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**Politics, Race and Absorption: Israeli Housing and
Education Policies for Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants,
1984-1992**

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In response to a question about policies to absorb the recent influx of Soviet and Ethiopian immigrants (1989-1992) a former Israeli Prime Minister responded: "There was no policy... immigration itself creates solutions... and solves problems." To the same question, a senior Jewish Agency absorption official commented: "... at the university you have ideas of vast plans... in life we do not have the time needed to make one... there is a need for quick and immediate decisions."

If education is the key to success for any group, it is doubly so for the Ethiopians. For them, it not only affects their chances for upward mobility, it plays a critical role in their integration into Israel's mainstream-modern, technological and mostly urban society (JDC, 1997).

Introduction

Since the early 1980s and until 1993 over 50,000 Black African Ethiopian Jews immigrated to Israel. Most "came from one of the most conservative, rural regions of Ethiopia, where modern means of communication and transportation were undeveloped, illiteracy among the adult population was more than 90 percent..." (Wagaw, 1993:26-28).

As with previous Jewish immigrants, the Israeli government and Jewish Agency assumed responsibility to absorb them into Israeli society.¹ Since independence in 1948 Israeli governments have pursued the goal of providing every Jewish immigrant a "decent home in a suitable living

¹ Established in 1929 the Jewish Agency represented world Jewry and the World Zionist Organization in efforts to establish a Jewish State in Mandatory Palestine. In 1952, the Israeli government gave it primary responsibility for the care of new immigrants, rural development and certain educational programs. While the Israeli government exercises considerable influence, the Agency remains independent. It receives its funds from the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) in the United States and the Keren Hayesod elsewhere.

environment”(Fialkoff, 1993a). By the mid-1980s, subsidized mortgages and rents became the major form of assistance for permanent housing for new immigrants.

A second important component of absorption included the formal schooling of children (Iram and Schmida, 1998:123). Israel provided formal education to all immigrant children. To an extent much greater than in the United States and many other countries, political party interests determined Israel's educational absorption policies. (Adler, Kahane and Avgar, 1975; Eisenstadt, 1967; & Eisikovits and Beck 1990: 178). Moreover, ethnic considerations (among Jews) as well as nationality (between Jews and Arabs) have been major concerns of Israeli educational policy. The Ethiopians, being black Jews, placed race on the agenda within the context of a characteristic of their ethnic or national identity.

This paper studies the housing and educational absorption policies of the Israeli government for the Ethiopian Jews who have immigrated since the early 1980s. It documents actual policies and explains why particular policies were adopted and why the Ethiopians were treated so differently. While official policy called for housing Ethiopian immigrants in communities with strong infrastructures in central Israel, most would be directed to permanent housing in spatially segregated clusters in specific neighborhoods and municipalities, often in Israel's periphery. In education political decisions at the highest level segregated Ethiopian immigrant children within an inferior school system.

Importantly, the experience of the Ethiopian immigrants in housing and education resembled that of earlier non-European Jewish immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s. Israeli policy housed them in the underdeveloped periphery with inadequate services and fewer economic opportunities and placed their children in segregated and inferior schools.

Holt (1995:97-116) argues that the spatial segregation of housing for Ethiopians was inevitable regardless of the intent of policies. He emphasizes the low socio-economic and educational status of the Ethiopian immigrant community in contrast to the host society. It is argued here that policies did matter—it was government policy that directed Ethiopians to specific communities and locations and confined them to a second rate school system. Moreover, the key to understanding the adoption of particular policies lies with the relative lack of political influence and low standing of the Ethiopian community within Israel's political-administrative systems (Christensen and Peters, 1999; Banfield, 1974:260-271; & Dror, 1968:35).

While the findings here are about Israel, they provide interesting and important insights into the implementation of low-income housing policies for minority immigrants. While the Israeli government favored dispersal policies, it actually implemented policies that concentrated the Ethiopian immigrants in weaker communities and neighborhoods. Why this was the case should be of interest to scholars of absorption and housing policies in many countries.

The paper should also interest students of education policies to absorb immigrants. While much of the relevant comparative literature focuses on empirical studies of school performance of immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities this study emphasizes macro policy (Gibson and Ogbu, 1991; Rivera-Batiz, 1996; Iredale and Fox, 1997; First, 1988; & Olsen, 1988). It examines policy parameters that influenced the opportunities and experiences of Ethiopian immigrant children in Israeli schools.

