had begun to allocate additional human and financial resources towards strengthening ties with its citizens abroad. Perceived as the extension of the nation-state, Israeli emigrant communities in large North American and European cities receive occasional guidance and assistance through state-sponsored programs aimed at “maintaining connections with the Israeli population abroad”³⁶.

Thus, for example, a dozen cultural centers have been opened since the early 1990s in Israeli embassies and consulates in various US and Western European cities. Named ‘Israeli Houses’ (*Batim Yisraelim*), they sponsor and organize a range of communal events and activities - including Israeli holidays and memorial days, Hebrew book clubs, and drama groups for both adults and children - in order to strengthen the relationship between Israel and citizens who reside in these metropolitan areas. Having abandoned the judgmental attitude long characteristic of the state towards Israelis abroad, staff in these centers encourages the active participation of emigrants in their activities as a way to support the country and retain some sense of Israeli identity.

Recognizing the multiple advantages embedded in their new de-territorialized status, a growing number of emigrants now struggle to make sense of their new transnational identity. Their Israeliness notwithstanding, many feel at home in their new environments and celebrate their diasporic mode. Being of Israel and being in Israel no longer clash in

³⁶ Ministry of Immigrant Absorption English website [http://www.moia.gov.il/english/index_en.asp]; last accessed on 08/12/05

emigrants' conception of identity. This idea is nicely captured in the words of an Israeli émigré describing her identity,

“Once and again the same questions resurface – who are we, what are we doing here. And while it is very tiring to hear the same questions and make the same responses, let me try one more time. So, we’re Israelis, that’s who we were born. But life is too short and everyone has to make his own decisions and if we - or anybody else - decided to leave Israel it is perfectly fine. But let us not forget that you can get the person out of Israel but you cannot get Israel out of the person, and the truth is that I don’t think I would even want to. So what’s my point? Well, I say, next year in Jerusalem or Haifa or Tel Aviv, but most importantly, I wish that when I am 60 years old I’ll be back home in Israel”³⁷.

Conclusions

Emigration discourses in Israel have come a long way since the state’s early years of independence. What began as utter exclusion of emigrants from the public sphere (and the nation itself), gradually changed to capture emigration as a rational economic strategy and recently culminated in the construction of a de-territorialized Israeli citizen. As I have shown, the discursive constructions taking place within Israel have had important impacts on emigrants’ identity formation processes.

The recent conceptualization of emigrant communities as viable cultural diasporas (Cohen, 1997) embedded in loosely connected transnational spaces (Pries, 2001), is now accepted by most state agencies in Israel. More importantly, this discursive

³⁷ *Israelis Abroad Forum*; [<http://www.tapuz.co.il/tapuzforum/main/anashim.asp?forum=25&pass=1>]; last accessed on 08/21/05 (Hebrew)

transformation has paved the way to a small - yet significant - number of state-conceived and funded initiatives that emphasize emigrants' (trans)-national cultural identity. Thus, not only does the state recognize its diasporic citizens as legitimate part of the nation, but further sees itself responsible for maintaining their national identity. On their part, emigrants are eagerly (re)-embracing their identity as Israeli citizens, yet no longer feel compelled to shun their new status as or justify their course of action. In fact, in a self-initiated move towards adopting a transnational identity, some long time emigrants in the West Coast of the US define themselves as Israeli-Americans (IsrAmericans).

Despite these seemingly idyllic relations, Israel is still a long way from having a clear body of policy towards its emigrants. Chronic shortage of funding, fragmented institutional framework, and short electoral cycles in the recent decade have thus far prevented any serious attempts to formulate a cohesive policy towards emigration and emigrant communities. While virtually every state representative I interviewed recognized, indeed supported, the importance of a strong and influential Israeli diaspora, very few could recall any serious discussion in Israel concerning the topic. It appears as if the programs mentioned in this article were, for the most part, isolated initiatives that do not necessarily represent any systematic policy-making on the part of the Israeli state.

Further research is still needed to determine whether the recent changes in state discourses towards Israeli citizens abroad is a reflection of a fundamental, more progressive approach that would lead to a clearer stance supporting the emergence of an Israeli cultural diaspora. The concentration of Israelis in a fairly small number of Western

countries - and even a smaller number of global cities – could facilitate state efforts to reach out to its citizens in order to re-assert their cultural identities. As well, the enthusiasm on the part of many diasporic community activists should accelerate this process of cultural de-territorialization. However, none of these factors could sustain the project in the absence of a proven political will.

CHAPTER 5

PRACTICING CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP: THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF ISRAELI MIGRANTS

Introduction

The explosion of citizenship studies in the last decade is no doubt related to the significant changes brought about by the reconfiguration of traditional political regimes, the production of new global frameworks of capital accumulation, the decoupling of polity membership and ethno-religious identity (itself linked to massive waves of cross-border human mobility), and the emergence of the so-called ‘new social movements’ (Shafir, 1998; Isin & Turner, 2002). These and other fragmentations have radically changed the nature of the long-conceived contract between individuals and the state and led to what Ong (2006) terms ‘mutations in citizenship’, namely, “a shifting political landscape in which heterogeneous populations claim diverse rights and benefits associated with citizenship, as well as universalizing criteria of neo-liberal norms of human rights” (p. 500).

One of the key manifestations of this new political landscape is the conceptualization of citizenship in cultural terms (Pakulski, 1997; Stevenson, 2003). Once predicated upon the civic (rights that guarantee a considerable amount of individual freedom), political (the right to vote), and social (“the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society³⁸”), citizenship has recently become associated with “the behaviors, discourses, and practices

³⁸ Marshall, T.H. (1964). *Class, Citizenship and Social Development: Essays by T. H. Marshall*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

that give meaning to citizenship as lived experience” (Siu, 2001: 9; see also Miller, 2007). Conceptualized as a (cultural) practice, citizenship transcends its former legally-defined, bureaucratically-confined space, “to occupy positions both inside and outside of the formal structures of administrative power” (Stevenson, 2001: 2).

Despite its obvious theoretical merits and application in a variety of cases (Miller, 1998; 2007; Stevenson, 2001; 2003), cultural citizenship and the practices associated with it have thus far been almost exclusively deployed as a means to examine processes of negotiation over cultural rights *within* the confines of one nation-state. With a few notable exceptions (Siu, 2001), cultural citizenship has become synonymous with the struggle of broadly defined disenfranchised groups, including incoming migrants (Ong, 1996), ethno-racial minorities (Flores & Benmayor, 1997; Rosaldo, 1994), and disabled individuals (Marks, 2001), to claim cultural rights and shape spaces of collective representation by partaking in the process of producing the public domain. The key objective of cultural citizenship according to this view is to legitimize social groups’ rightful claims for representation in the eyes of hegemonic social and state agents (Flores & Benmayor, 1997). A different approach sees cultural citizenship as a subject-forming process through which the meaning of *being* a state subject is discursively and practically constructed out of the inter-relations between the state and its prospective citizens (see Ong, 1996).