Relevant for comparison are long-range effects of Israeli housing and educational policies on Ethiopian Jews in Israel (Ogbu, 1991; & Sever, 1997:511). Will the policies that housed Ethiopians in peripheral areas and poor neighborhoods in central Israel and denied them educational

opportunities result in their becoming an institutionally marginalized minority whose members lose their will to succeed? (Matute-Bianchi, 1991:204-6).

Methodological Issues

This research deals "...with behavior of senior political decision makers and policymaking organizations under adversity" (Dror, 1986:49). The research is based on a review of relevant archival materials in the Jewish Agency for Israel, and Ministries of Education, Housing, Interior and Finance. The author examined minutes and memos of important committees involved in immigration absorption as well as correspondence of several key officials. In addition, he conducted in depth structured open-ended interviews with several major elected and administrative officials. Finally, the author reviewed research results of others and newspapers.

This is an implementation study. Rather than evaluate the success of policies, it investigates their implementation and explains their outcomes (Kirst and Jung, 1982:119-148; & Murphey, 1973:161-198). The objective is to provide "...a clear factual account of the implementation experience [while recognizing] different points of view [held] by the various participants in the implementation experience" (Yin, 1982:63).

The author discounts the analytical distinction made by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) between policy formulation and implementation; rather, policy-making and implementation are viewed as part of a single interactive and interdependent process (Lasswell, 1956, 1963; Sabatier, 1991:144-147). Events preceding, as well as during, a formal policy-making stage, influence the policy implementation process. Moreover, parts of a policy may be incomplete, unclear, and ambiguous. Public policy "lays down general directives, rather than detailed instructions..." (Dror, 1968:14). In addition, its intent could be "adaptive" rather than "programmed," with the

objective being to establish agreements on “...acceptable rules of the game that would allow the multiple participants to bargain and compromise during the course of implementation” (Berman, 1980:205-227). Most importantly, enacted policies are probably continuously re-negotiated before (and after) implementation at the national and local levels. Therefore, policy analysis must pay attention to how political, bureaucratic, economic, and cultural variables influence policy implementation.

An understanding of the political-bureaucratic context of Israeli politics is essential for comprehending absorption policies for Ethiopian immigrants. First, the Israeli government is not a uniform body, but is “composed of largely independent ministries” (Aharoni, 1991:242) that often “operate more as competing units than as integral parts of a coordinated government machinery” (Akzin and Dror, 1966:8-10).

The broader macro-economic context also affected the policy implementation process (Barrett and Fudge, 1981:270). During 1989-1992, the national security situation of Israel, including the Palestinian uprising (**Intifada**), as well as the government's settlement policy in the occupied territories and the massive immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union (see Appendix), influenced policy and resources for the absorption of Ethiopian Jewry.

Israel and Immigration

Following independence in 1948, Israel's Knesset (parliament) enacted the **Law of Return** (1950), which granted Jews throughout the world the right to immigrate and become Israeli citizens (Adler, 1996:135-144). Massive immigration propelled national and economic development as new immigrants doubled Israel's population by 1952 and tripled it by 1960 (see Appendix).

Initially most immigrants lived in temporary camps operated by the Jewish Agency in coastal Israel. Everywhere, electricity, running water, and sanitary conditions were minimal. Equally scarce were educational and social services. Within a few years between 110 and 160,000 moved into abandoned Arab housing (Aharoni, 1991:216; & Stock, 1988:78-79). The majority, however, moved to transit camps (**ma'abarot**), established by the Jewish Agency as a temporary solution. Here families rented a hut and provided for their own livelihood. By the end of 1951 there were 92 **ma'abarot** with 52,000 dwelling units.

In the early 1950's, arguing that national security prohibited concentrating the Jewish population along the coastal strip, the government adopted a policy of population dispersal. Most immigrants arriving in the 1950s were sent directly from boats or planes to new housing, furnished by the Jewish Agency, in development or "new" towns in sparsely populated peripheral areas, some of which were in regions with Israeli Arabs and near hostile borders (Aharoni, 1991:116; Cohen, 1970; Eisenstadt, 1967:198; & Smoocha 1978:90). Immigrants of means settled themselves in the major cities (Torgovnik, 1990:26; & Rivlin, 1992:4).

Critics claimed that the population dispersal policy was part of an overall effort by the existing political establishment to create a dependent immigrant population that allowed the retention of power during national growth and development (Sheffer, 1978 64-96; & Aharoni, 1991:229ff.). Regardless of intent, the population dispersal policy limited opportunities for new immigrants: During its early decades, Israel's economic development and growth occurred in the center of the country, by-passing the development towns (Sharkansky, 1997:7; & Aharoni, 1991). Moreover, the level of educational, social, and health services in the new towns lagged far behind that of central Israel; for example, "[m]ost of the new communities lacked facilities for secondary education" (Adler, Kahane and Avgar, 1975; Lipshitz, 1996:1-2; Shama and Iris,

1977; & Stock, 1992:104ff.). Despite the relatively small size of the country, residents of the development towns did not have access to jobs in the center. According to Halper (1985:112-139) and Smootha (1978), dispersal policies contributed to a social gap between veteran Israelis of European origin [Ashkenazim] and their offspring and the newer Jewish immigrants from Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East (Sephardim or Orientals). The latter constituted the overwhelming majority of the new towns' population.

These absorption policies also fostered paternalism, which was characterized by bureaucratic control of a dependent immigrant population who became wards of the state (Ashkenzi, 1985:90; Weingrod, 1966:122; Eisenstadt, 1967:19; and Halper, 1985:122). Immigrants had little to say about where they would live, their children's education, and their means of livelihood. Weingrod (1966:vii, 121) described entire immigrant villages (and towns) as "administered communities" where "social, cultural, economic, and political development was directly determined by outside agencies."

In contrast, the Jewish Agency Absorption Department gave preferential treatment to many Polish Jewish immigrants in the first decade of the state. At great expense, it provided many of them with subsidized housing in the center of the country (Stock, 1988:128, 129, 243).

The population dispersal policy impacted on the educational system, which resulted in the separation of pupils based on class and ethnicity.

Education and New Immigrants

In 1953, two separate public school systems--state secular and state religious-- replaced "educational streams" controlled by political parties. The Ministry of Education, however, controlled only the state-secular system. The new law gave a public committee controlled by the

National Religious Party authority over matters of pedagogy in the state-religious system. It remained a party controlled school system devoting "considerable time to the Bible, learning daily prayers, analysis of the rules of... keeping kosher and Jewish holidays" (Weinstein, 1985: 217; Iram and Schmida, 198:21 & Lazin 1982).

The 1953 reform also established "recognized" private schools, many operated by ultra orthodox religious groups. As a condition of state aid, these systems had to adopt parts of a standard curriculum and agree to ministry supervision (Iram and Schmida, 1998:21). In practice, however, party and coalition politics have made these autonomous of ministry supervision. Today they receive government aid on par with the state systems.

During the 1950s and 60s, national, ethnic and class separation characterized the Israeli educational system (Adler, Kahane and Avgar, 1975 & Iram and Schmida, 1998). The government and Jewish Agency settled large numbers of immigrants in specific neighborhoods and towns in central Israel. The Ministry of Education's neighborhood school policy resulted in children of veteran Israelis (mostly Ashkenazim or European Jews) and immigrants from Arab lands (mostly Sephardim or Oriental Jews) attending different schools. In addition, the more religious Oriental immigrants and more secular veteran Israelis preferred different school systems.

In the periphery, a complex segregated demographic mix had Israeli Arabs living in their villages and Israeli Jews in kibbutzim, moshavim and in development towns.² The Arabs of Israel wanted to educate their children in their own schools, which met the desire of the Israeli government to have them in a separate, government controlled, system (Iram and Schmida, 1998:6; & Majid Al Haj, 1998). The kibbutzim, with almost all veteran Ashkenazi Israelis had their own, ideologically oriented schools.

² A kibbutz is a settlement in which the members own all property collectively. In the moshav, each family owns its

In contrast the moshavim absorbed large numbers of Jewish immigrants from Europe and Arab lands in ethnically homogeneous settlements. Most Oriental Jews on moshavim sent their children to state religious schools while veteran moshav members and some of the newer European immigrants sent their children mostly to state secular schools. When Oriental immigrant and veteran Israeli Jewish children went to the same school, they were placed in separate tracks (Halper, Shokeid & Weingrod, 1984:53ff.). In the development towns in the rural and peripheral areas the new, low-income immigrant population, mostly Oriental Jews, studied in their own state secular and religious schools (Iram and Schmida, 1998:125-127).