This chapter seeks to push the limits of the concept by examining the process through which Israeli migrants negotiate their cultural citizenship rights and obligations vis-à-vis

their sending state. Cultural citizenship in this context is understood as the rights conferred upon transnational migrants by the sending state *and* their perceived responsibilities in exchange. Citizenship rights consist of the provision of cultural services (e.g., ceremonies marking national holidays) by the Israeli state to migrants, whereas duties includes loyalty towards the state manifested through the consumption of these and other state-funded cultural events. Cultural citizenship, I therefore argue, can be thought of as mutually-obliging, reciprocal, and transnational pact between the state and its migrants. At the same time, I argue, cultural citizenship is far from being a linear, finite process; rather, as state officials' and migrants' narratives suggest, the discursive construction of citizenship (and practices associated with it) differ considerably between the two groups and even within the same group.

The chapter is divided into three main parts; in the first section a theoretical framework of cultural citizenship as a process of negotiation between state and migrants over the (production and) consumption of homeland culture is presented. It argues that in a transnational context, cultural citizenship becomes a quest to belong to more than one nation-state and protect the rights endowed by either. The second part examines the shifts in the social construction of Israeli migrants from a culturally disenfranchised collective to a group with legitimate claims for unique rights and spaces. Using narratives by state representatives and community activists, this section illustrates the fragmented nature of cultural citizenship and the fundamental lack of consensus over the spaces and practices associated with it. Specifically, it shows how despite – or perhaps because of - their extra-territorial status, Israeli migrants differ in their interpretation of cultural citizenship

and the extent to which the sending state ought to be involved in their daily lives. While some support a formalized relations with official agencies, others reject state involvement altogether, arguing instead that it ought not to play a role in communal lives. The chapter concludes by examining the case of the Israeli community in Los Angeles and its recent efforts to secure sustainable extra-territorial cultural space while resisting a top-down, all-embracing state projects (Jessop, 1990) of re-territorialization.. Focusing on the community's largest annual gathering during Israel's Independence Day (*Yom HaAtzmaut*), it argues that the Festival has been a negotiated space through which migrants have sought to redefine their formal affiliation with the state in a way that fits their unique needs as extra-territorial cultural citizens. Conceived by the state yet currently run exclusively by migrants, the Festival has gradually become a self-produced, extra-territorial space through which migrants to claim their lawful cultural rights as Israeli citizens while simultaneously defying the state's hegemonic interpretations of Israeli culture, citizenship and identity. The communal discourse about the Festival exposes a much larger debate on the role of the state in the lives of migrants in general and the production of cultural spaces in particular.

Theorizing Cultural Citizenship beyond the Nation-State

As an analytical category cultural citizenship traces its roots to several related and interdisciplinary traditions (Miller, 1998; 2002; Pakulski, 1997; Stevenson, 2003; Isin & Turner, 2002). In particular, two important conceptualizations emerged in the 1990s; the first is evident in the writings of the Latino Cultural Studies Working Group (Flores & Benmayor, 1997; Rosaldo, 1997; Rosaldo & Flores, 1997). In a series of publications

group members examine a range of practices through which various Latino groups in urban centers claim 'spaces of membership' in contemporary American society. The heart of their argument is that, irrespective of their formal citizenship status in the US, Latino immigrants of various generations are largely excluded from *de facto* and *de jure* social spaces that are fundamental for the cultivation of a sense of national belonging. Their exclusion from these spaces, it was further argued, leads to the perpetuation of their effective invisibility in the public realm (in contrast to their disproportional presence in other spaces of the postmodern American urban landscape) and consequently undermines their ability to voice their demands, make claims and obtain certain collective cultural rights. As Flores & Benmayor (1997:15) note, "Cultural citizenship can be thought as a broad range of activities of everyday life through which Latinos and other groups claim space in society and eventually claim rights...the motivation is simply to create space where people feel 'safe' and 'at home', where they feel a sense of belonging and membership". From this perspective, meaningful cultural citizenship requires the embracing (and not merely the occasional acknowledgment) of cultural difference and the subsequent empowerment of the culturally disenfranchised - through socio-political projects - to create legitimate spaces from which to claim their collectively-defined cultural rights. Cultural citizenship becomes a process of social transformation at the end of which various groups' differentiated needs will be recognized and, possibly, fulfilled by the relevant authorities.

A second theoretical strand rooted in the early writings of Aihwa Ong (1995; 1996) conceives of cultural citizenship as a process of negotiation between cultural minorities

(primarily newly arrived Asian migrants), state institutions and civil society organizations through which members of the former groups are positioned along fixed axes of race, class, gender, and level of cultural development. In contrast to the former conceptualization which focuses on potential avenues of cultural transformation, Ong is primarily concerned with the process of adaptation cultural minorities go through following their arrival in the US and the myriad subject-making technologies they are exposed to by veteran social agents and public entities. Becoming a citizen-subject in the US, she argues, is contingent upon this process of adaptation in which both state and social agents serve as ‘gate-keepers’, overseeing the process of incorporation. Drawing heavily on the notion of subject formation (Foucault, 1982; 1984; 1991), Ong emphasizes the hegemonic practices ethno-racial minorities are subjected to, yet asserts that despite clearly uneven relations of power, resistance and (re)-interpretation of these practices often take place as these groups mobilize their knowledge and cultural resourcefulness to evade negative social fixations. Cultural citizenship is thus comprised of those

“Cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of *belonging with a national population and territory*. Cultural citizenship is a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society. Becoming a citizen depends on how one is constituted as a subject who exercises or submits to power relations” (1996: 738; Italics added).

Despite their obvious differences, both conceptualizations anchor cultural citizenship in the apparatus of a single nation-state and are therefore unable to fully account for the

extra-territorial nature of transmigrants' identities. Following Siu (2001), I argue that for transmigrants (and other diasporic subjects), cultural citizenship requires a conceptual formulation that transcends "the singular relationship between an immigrant group and their nation of residence" (p. 14) to include the process by which they negotiate their position vis-à-vis the sending state apparatus and civil society. Thus, while making claims on the sending state in order to obtain collective rights that would serve their perceived unique needs, transnational migrants re-produce themselves as loyal subjects by symbolically re-incorporating themselves (and get re-incorporated) into the nation through a range of cultural practices. The production of cultural citizens, therefore, ought not to be seen as a top-down state project, but rather as an arena in which access to cultural production, distribution and consumption is struggled over by state agencies, civil society organizations, and diverse market forces (McGuian, 2001). As Isin & Wood (1999) remind us, each of these sectors needs be seen as "producers of meaning and representation and knowledge consumers under advanced capitalism" (p. 152).

For transmigrants, the production and consumption of culture is inextricably linked to their unique position as diasporic citizens of the sending state. With the increase in size and importance of transmigrant communities (Levitt, 2001; Vertovec, 2001; 2003), a considerable number of sending states have sought to strengthen ties with their citizens abroad by devising various types of bonding mechanisms (Barry, 2006; Chander, 2006). Mechanisms of cultural bonding have become a particularly useful tool in sending states' efforts to produce cultural citizens beyond international borders. As Chander recently argued, "Emigrants' sense of connection to the past must be renewed through an

investment into the present and the future. Accordingly, [sending] countries have sought to re-imagine their nation as encompassing a far-flung diaspora” (2006: 76). Unlike economic (e.g., tax incentives for trans-migrants’ investment in homeland development projects) and political (e.g., dual citizenship status, absentee voting rights) strategies which necessitate the deployment of considerable human and material resources, policies aimed at bolstering cultural bonding with transnational migrants require considerably smaller efforts.

State, Migrants and Cultural Citizenship: An Emerging Transnational Pact?

The relationship between Israeli state and migrants has been often described as uneasy (Cohen, 2007). As a large number of scholarly accounts have shown, out-migration from the Jewish state has traditionally been portrayed as a threat to the inherently fragile Zionist project (Cohen, 2004; Gold, 2002; Lahav & Arian, 1999; Shokeid, 1988; Sobel, 1986). In particular, migrants were seen as an imminent threat to Israeli nation building efforts and the nascent territorial identity Zionist ideology was keen on cultivating (see Newman, 2001). The 1980s had seen a slow discursive shift in Israel concerning migrant communities and the nature of their relationship with left-behind state and social agents (see chapter 4). The following two decades have witnessed a gradual shift in the official Israeli stance towards migrants. Having abandoned (or at least considerably downplayed) the judgmental approach towards its citizens abroad, state agencies in Israel have ‘discovered’ the multiple advantages associated with a loyal cultural diaspora. The discursive shift was soon followed by a set of practical resolutions intended to secure stronger cultural relations between the state and its overseas citizens. Thus, for example,

a 1988 initiative led by first lady Ofira Navon resulted in the establishment of the first center for citizens abroad in Israel's consulate general in New York. Named *HaBayit HaYisraeli* (Hebrew for "The Israeli House"), the center was originally conceived by the Ministry of Immigration & Absorption (MOIA) as a cultural center for migrants through which to maintain their Israeli cultural heritage. A dozen Israeli houses have been opened since in a handful of North American and Western European cities, and while each enjoys a fair amount of organizational independence, they all work towards "the preservation of Israeli cultural values among those who have decided to live outside Israel"³⁹. Among the most popular activities are live broadcasts of sporting events from Israel, Hebrew story time for young children of migrants, sing along sessions, ceremonies marking national celebrations and other Jewish holidays, and Israeli guest speakers.

The notion that Israelis abroad - by virtue of their citizenship status - are entitled to receive cultural services by the state and its local emissaries has been clearly expressed by Collette Avital, Member of Knesset and Israel's former Consul General in New York,

"I think this [reaching out to Israeli migrants] is something that needs to be a national priority. We need to normalize the relations in the sense that we must treat Israelis abroad as full citizens, as an important and meaningful Diaspora, and provide it with the appropriate [cultural and educational] services, just like we provide them with consular services. The model I have in mind is that of the French government that has always sought to provide its citizens abroad with French culture. The notion was that French citizens outside France should continue to be French, consume French culture and speak

³⁹ Website of the Israeli House in Paris (<http://www.baitisraeli.net/habaitHaisraeli.asp>)

the French language and that is why they established French schools outside France. The idea was not just to educate French expatriates about their own culture but also to educate other, non-French citizens about it. The result was that entire generations grew up to love France and the good things it stands for” (Personal Interview, 3/15/2008).

Clearly supported by the speaker, the notion of a cultural policy aimed towards migrants is seen as a means to an end. In addition to making Israelis abroad an integral part of the nation it implicates them in a complex relationship with the state as they are expected to serve as ‘ambassadors at large’ and disseminate state-produced culture. In line with the conceptualization of cultural citizenship as a transnational pact, the state is entrusted with the production and provision of cultural services to migrants in exchange for their agreement not only to consume them, but also to use them as a means to ‘educate’ other, non-Israeli citizens. Similarly, Nadia Prigat, the former head of the Department for Returning Residents (*HaMachlaka LeToshavim Chozrim*) in Israel’s Ministry of Immigrant Absorption (MOIA) argues that the meaning of Israeli citizenship has important implications that transcend the state’s territorial boundaries. In a recent interview she reiterates the perceived commitment of the state to its extra-territorial subjects while highlighting its reciprocal nature.

“Let me put it this way – every emigrant is an Israeli citizen, period. And Israeli citizenship has a meaning, both in terms of the individual who has a responsibility towards the state and in terms of the State which has a responsibility towards its citizens, and that is something which is not easy to define. It is true that emigrants live elsewhere and have - to some extent, at least - adopted different culture, different customs, and so on, but the crux of the matter is that they are first and foremost citizens of the State of

Israel and we have a responsibility towards them just as much as - I'm sure – the vast majority of them feel responsible towards the state, society, and their family members here. When it comes to one's citizenship, it doesn't matter where one lives or how long he has been away" (Personal Interview, 3/12/2008).

From the state's perspective, migrants are defined first and foremost through their Israeli citizenship status. Neither place or length of residence nor dual citizenship status (which a substantial, yet unknown, number of Israeli migrants possess) appear to matter in defining one's position vis-à-vis the sending state as the two are discursively constructed as locked in a long-lasting contract in which the citizen enjoys a range of cultural rights even while living outside national territory and is expected in exchange to fulfill his/her national duties. These rights *and* duties, as the following excerpt from an interview conducted with the coordinator of the Israeli House in a western US city illustrates, are increasingly defined in cultural terms

"We want them [migrants of first and second generation] to attend [cultural] events and in general make them feel that there is some governmental agency in Israel that cares about them, that listens to them and that provides them with cultural services as much as possible. These are things that nobody else does and it really helps when the State of Israel takes on itself to do these things for its citizens here" (Phone Interview, 3/21/2007).

In line with the conceptualization of citizenship in terms of cultural practices, there has been a growing awareness on the part of state agencies that they ought not only to *speak* of re-territorialization and preservation of migrants' ties to the nation, but also produce

the appropriate spaces in which to practice it. Realizing that migrants are slowly ‘slipping away’ from its hands, the Israeli state has taken upon itself to carve out extra-territorial spaces in which to re-territorialize migrants’ identities. The idea behind these state projects (Jessop, 1982; 1990; 2001) has been to formalize the relations between the state and its migrant communities by creating a perfect symmetry between state’s and migrants’ cultural obligations. Yet, as the following section illustrates, whether these spaces are in fact needed and to what extent they serve the unique needs of the Israeli migrant community in Los Angeles is not always clear. The lack of consensus among community activists in regards to the effectiveness of these spaces is coming out very clearly from migrants’ narratives presented below.