Later, in the early 1980s some parent groups in the larger cities established more elite schools (Noam) within the state religious system. While being more religious (separate classes and/or schools for boys and girls), Noam Schools attracted a better off Ashkenazi clientele that could afford special fees. Some claim that these schools were established to circumvent the integration of Ashkenazi and Sepharadi pupils (Halper, Shokeid & Weingrod, 1984:53ff.; Haaretz November 27, 1997). Consequently, the percentage of economically poor and Oriental pupils in the regular state religious systems increased. It became the far weaker system; many of its pupils did very poorly in the school system (Adler, Kahane, and Avgar, 1975).

Despite a declared policy of establishing educational opportunities for all (Jewish) Israeli pupils, by the late 1950's, large numbers of Oriental immigrant children, concentrated in poor neighborhoods, development towns and moshavim received an inferior educational experience (Adler, Kahane & Avgar, 1975 & Eisenstadt, 1967). Beginning in the 1960s the Ministry of Education pursued policies to strengthen the educational experience of the weaker, newer, mostly Oriental Jewish pupils (Blass & Nir, 1984 & Iram and Schmida, 1998:123-125ff.). The Ministry

provided additional resources, instituted a longer study day, recruited and trained teachers, funded enrichment for schools, introduced an American style "Head Start" pre-kindergarten program and instituted social integration in post-primary schools (Wagaw, 1993:49ff. & Amir and Sharan, 1984). Later, its Welfare Project and the Government-Jewish Agency Project Renewal targeted resources to schools in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods (Lazin, 1994). The educational impact of these efforts remains questionable (Iram and Schmida, 1998:26-27).

A Ministry of Absorption, 1967

The failure to attract young Western volunteers as immigrants following the Six Day War in 1967 resulted in a broad attack against Agency absorption authorities and their policies. This led to the establishment of a state Ministry of Absorption in 1968. Nevertheless, the Agency retained its central role in absorption because of party interests and the United States tax code, which prohibited UJA funds being given directly to a foreign government (Stock, 1988 & 1992). Lacking sufficient resources, the new ministry unsuccessfully coordinated absorption policies of the various ministries and the semi-autonomous Jewish Agency. It remained a weak ministry with ministers coming from minor faction of the major government party or from a smaller party in the coalition.

While continuing with many of the same paternalistic policies toward poor immigrants from "countries of distress," the Jewish Agency initiated new programs for "academic" immigrants from Western "countries of affluence" (Adler, 1996:136; & Horowitz, 1996). It assigned the latter to absorption centers in central Israel for six months, where they received meals, Hebrew lessons, a general orientation, and help finding a job and an apartment. In

response to increased immigration from the Soviet Union (1968-1973) the Agency rented 6,000 private apartments in central Israel, which it then offered to the immigrants at subsidized rents.

The expected massive wave of immigration from the Soviet Union in 1988 led the government to institute a policy of “direct absorption” which bypasses absorption centers. Following a short stay at a hotel or with relatives, the immigrant receives a financial stipend and rents housing on the private market. The immigrant then finds a job or participates in a subsidized job-training program. The government and Jewish Agency excluded Ethiopians from direct absorption (Minutes... of Jewish Agency and Government in the Office of Prime Minister, 22 June 1987).³ They, along with a minority of Soviet immigrants (mostly elderly, handicapped, and single parent families), continued to be absorbed in Jewish Agency absorption centers.

Officially, Agency and government officials argued that the Ethiopians were incapable of being absorbed directly into Israeli society; they lacked the education, skills, knowledge, resources, and appropriate culture to find housing on their own. Nevertheless, several hundred families and individuals, if not more, managed on their own. They moved in with relatives and friends upon their arrival or from absorption centers (Weingrod, 1995:253ff).