Spaces of Cultural Citizenship: By Whom and for Whom

In a recent interview with a US-based Hebrew newspaper Ehad Danoch, Israel’s former Consul General in Los Angeles complained that by avoiding certain local events, Israeli expatriates in Los Angeles have failed to fulfill their part in the cultural contract with their home-state

“This [the Israeli community in Los Angeles] is one of the largest communities outside Israel, perhaps even the largest. There are people here who are connected to Israel and there are those who are not...Take for example Memorial Day for the IDF Fallen. It has been advertised in all media outlets here, including TV, everybody saw it. Yet, not more than 1500 people arrived [to the ceremony]...If there are indeed roughly 250,000 Israelis here [in Los Angeles], then why is it that only 1500 showed up?”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Maimon, S. (2007) “HaPatriot [The Patriot]” in *Yediot America*, 4/26, p. 10 [in Hebrew].

The disappointment expressed by Israel's senior representative in the western United States reveals an underlying expectation on the part of various state representatives that the cultural spaces offered to Israeli citizens abroad be utilized extensively. Attending official ceremonies organized by the state, for example, has been seen as one of the strongest manifestations of one's identity as an extra-territorial citizen as it reinforces her sense of belonging to the homeland and legitimizes her status as an Israeli citizen that is entitled to make claims on the state. Furthermore, the expectation that Israeli migrants remain strongly connected to the homeland should not, according to the Consul General and others, be seen as an exclusive interest of the state and its institutions. Rather, local diasporic organizations are called upon to serve as mediators between migrants and the state and encourage the re-territorialization of the latter independently of any official efforts.

"I would have liked to see more Israeli organizations operating in Los Angeles and more activities in existing organizations. Additional organizations would lead to more creativity, diversity, and people's participation. Despite the fact that we tend to be busy with our jobs and families and, inadvertently, disconnect ourselves from our environment, we should maintain ties with the community and take part in its activities; show up for [IDF Fallen] Memorial Days, [Israel] support rallies, cultural activities and so forth"⁴¹.

This official articulation suggests that in the eyes of Israeli officials, cultural consumption is the duty of Israeli migrants. Absence from national territory should not, according to

⁴¹ Dinur O. (2007). "Ehud Danoch: Patriot Amity [A Real Patriot]", *Anachnu BeAmerica* [We're in America], 4/7, p. 13 [in Hebrew].

this perspective, serve as an excuse for absence from extra-territorial cultural spaces. The transnational pact between the state and its diaspora, while not easily enforceable, allows both sides to negotiate more effectively than in the past their rights and duties through both formal and informal channels of communications (e.g., community newspapers).

Community activists on their part claim that the long decades in which ‘Overt Rejection’ had been the official state policy have led the community to adopt an ‘expect nothing’ approach when dealing with the Israeli establishment. The recurrent argument in many of my interviews had been that despite the lofty rhetoric that is characteristic of state representatives, very little has been done in practice to produce appropriate cultural spaces for the migrant community. Thus, Yehuda, a key community activist who has been living in Los Angeles since 1988 sums up the situation in the following words, “It is not like we’re sitting on our hands waiting for the consulate to organize events for us...we understand their difficulties in helping us out, so we have taken matters to our own hands. We seldom seek their help because we know they cannot deliver” (personal interview, 3/29/2008).

Similarly, others have claimed that when it comes to Israeli culture outside national territory, they have very few expectations from the state. Some went as far as declaring that the state ought to play no role in the lives of Israelis abroad. Tal, a 35 year old Israeli woman who resided in Los Angeles in the past seven years (and has since returned to Israel) argues that by voluntarily removing themselves from Israeli territory, migrants have lost the right to receive any type of cultural services from the state.

“In my opinion, *it is not the state’s role to entertain migrants*. It may well be that that’s what they are indeed intended to do, but to me the initiative should be the community’s. I mean, the state – through the consulate and other bodies – could help out, organizationally, perhaps financially too, but at the end of the day, I think that it is the community members’ responsibility to take the initiative. Frankly, though, like I said before, I don’t see that happening, because people are very often indifferent to these things. They are so damn busy trying to accumulate wealth that they do not make the minimal effort to come together as community and produce anything of value, and if they do – it is rarely sustainable” (Personal Interview, 3/29/2008; italics added).

Others believe that while the state’s budding cultural programs have the potential to make a difference in the life of the community, they often fail to do so because they are conceived in isolation from the community and without taking into account the transnational nature of many of its members. A recurrent complaint has been that the cultural support of the state seldom considers the transnational status of many second or even first generation migrants. Rivka, a long time educator residing in Los Angeles since the mid-1960s told me in a recent phone interview that as long as projects continue to be conceived in Israel - in isolation from the community and its particular needs - they are doomed to fail miserably.

“In my opinion [Israeli] culture - the way defined by the consulate, and I guess the people in Jerusalem who are responsible for the appropriate policies – does not always resonate well with the needs of the local migrant population. It often looks like it’s an effort to ‘educate’ people here, to preach a return to Israel. It is such archaic approach that people refuse to take part in it. And it almost always focuses on preserving Israeli identity the way it was *there* in the so-called ‘old-land’. It lacks the proper flexibility that is needed in

order to help migrants (re)-define and make sense of their new identity, whether they accept it or not. I mean, it is inconceivable to think that a person leaves his place of birth, comes to a new environment and remains the same; he changes, his needs change and, clearly, his identity-related questions change” (Phone Interview, 3/30/2008; italics added).

What these quotes suggest is that in the eyes of some Israeli migrants, the state itself has failed to deliver the cultural services it has promised and prided itself upon. The recurrent argument in many narratives had been that despite repeated declarations by state officials to support migrants’ efforts to maintain their and their children’s Israeli identity (through language programs, music, celebrations of Jewish and Israeli holidays) and ensure that they remain culturally on par with the rest of the nation, it had failed to provide the appropriate services. The picture drawn by many migrants is that even when resources were invested by state agencies in cultural programs, they were often poorly designed and implemented, primarily because there was little or no consultation with local activists. At the same time, the different opinions expressed by the migrants quoted above suggest that even within a small circle of community activists there is hardly any agreement over the particular role the state ought to play - or not - in the community’s cultural scene (e.g., organizer, coordinator, financier).

This sense of long-lasting cultural exclusion experienced by many Israeli migrants had often motivated them to embark on independent initiatives aimed at producing separate spaces in which to practice their rights and duties as cultural citizens of the Israeli state. Many of these spaces have originally emerged as communal initiatives with little or no

help from official state agencies, yet for a variety of reasons were not sustainable and had gradually phased out. For reasons I discuss below, the Israel Day Festival (henceforth the Festival), became the single most important venue through which the Israeli community in Los Angeles has managed to re-assert its sense of national belonging. Despite past and present hardships, the Festival has gradually become a self-produced communal space of cultural citizenship. A space of identity formation, the Festival is currently the single most important cultural space - organized, financed, and executed almost exclusively by the Israeli community in Los Angeles. Yet, despite, or perhaps because of this organizational independence from state agencies, the Festival has become the strongest venue used by Israelis abroad to practice their cultural citizenship and convey a public message that they continue to fulfill their part in the transnational pact (despite the state's failure to do the same). The consumption of Israeli culture in a self-produced extra-territorial space allows migrants the right of passage to Israeli citizenship.

Using data obtained from participant observations and secondary information sources, the next section analyzes the Festival as a space through which Israeli migrants seek to secure their position as cultural citizens of Israel. Now the largest Israel-related annual event outside state territory, the Festival is no longer merely an event designated to mark the state's Independence Day or mobilize diasporic support of its policies. More importantly, it is a mass celebration in which an otherwise highly fragmented and poorly-organized migrant community comes together to show off its local achievements, celebrate its vitality, and secure its (still) uncertain space in the Israeli nation. Drawing

participants from the metro area and beyond, the Festival is an annual reminder to many migrants that being a citizen entails more than carrying a national passport.

Diasporic Celebrations as Spaces of Citizenship

Diasporic celebrations have often been examined by focusing on the role they play in the process of identity formation among transnational migrants. The notion that diaspora-organized events become hybrid (or third) spaces linking the diasporic community 'here' with the homeland society 'there' has been supported by a large number of studies (Chan, 2003; Marston, 1989; Mincyte, 1999; Shukla, 1997). Nurse (1999), for example, argues that for the Trinidadian diaspora,

“Carnival as a cultural activity is not just about merriment, colourful pageantry, revelry and street theatre. Carnival is born out of the struggle of marginalized peoples to shape a cultural identity through resistance, liberation and catharsis...*It has acted as a bond between the diasporic community and those at home, promoting much travel and contributing to a pan-Caribbean identity*” (p. 662, *Italics added*).

To the extent that diasporic celebrations have been looked at as spaces created by marginalized groups to re-assert their identities as national citizens, they have often been analyzed in the context of the receiving state. Thus, for example, the marking of *Cinco de Mayo* by Mexican migrants in the United States has been frequently seen as an effective means towards re-asserting cultural space in mainstream American society (Alamillo, 2003). Public *fiestas* in general were conceived as instrumental in the creation and solidification of a united Latino front vis-à-vis white America (Sommers, 1991) and as

communal forums through which to advance equal membership claims. The re-affirmation that Hispanic culture and American (read white) citizenship were not mutually exclusive has been a key aspect of these public events. With few exceptions of countries under political duress much less has been written about organized diasporic celebrations as a space to secure rights associated with the sending state. Laguerre (1998; 2006), for example, argues that during the 30-year rein of dictator Francois ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier (1957-1986), the Haitian diaspora in the United States had used its organizational infrastructure to help mobilize domestic and international support to topple his regime. Similarly, key activists in the Cuban diaspora (as well as American politicians) have long used the Caribbean Island’s Independence Day parade in South Florida to denounce Fidel Castro and advocate a regime change for the sake of citizens in Cuba and the diaspora (Torres, 1999).

Despite a constantly growing Israeli diaspora in North America and Western Europe (Gold, 2002; Cohen, 2004) and a gradual increase in the number of cities around the world in which locally organized events marking Israel’s Independence Day are celebrated annually⁴², to the best of my knowledge no academic studies have thus far been produced that systematically examine these communal celebrations and their role in the formation process of a (trans)-national Israeli identity. With one recent exception (Semi, 2006), Israel’s *Yom HaAtzmaut* (Independence Day) celebrations in the diaspora have gone unnoticed by scholars despite their obvious importance as spaces of (Jewish and) Israeli identity.

⁴² A quick online search yielded more than a dozen cities in which the day is celebrated publicly, including San Francisco, New York, Sacramento, Baltimore, Houston, Cincinnati, Honolulu, Pittsburg, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Toronto, Riga, and Melbourne.

Securing Cultural Citizenship: Israel's Independence Day Festival in Los Angeles

Israel's Independence Day Festival in Los Angeles is currently the largest annual gathering of Israeli migrants in the world. Started as a small gathering of several hundred people who came together to celebrate Israel's 40th birthday (1988) at the local Jewish Community Center, it has been attracting well over 30,000 participants from all over Southern California in the last few years⁴³. In the mid-1990s, due to a sustained increase in the number of participants, organizers were forced to find an alternative venue and the festival has relocated to Woodley Park, north of the City of Los Angeles at the heart of the San Fernando Valley. Also as a result of the growth in size, a full-time executive director has been appointed by the organizers and a public benefit non-profit organization was established through which funds were channeled to support various activities.

The Festival began as a collaboration of a handful of Israeli migrants in the Los Angeles metro area who sought to re-create the atmosphere of home for expatriates. The idea was to ensure that the Israeli way of celebrating the holiday prevails outside national territory as well. Amnon, a long-time member of the Festival's Board of Directors who has been living in Los Angeles since 1962 told me in a recent phone interview,

“We really just wanted to bring the Israeli experience to Los Angeles. We realized that the events organized by the Jewish Federation for *Yom HaAtzmaut* were really boring and

⁴³ Chong, Jia-Rui (2007) “Israel festival draws 35,000” *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, p. B3.

traditional; it was not the way we were used to celebrating in Israel as kids. So in 1988, before the 40th anniversary, a few of us here in the community started talking and decided to put together something that would show American Jews and others what it is like to really celebrate *Yom HaAtzmaut*, the way they do it in Israel, with the food and the songs and the dancing” (Phone Interview, 3/30/2008).

But there were other, less explicit reasons for the establishment of the Festival as some activists admit. In an era of ‘overt rejection’ and widespread criticism towards them by extensive parts of Israeli state and society, migrants felt compelled to produce a communal space after their own image. Defying the Israeli establishment and its demeaning treatment of extra-territorial citizens, community activists in Los Angeles – perhaps inadvertently – constructed a space through which a message was conveyed to the state and their left behind co-nationals that despite their extra-territorial location, they remain loyal citizens of the state.

In line with this sense of communal independence, the Festival’s first decade (1988-1997) was characterized by activities wholly financed by local donations. It was not until its 10th anniversary (on Israel’s 50th Independence Day) that Festival organizers had approached Jewish/Israeli institutions (e.g., Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles) and asked for their financial and administrative assistance⁴⁴. In comparison, this year’s list of (co)-sponsors included the City of Los Angeles (Departments of Cultural Affairs and Recreation & Parks), the Jewish National Fund (JNF), Israeli TV Network, the Israeli Scouts, and dozens of local synagogues. Although the local Israeli Consulate (under the

⁴⁴ Amnon estimates that roughly 10% of the Festival’s \$250k budget comes from the Jewish Federation.

auspices of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Immigrant Absorption) is not an official sponsor of the Festival, its logo appears on virtually every official publication of the Festival. When asked to explain the Consulate's lack of effective involvement in the Festival, most migrants quote budgetary constraints as the main reason. Some have alluded to the fact that despite its lofty rhetoric about the importance of (re)-connecting with migrants through cultural events, the Consulate has remained largely uninvolved in the life of the community in general and in its cultural life in particular. Yossi, a long time migrant sums it up by saying, "It [the Consulate] is not a factor in the [cultural] life of the Israeli community in Los Angeles, period". While this may be a slightly exaggerated statement, other migrants I spoke with admit that the state's decision to remain largely aloof of the activities of the Festival can be traced back to the days in which the dominant 'overt rejection' discourse (see chapter 4) dictated a state policy of ostracizing migrant communities regardless of their size.