Not mentioned were apparent vested interests of the Agency and government in keeping the Ethiopians under its care and control. First, if the Ethiopians participated in “direct absorption,” the Agency would lose control over tens of millions of dollars received annually from the American government and overseas Jewish philanthropic groups. Moreover, caring for Ethiopians in exclusive Agency institutions helped overseas agencies raise money for the Jewish Agency: “They could be displayed as a unique and exotic group; black, Jewish and poor”(Hertzog, 1997:197; & Stock, 1988:200).

³ Copies of most documents cited here are located in the offices of the Secretary General of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. Documents relating to the Beilin Committee are in the Ministry of Finance.

Second, while “direct absorption” had reduced the Agency’s role, the care for Ethiopians delayed its departure from absorption. In the late 1980s the Agency agreed to transfer its absorption functions and absorption centers to the government. While overseas donors favored this move, Israeli Agency officials and bureaucrats opposed it. An agreement was signed in November 1988, but only partially implemented; the arrival of the Ethiopian immigrants delayed the transfer of absorption centers and other functions for several more years (Katz, Globerson, Kop., Neipris and Weinblatt, 1987). The Agency needed the Ethiopians as dependent immigrants for its own survival.

The Israeli government also had a financial incentive to deny Ethiopian Jews access to “direct absorption.” The Agency with overseas moneys funded 100 percent of absorption via absorption centers. In contrast, direct absorption initially required the government of Israel to fund 50 percent of the cost.

Ethiopians Come to Israel

According to Kaplan and Rosen (1994:62ff), prior to 1977, only one hundred Ethiopian Jews “had been grudgingly allowed ... (to immigrate)... by either Ethiopian or Israeli authorities.” Thereafter, the Israeli government began to foster their immigration.

Many in Israel had questioned their being Jewish. A major change occurred in 1973, when then Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef recognized them as descendants of the Tribe of Dan and eligible to emigrate under the Law of Return (Memo of Secretary General of Jewish Agency to Members of Coordinating Committee 24 October 1984). For the purpose of marriage, however, he insisted that they undergo “strict conversion procedures” involving immersions for

men and women, symbolic recircumcision for the men and a commitment to obey Jewish Law. In 1976, using Rabbi Yosef's letter, Minister of Interior Shlomo Hillel officially accepted them as Jews under the Law of Return.

The question of the legitimacy of their Jewish identity remained an issue even after their arrival in Israel. Some groups, including the Chabad Movement, would not let them into their schools without undergoing formal conversion (Youth Aliyah, 1995:29). In response to protests and pressure by Ethiopian activists, the Orthodox establishment has shown a degree of pragmatism toward the community (see Kaplan and Rosen, 1994: 74ff.).

Following the overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974 and up to 1984 almost 6500 Ethiopian Jews immigrated to Israel (see Appendix). Many left secretly with the aid of the Israeli intelligence services (Mossad) or the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry (Szulc, 1991:249ff.; & Kaplan and Rosen, 1994:59ff.).

Increased persecution led several thousand Ethiopian Jews to flee into Sudan in 1984. Between 21 November 1984 and 5 June 1985 the Israeli Mossad conducted **Operation Moses**, a covert airlift, which brought between six and twelve thousand Ethiopian Jews to Israel (New York Times 2 November 1980; Kaplan and Rosen, 1994:63, 74ff.; & Szulc, 1991:298). In response to disclosure by Israel, Sudan stopped the operation. Shortly thereafter, the United States government evacuated the remaining 600 Jews to Israel.

In early June 1987, then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir called for the reunification of Ethiopian Jews with their families in Israel. He stated: "We are ready to get them out by every means--formal, informal, clandestine, or whatever" (Minutes of Meeting.... Office of Prime Minister, 22 June 1987). With resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and Ethiopia,

immigration rose to 1382 in 1989 and 4,153 in 1990 (Memo, Arnon Mantver to Uri Gordon , 2 February 1992).

Concerned about the well being of Jews left in Ethiopia, the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry encouraged Ethiopian Jews to move to Addis Ababa. The organization hoped to pressure the Israeli government to airlift them out (Kaplan and Rosen, 1994:65; Szulc, 191:300; Memo, Arnon Mantver to Uri Gordon 7 May 1991). By September of 1990, almost 21,000 Ethiopian Jews waited in various shantytowns and camps in Addis. **Almaya**, a Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) organization, provided shelter and food and established a school with 4500 pupils (Szulc, 1991:300; Minutes of Meeting of Director Generals of Jewish Agency, 3 September 1990). The Agency became a partner in the refugee camp. In the spring of 1991, it began processing residents for evacuation to Israel. During a 36-hour period between May 24 and 26, 1991, the Israeli Air Force airlifted 14,160 persons from Ethiopia to Israel in **Operation Solomon**.

Initial Housing Policies--Absorption Centers, Hotels and Caravans

The government/Jewish Agency Coordinating Committee (Board) and Authority for Immigration and Absorption (CC), established in 1954, oversaw general housing policies for the Ethiopians. It established an Ethiopian subcommittee, chaired by the Minister of Absorption, to coordinate all absorption efforts. The Agency, however, had exclusive responsibility for Ethiopian immigrants upon their arrival and during their first year in Israel (Letter, Chaim Zohar, 3 October 1984; Stock, 1992:7; CC of 24 June and 29 October 1984).

All Ethiopians would be initially absorbed in Agency absorption centers. While other immigrants were expected to remain in the centers for up to six months, the official expectation

for Ethiopians was one year. Many stayed longer (Memo, Secretary of Jewish Agency... to the CC 24 October 1984). In February 1984, for example, over one half of the 3000 Ethiopians in absorption centers had been there more than one year and some for more than three years. During Operation Moses, with absorption centers filled to capacity, the Jewish Agency placed thousands of Ethiopians in hotels, where many remained for over a year (Social Services Division of Absorption Department of Jewish Agency, 'Annual Report on Immigration from Ethiopia' 13 February 1984; CC of 24 June 1985). Little changed by 1989 when sixty-five percent of the 2667 Ethiopian residents had been living in the centers for at least 4 years! (Memo, Moshe Nativ to Mendel Kaplan, 7 June 1989).

The Ethiopians preferred to remain rather than move to permanent housing, which was often located in other towns and cities. This was for a variety of reasons, including financial, having children in nearby schools, proximity to work, and presence of friends and relatives in the center and nearby area (Letter, Yisrael Schwartz to Regional Ministry (of housing) Directors, 25 June 1991). Some found the absorption centers and caravans adequate; they had a roof over their heads and a caretaker to deal with their problems. Why leave to fend for them in an uncertain environment? In addition, Agency absorption center personnel preferred for them to stay out of concern for their own jobs: empty absorption centers might be closed.

The increase in Soviet immigration in 1989/1990 with thousands of poor, elderly, and handicapped persons aggravated competition for the few vacant places in absorption centers. In response to the projected influx of Ethiopians in 1991, the government and Agency planned for ten additional absorption centers, which included use of two army bases and vacation facilities of the Soldiers Benevolence Association (CC of 17 February 1991 and Summary, Director-Generals of Jewish Agency, 10 December 1990; & Cabinet decisions of 16 December 1990).

Most were full and few persons were leaving; consequently, newer Ethiopian immigrants went to live with relatives. While the host family received monthly compensation, the immigrants received no services. Officially, this was not a policy.

With Operation Solomon, the Agency placed about 11,000 persons in hotels in the periphery and in Jerusalem. It housed another 3460 Ethiopian immigrants in 45 square meter mobile home in caravan sites operated by a Ministry of Housing subsidiary, that were located mostly in northern (Galilee) and southern (Negev) Israel (Circular, Director General-Jewish Agency #5, 17 June 1991; Letter, Arnon Mantver to Ediso Masala, 29 May 1991).⁴ Others were taken in by relatives and friends (Summary of Meeting of Ethiopian Team of the Agency 5 June 1991; & Note, Aryeh Barr to Ariel Sharon 16 June 1991).

In early fall 1991 the government hoped to transfer the 11-12,000 Ethiopian immigrants from hotels to caravan sites and absorption centers. Originally planned for the large influx of Soviet Immigrants, the caravan sites housed many Soviet immigrants as well as some poor and “homeless” Israelis.⁵ While the sites were located throughout the country most were in rural areas, which required investment in infrastructures. From an initial estimate of \$15,000 they ended up costing as much as \$39,000 per unit (Comptroller's Report, 1991:228ff.). Mayors of larger cities refused to accept caravans because they feared recreating transit camps (ma'abarot) of the 1950s! Less publicized was the concern of many mayors, especially in development towns, that the immigrant Russians might upset the local political balance based on a majority of Oriental Jewish voters. Some mayors were afraid of a negative reaction of their citizens if they helped the “Ashkenazi” immigrants.