It is interesting to note that in spite of its lack of direct involvement, the state and its representatives have been quite visible in the Festival since its early days. In fact, to clearly distinguish themselves from the rest of the (mostly) non-profit organizations in attendance, the Consulate's pavilion traditionally occupies a space that is far removed from the rest of the other booths. The Pavilion was packed with people during my visit, mostly migrants who were trying to obtain information about the benefits offered to '*Toshavim Chozrim*' (Returning Residents). The tables in and around the pavilion were filled with infomercials about the various programs supported through the consulate (e.g., the Israeli House). In general, it appeared as if representatives of the state were using the

site to promote their cultural and other re-territorialization programs. Further, in despite of the Consulate's decision to remain largely uninvolved in the organization of the event, an invitation has been extended by Festival organizers to the Israeli Consul General in Los Angeles every year since 1988 (including the most recent one, which I attended). Invariably accepting the invitation, I was told, Consul Generals have usually delivered passionate speeches about the importance of the ties between the state and its largest migrant community. Interestingly, most migrants I interviewed were not aware of the state's presence at the event and a significant number pointed out that they had no interest in visiting its unusually large tent. One migrant commented, "Except for renewing my passport, I keep my distance from the consulate and those other bureaucrats; I always have the feeling that the only thing they are interested in is returning us to Israel". Organizers of the Festival and other key community activists, however, claimed that the presence of the state in the event was quite important and had both symbolic and practical reasons. One member of the board noted, "the fact that they [representatives of the consulate] are here is important for two reasons: first, it gives the event the official legitimacy and projects an image of communal cohesion and unity; second, it re-assures members of the community, at least those who still need it, that the state sees them as part of Israel".

In contrast to most US-based diasporic celebrations, the Festival and its activities are much more focused on the sending (rather than receiving) state and society. While the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and other local dignitaries have been in attendance and the American flag - alongside Israel's - is present everywhere, there is very little in the

Festival's atmosphere that reminds one of its location at the heart of a major American metropolitan. The much-theorized hybrid atmosphere I was expecting to encounter in the Festival was hardly felt during my attendance; the predominant language spoken was Hebrew (followed, surprisingly, by Farsi and Russian) and the presence of the Los Angeles Police Department was a vague reminder of the receiving state. Unlike Mexico's *Cinco de Mayo* or the Irish celebration of Saint Patrick's Day in the diaspora, the Festival is geared more towards incorporation into the homeland than the hostland. As far as first generation Israeli migrants in Los Angeles are concerned, the Festival is not a third space in which to assert their transnational, in-between status; rather, through a public display of home-bound cultural practices the Festival allows migrants to re-produce themselves as loyal citizens of the State of Israel in Los Angeles, the epitome of transnational America.

Indicative of migrants' political struggle to be recognized as part of the nation, yet sensitive to the changing face of the migrant community, the Festival includes traditional activities (Hebrew 'sing alongs', Mediterranean-like cafes and restaurants, Israeli food vendors, and a display of the human and physical geography of Israel) alongside newer, hybridized activities that cater mostly to the second generation and the non-Israeli crowd such as bilingual hip-hop artists and Israeli-style theme park. Organizers attribute the evolution of the Festival (from traditional to less traditional activities) to the changing faces and identities of members in the community. "If you want to attract a large number of families, you have to diversify activities, make sure they all have something to do here", says a member of the board.

Despite a dwindling number of visitors since the late 1990s, the Festival still is one of handful venues through which Israeli migrants – of both generations - to practice cultural citizenship. Attending the Festival, I was told, is much more than celebrating one's ethnic or national identity; in fact, it is the embodiment of migrants' personal commitment to the sending state and its society, the epitome of fulfilling one's duties towards the home state. Some migrants compare an absence from the Festival to a failure to uphold one's (cultural) duties towards Israel.

The notion that attending the Festival is an annual obligation of Israeli migrants has been expressed by others as well. Internalizing the idea that cultural citizenship is a pact between the sending state and its diasporic subjects that requires the coordination of (and participation in) specific cultural events – whether they are state-produced or not – many Israeli migrants define their participation in (or absence from) the Festival in terms of their commitment to support the well-being of the state and its citizens. It is in light of this sense of practical commitment that one must understand the anguish expressed by long-time migrants over the recent decline in the number of Festival participants. For some, dwindling attendance is gloomy evidence not only for the diminishing organizational basis of the community, but also to its weakening ability to influence decision making processes in Israel.

The concern expressed by Festival activist and others is not merely about the effect it would have on their Israeli identity (as this, they all assured me, was strong enough), but on whether – in the absence of their primary space of cultural citizenship – they would

still be able to make claims on the sending state for cultural and other services. Various other more or less formal cultural spaces exist for Israeli citizens in Los Angeles through which to cultivate a sense of national identity, but the Festival is perhaps the only one space that allows them to fashion their ties independently of the state.. “It is not just the hundreds hours’ worth of work we invest in this project that makes us feel part of something bigger”, one activist told me, “it’s also about the day itself, the love for Israel, the support that tens of thousands of people show; these are the things that remind us year in and year out why this project is so important to us and to Israel”.

Several migrants who have been involved in the Festival since its early days sadly noted that the enthusiasm of the first decade is no longer felt. While none doubted its importance in bringing thousands of Israeli citizens together to support the homeland and prove that it remains salient to their identities, some have argued that a major reform is desperately needed in terms of its content if these goals are to be realized. Particular concerns have been expressed about the meager attendance of veteran first generation migrants and the relatively small number of younger, second and even third generations taking part in the event. The latter groups, feeling far less committed to the homeland and the nation compared to their parents, are the new cultural citizens that Festival organizers try to entice.

Thus, the biggest concern among community activists is that the Festival ceases to fulfill its primary objective as a space of cultural citizenship through which migrants ‘rally around the (Israeli) flag’ - literally and figuratively - to fulfill their cultural duties and at the same time receive the official recognition from the state for their efforts. The

expectation from Israeli citizens is different, they argue, than that of American Jews and so they ought to contribute more of their time and money to ensure that the Festival tradition continues. The fear of losing their quintessential space of cultural citizenship is intimately linked to a common feeling among activists that a failure to sustain the community's flagship event could potentially lead to an even greater disconnect with state agencies in Jerusalem and Los Angeles alike. It is through the Festival and similar events (albeit smaller in scope), activists argue, that the community has established itself as an important asset to the Israeli state. But a deeper analysis reveals a second, related reason for the concern among activists. The Festival, they argue, has for years been the only true successful project of the community that is entirely independent of any state assistance; should it - like other local initiatives over the years - fail it would be a clear evidence to the community's incapacity and the need to rely on the state for seemingly internal matters.