⁴ Many were divided into two three- room units each with bathroom and kitchenette. The split units were called Meguranim, and they were designed for small families and couples without children.

⁵ Some Israelis had lost their low-income rental units in the private market to Soviet immigrants able to pay a year's

As the June 1992 Knesset elections approached, over 6173 persons from Operation Solomon remained in hotels, and another 10,135 were in caravans. Six additional caravan sites for 5025 Ethiopians were not ready and no provision had been made for an additional 1,000 persons in the hotels!.

The above describes the effort to improve on a temporary housing solution. For many Ethiopians, the caravans were an improvement; they lived as families and they cooked for themselves. Ironically the caravans became the next housing problem. Unlike the large showcase site, Nachal Bekka in Beer-Sheva, with paved roads, public transportation, social services, pre-school facilities and public telephones, many lacked these amenities. Most were in rural and isolated areas and included a least two army camps; they provided few services and even fewer job opportunities.

Permanent Housing Solutions

Two major principles governed permanent housing policies for Ethiopians. First, the government would purchase apartments in areas “**that have strong infrastructures**” more in the center than the periphery (emphasis added). Second, Ethiopian immigrants would be integrated within Israeli society in groups whose size enabled observance of community life **while not creating “congregational pockets** (emphasis added)”(Ministry of Absorption, 1987: & Memo, Aryeh Barr to Ariel Sharon, 16 June 1991). During the next few years, however, actual policies and practices often contradicted the above (Memo, Yisrael Schwartz to Aryeh Barr, 20 May 1991). Despite policies to settle Ethiopians in central Israel “...the economic realities of the country continued to favor the “ghettoization” of the [Ethiopian] immigrants”(Wagaw,

rent in advance as part of direct absorption.

1993:138; & Memo, Aryeh Barr to Ariel Sharon, 16 June 1991). The cost of dispersed housing in good neighborhoods in central Israel, via construction, purchase, and or mortgages, was prohibitive.

In the 1980's, the only sources of vacant public housing existed in peripheral development towns and lower income neighborhoods in central Israel. By the late 1980s several thousand Ethiopian immigrants occupied many of these rehabilitated units often in the same building, street or neighborhood (Letter, Moshe Nativ to Max Fisher, 26 June 1989. The government encouraged Ethiopian immigrants to purchase these units (Jewish Agency Subcommittee on Immigration 17/18 October 1985; Jewish Agency Housing Committee of 18 February 1985; Memo, Mendel Kaplan to Moshe Nativ, 12 February 1990 and Memo, Yisrael Schwartz to Habib Katzav, 10 February 1991). Another public housing option involved the Housing Ministry's purchase of older apartments in the private sector, which the Absorption Ministry rented to immigrants via Amidar and Amigour.⁶ Most units were scattered in low-income neighborhoods in poorer municipalities in central Israel (see Appendix). Later arrivals followed relatives and friends to these lower-income environments despite policies urging them to live elsewhere.

Government and Agency policy also turned many temporary (convertible) absorption centers into permanent public housing for Ethiopians. This created instant mini-ghettos of Black Ethiopians in low-income neighborhoods in peripheral development towns and in poorer neighborhoods in central Israel (Lazin, 1997). In late 1986, there were at least fourteen convertible absorption centers with 700 Ethiopian families (3500 persons) (Memo, B. Manzuri to Rav Yitzhak Aaron, 4 September 1986).

⁶ The units are called "NER" in Hebrew, an acronym for Neches Nirakash [purchased assets]. (Comptroller's Report, 1989:535). Amidar, a government company and Amigour, owned by the Jewish Agency, own and manage low-income public housing (Aharoni, 1991, pp. 216ff).

After 1988 the government built tens of thousands of units in the periphery and in poorer towns on the fringe of central Israel for Soviet Jews. Ethiopians occupied some of these units (Letter, Simcha Dinitz to Yitzhak Modai, 21 May 1992; Memo, Yisrael Schwartz to Aryeh Barr, 20 May 1991; & Lazin 1997).