Conclusions

The chapter sought to accomplish two things; first, to re-conceptualize extra-territorial citizenship in cultural (rather than civic, social or economic) terms, and second, to examine the politics of extra-territorial space production and illustrate the extent to which it becomes a venue in which state-migrants relations unfold. In particular, I have argued that in the Israeli case attempts made by the state to augment its incorporation regime have relied upon the deployment of cultural (and other) bonding mechanisms with its citizens abroad. These bonding mechanisms have given rise to a new and informal status of the migrant as a cultural citizen that is entitled to the provision of cultural services by

the state. In exchange, the cultural citizen is expected to consume these and other cultural events so as to be recognized as part of the Israeli nation. The informality of this transnational pact notwithstanding, I have shown that to a lesser or greater degree representatives of both sides expect its reciprocal fulfillment and seek accountability from the other.

The Israeli Festival in Los Angeles has been examined as an extra-territorial space of cultural citizenship through which the rights and duties of the transnational pact are negotiated and practiced. A community-owned space ('from below'), the Festival is conceived by some activists as the ultimate venue through which to practice their rights and duties as Israeli citizens. Despite qualitatively different interpretations by community activists concerning its main objective and the level of importance in securing stronger ties with the state, the Festival nevertheless remains a quintessential space of cultural citizenship in which a reproduction of the Israeli subject takes place. As I have shown, attending the Festival is – for some migrants - the primary route through which to re-assert their affiliation with the state by practicing their cultural citizenship duties. At the same time, setting up a public space in which to celebrate independence and support of the homeland is a communal strategy to remind the state of its own obligations towards its cultural citizens. The state on its part, despite its mainly symbolic participation in the Festival, utilizes it as a conduit to reach out to the community and urge its members to become more involved in Israel-oriented affairs.

It is this reciprocal need of a space of cultural citizenship, I argue, that sustained the Festival in the past twenty years. Its resilience in the face of financial hardships and organizational hurdles is evidence to the resilience of cultural citizenship as a committing transnational pact. Thus, despite occasional failures of either side to fulfill their part in the agreement it did not entirely collapse. Neither low attendance of migrants nor effective disengagement of the state from the Festival voided the agreement as both sides understand the importance of the space and strive to maintain it.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The current research aimed to theorize the complex relations between the sending state and its migrant communities under conditions of globalization. In particular, it sought to examine the politics of cultural re-territorialization and the process of production (and maintenance) of extra-territorial spaces in which these projects are socially constructed, deployed, and negotiated. By underscoring the salient role cultural practices from above *and* below play in the re-configuration of extra-territorial spaces, I have showed the extent to which states and migrants imbue these spaces with their own meaning of citizenship. Projects of re-territorialization from above, I have argued, are part of an overall strategy to return migrants to Israel by first subjecting them to the hegemonic cultural practices of the state and then re-asserting their status as (territorial) Israeli citizens. Self-reterritorialization (from below), on the other hand, are self-initiated programs that seek to resist simplistic, top-down assertions of citizenship and create instead a re-configured, differentiated model of extra-territorial (diasporic) citizenship.

Taking ‘sedentarist metaphysics’ as a starting point, I have argued that the state’s long tradition of fixating mobile subjects to designated spaces as part of a larger project of (re)-territorializing the nation remains imminently important in the contemporary ‘space of flows’ (Castells, 1996). And while the postmodern mobile – the transnational migrant, the business traveler, the tourist – is not necessarily seen as a threat to the current political order (and is sometimes conceptualized as an agency who reproduces it), it is her potential contributions to the nation-state (its politics, economy, culture, society) that

motivate the latter to restrict its repetitive movements to well-protected conduits. In the case of transnational migrants, projects of cultural re-territorialization - and the spaces which they give rise to - are important conduits through which to capture some of these contributions. Extra-territorial programmatic initiatives targeting first, second and third generation migrants – whether initiated from ‘above’ or ‘below’ – remains a key strategy in the state’s persistent attempts to secure the long-conceived tie between the broadly-defined nation and its historic territory. More importantly, they are intended to maintain the transfer of existing (and accelerate additional) resources - both human and others – from the extra-territorial to the territorial. Whether financial remittances, diasporic lobbying, or the actual return of bodies to the homeland, projects of cultural re-territorialization implicate the state and its migrant community in a new type of transnational contract, one which gets unfolded in a plethora of extra-territorial spaces. Yet, as I have argued throughout this manuscript, the production of these spaces and the nature of the projects that are deployed within them ought not to be seen as a linear process. Rather, by virtue of the vested interests both state and migrants have in these new ‘spaces of interaction’ they are never entirely consensual; instead, they are in a state of constant change, continuously contested, negotiated, and re-configured by either set of actors who seek to imbue them with its own cultural meanings.

Exploring the process of negotiation in and around these new extra-territorial spaces is critical, I contend, not simply because it sheds light on the myriad ways by which the so-called ‘cultural contract’ that is being crafted between state and (diasporic) citizens, but also because it renders a more refined picture of the role of the state in governing

transnational social relations. Underscoring the historically unparalleled ease by which states can (and do) transcend international borders to set up spaces through which to (re-)shape migrants' social identities is, therefore, a key contribution of this research. The notion that in a fiercely competitive global environment states do not shy from pursuing population segments beyond their border in order to capitalize on their strengths and benefit from their (current and potential) contributions to the 'homeland' is radically new and opens up a wide range of research avenues that center on the relationship between state, territory, and extra-territorial citizenship. And while, as I have noted, the idea of nation-states' taking advantage of their diasporic communities to gain additional resources is not entirely new (see Shain, 1999), it is the flexible approach to territory recently taken by various migration-sending states that render the notion of 'absolute territorialism' archaic. Re-territorialization, the flexible re-setting of national boundaries such that they include spaces (physical and symbolic) and peoples that traditionally thought to have been lying beyond national territory, has altered nation-states' 'zone of influence' by re-incorporating new social groups into it. It is the funding and setting up of brand new cultural enclaves at the heart of its diasporic communities allows sending states to retain a considerable amount of influence over social identities. In the Israeli case, discursively constructing and re-imagining migrants as integral part of the nation has motivated the government to build better, more secure conduits to reach out to its invaluable pool of human and material resources. Further creating and maintaining designated extra-territorial spaces for migrants has strengthened the state's ability to control these resources, and, ultimately, channel them towards a wide range of territorial projects.

As I have argued, seeing cultural re-territorialization as a project in which the state has considerable vested interests does not mean that it is a linear, top-down process of hegemonic re-incorporation. Thus, rather than fetishizing state power or institutions – as many scholarly studies on state-migrants’ relations tend to do - I have chosen to pay a careful ethnographic attention to the agency of migrants and the myriad ways by which they respond to and re-interpret state-initiated projects, and in some cases even produce their own, alternative projects in order to better practice their perceived citizenship duties. The diasporic or extra-territorial condition, I believe, is best conveyed by individual agents who live it daily. Far from living life on the margins of any nation-state or heroically subverting any existing hegemonic political order, Israeli migrants are the ultimate embodiment of the mundane, uneventful extra-territorial condition. A key point in this context is that for Israeli migrants⁴⁵, living extra-territorially often involves close, daily encounters with the sending state apparatus in various forms by virtue of the embodied nature of the Israeli state in their places of residence. It is these intimate encounters, I have argued, taking place in a large (and quickly growing) number of extra-territorial spaces that makes the latter so important to our understanding of state-migrants’ relationship.

As chapter 6 illustrate, the production and maintenance of extra-territorial spaces is better conceptualized as a process of negotiation between state and migrants over the meaning, boundaries, and practices of Israeli citizenship. The notion that a set of alternative citizenship rights and duties ought to be re-configured for those in an extra-territorial setting is in line with what Iris Young (1990) termed *differentiated citizenship*, namely

⁴⁵ I do not know for a fact that this is the case for other migrants (e.g., Mexicans).

“[T]he articulation of special rights that attend to group differences in order to undermine oppression and disadvantage” (p. 252). For Israeli migrants, I argue, the struggle has (and still is) centered on their quest to be recognized as differentiated, extra-territorial citizens whose rights and duties are distinct than their territorial co-nationals. The notion that one is entitled to different rights (and subjected to different duties) lies at the heart of the production of extra-territorial spaces. Interactions between government agents and migrants have centered on the latter group’s quest for a new articulation of Israeli citizenship, one that is in line with their unique status and needs. For the state, though, acknowledging extra-territoriality as a distinct citizenship status is a highly problematic issue, not only due to the symbolic centrality of territory in the Zionist ideology, but more so because of its deep-rooted fear of losing valuable human (and, subsequently) material resources. In a competitive, globalizing environment, it is incumbent upon the Israeli state to ‘arrest the flows’ by following them and attempt to control them.

As I have shown, the ‘overt rejection’ discourse which was dominant in Israel during its first four decades negated the provision of any non-consular rights to Israeli migrants. Yet, in light of the changes in discourse and policy over the last twenty years, migrants are expecting, indeed, demanding differentiated rights. Fully aware of the advantages (and disadvantages) of their extra-territorial condition, Israeli migrants seek a new formulation of their rights as citizens of the state in exchange for what they see as their own duties (e.g., unremitting support from afar, attendance in cultural ceremonies). As Haim, one of my most articulated and vocal informants put it, “I don’t want to get involved in the day to day issues [in Israel], but I do think that it is important that the

leadership of the State, including the Prime Minister should be elected by the voices of every single citizen, regardless of where they live”. Seeking to push the traditional limits of Israeli citizenship and re-formulate a new contract with the state, migrants are motivated to use their extra-territorial status (and spaces) to challenge the state and force it to act on it.

From the state’s standpoint, though, this newly suggested agreement is not a substitution for the traditional civic contract but rather a temporary arrangement. Supporting a lively, committed (and state-supported) cultural diaspora does not mean coming to terms with its permanency; in fact, it is projects of re-territorialization which have occasionally undermined the permanent nature of the Israeli diaspora and worsened its already fragmented, disorganized form. By producing carefully selected and ostensibly biased spaces of re-territorialization (and preventing the emergence of more meaningful and long-lasting others) that state has often exacerbated the community’s inability to act collectively in their new places of residence. Since communal organization and activism is often a pre-requisite for building a viable cultural diaspora, it is the undermining of these efforts that sustains migrants’ sense of transience and reproduces their reliance on the state. As Yehudah, the founder and former president of CIC (Council of Israeli Community), the first Israeli umbrella organization in Los Angeles, told me, “Our objective [in establishing CIC] has been to build the necessary [communal] infrastructure, [since] Israelis do not know how to live in a community, period. They always keep waiting for the state [to take care of them], not realizing it won’t happen because it is counter-productive to its objectives [of returning them].” But as this research clearly

shows, increasingly, the state *is* taking care of its migrants, assuming greater responsibilities over their well-being and making itself highly visible in their daily lives in a wide range of extra-territorial spaces. One of the questions this research engaged with, though, has been the purpose of these newly conceived spaces and the extent to which they are indeed serving the differentiated needs of the extra-territorial Israeli citizen.

As I have argued, despite their seemingly neutral appearance as spaces of identity formation (or ‘tie-maintenance’, as some of my official interviewees had referred to them), a more careful examination reveals that these and other venues are instrumental in the state’s attempts to re-subject migrants to its cultural hegemony and territorial regime. Thus, for example, the different responses given by first generation migrants and state agents to the question of the Festival’s main objective is quite telling in this context; whereas the former appeared to have sought official recognition in their culturally-based, extra-territorial status, the latter - in line with the ideologically zealous Zionist stance that sanctifies territory – have often articulated a position that sees extra-territoriality as a temporary disorder, an easily fixable, transient status that is bound to change once the project of re-territorialization realizes its objectives. As I have shown, these incongruent conceptualizations of Israeli citizenship feed back into, get negotiated in, and ultimately transform the exact same spaces.

The process of negotiation, however, does not always yield the desired outcome for either state or migrants. As chapter 6 illustrate, whenever existing spaces (and by extension –

the practices of citizenship that are deployed within them) have failed to satisfy the perceived needs of the migrant community, or when such spaces were not in existence altogether, activists have sometimes chosen to construct new (or alter existing) spaces through which to practice their rights and duties as citizens. Thus, for example, the failure of the traditional state-produced Festival to fulfill the needs of migrants ‘to celebrate Independence Day like in Israel’ led to the construction of an entirely new space through which to support the state and voice their demands for a space in the nation. Migrants simply withdrew their support of the state-funded event and produced their own alternative space shortly thereafter. Despite the markedly different approaches taken by the community in each one of these cases, the rationale behind both was similar – to retain a certain degree of power over the construction of extra-territorial spaces.

As the Israeli case illustrates (and the Mexican, Indian, and Chinese confirm) the relationship between sending states and migrant communities has been growing ever more intimate in the foreseeable future. As a larger than ever number of states recognize the advantageous position of their extra-territorial citizens, they conceive a variety of (trans)-national policies and re-territorialization projects aimed at re-incorporating first, second and third generation migrants’ into the expanding nation by re-configuring their citizenship status. As I have argued, migrants’ varied responses to these state-initiated efforts and the spaces in which they take place are seldom neutral. Instead, these projects and spaces breed a new and altered sense of citizenship and re-define the relationship between the state and migrants.

ANNEX 1**List of Interviews with State Representatives** (* denotes phone interview)

1. **Nadia Prigat**, Director, Department for Returning Residents, Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. Jerusalem.
2. **Colette Avital**, Member and Deputy Speaker of the Knesset; Former Consul General of Israel in New York and Chairwoman of the Committee for Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs. Jerusalem.
3. **Michael Malkior**, Member of Knesset and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Culture, and Sports. Jerusalem.
4. **Shmuel Lahis**. Former General Manage of The Jewish Agency for Israel. Jerusalem/
5. **Mirla Gal**. Director-General, Ministry of Immigrant Absorption. Jerusalem.
6. **Becky Nahum***. Director of Israeli House, Consulate General of Israel in Chicago.
7. **Orna Elnar***. Director of Israeli House, Consulate General of Israel in Los Angeles.
8. **Hadara Aluk***. Director of Israeli House, Consulate General of Israel in San Francisco.

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