Finally, the mortgage policy for Ethiopians produced poor results. A relatively small number of mortgages were given to Ethiopian families until 1991 (Memo, Yisrael Schwartz to Fred Lazin, 21 July 1986). Most absorption officials expected that immigrants would need time to decide on where to live permanently, especially if they were unemployed. All the more so for the Ethiopians, many of who were unfamiliar with the mortgage system and often viewed “home purchase with suspicion” (Kaplan and Rosen 1994:84ff.). In addition, the level of mortgages proved insufficient to purchase housing in “good” locations (Fialkoff 1993b).

In conclusion, many permanent apartments provided for, or purchased by, Ethiopians were in peripheral development towns that had high unemployment, fewer economic opportunities, and problematic educational systems. Many also went to live in several development towns on the outer edge of the center of the country between the periphery and metropolitan areas in the “slipover range of the Tel-Aviv metropolitan area ...” (Lipshitz, 1996:11ff.). Here they were also spatially segregated, often in the poorer neighborhoods. While these towns might offer fewer opportunities for employment, the residents are within “commuting distance” of the economically expanding center of the country.

Education Policy Toward Ethiopian Immigrant Children

In the early 1980s, Zevulun Hammer, Minister of Education and head of the National Religious Party, instituted a policy requiring all Ethiopian children to attend state religious

schools during their first year in Israel. They would not be allowed to exercise their legal right to choose the state secular system (Schwartzwald, 1984:105 & Ministry of Education, 1996:9). While neither enacting legislation nor passing a formal resolution, the Knesset (parliament), Government and the Jewish Agency supported this policy. A formal decision may have been illegal and could have led to petitions to the High Court of Justice.

Hammer and his supporters believed that a religious education was necessary for Ethiopian Jews who had been cut off from Rabbinical Judaism for centuries (Jerusalem Post, 3 June 1991). No similar policy was deemed necessary for the overwhelmingly assimilated Soviet Jewish immigrants arriving after 1989 who had lived in a Communist system for several generations.

The Labor Party supported this policy. Its leaders wanted to avoid its own past absorption "errors" that forced traditional religious Jews to send their children to secular schools in the 1950s (Zameret, 1992). Others believed that sending Ethiopians to State Religious schools would lead to their acceptance as Jews.

Hammer's decision increased resources for the state religious school system, controlled by his National Religious Party. The families of Ethiopian pupils also provided potential voters for the National Religious Party. Officials of the state religious system, however, deny political motives. In their view the system accepted a spiritual and national challenge to help educate and absorb Jewish immigrant children. In the long run, however, it also paid a price. After 1991, with the increased number of immigrants from Operation Solomon, the system and schools suffered from overload and "white flight". Some of its officials were willing to "give up" some of the Ethiopian pupils to the secular school system.

While most Ethiopian parents at the time probably had no idea of the differences in the school systems, many may have preferred a religiously oriented education for their children (Gdor, 1996:28; & Weinstein, 1985:218). Regardless, Hammer had "consulted" only with Ethiopian religious leaders. He had no contact with parents or non-religious Ethiopian leaders. Parents had no choice in the matter in the same way that religious Moroccan Jewish immigrants in the 1950s had no right or means to object to their children being assigned to secular Israeli schools.

Importantly, while claiming to respect the traditions of the Ethiopian pupils, the religious school system adopted a policy of assimilation. It wanted the immigrants to adopt "...mannerism, language, traditions, cultural mores and values of the host society" (Eisikovits and Beck, 1990:178). Successful integration meant "...their abandoning 'old ways' and becoming models of veteran Israelis" (Sever, 1997:510)."

Before examining the educational consequences of this policy, it should be emphasized that upon arrival, many Ethiopian children had little or no formal schooling. A large number could neither read nor write in any language and many did not know Hebrew. Also, between 25 and 38 percent, compared to 9 percent for Israeli families, were single parent families (Israel, Ministry of absorption, 1996 & Wagaw, 1993:74). Many families with children lacked a breadwinner (Haaretz, December 30, 1998; Kaplan and Rosen, 1994:73; Kaplan and Salamon, 1998:7; & Youth Aliyah, 1995:22.). They also had minimum support from often illiterate (in their mother tongue) and very poor parents who did not know the language, curriculum or host culture (Wagaw, 1993:28ff.; JDC, February 1997; Youth Aliyah, 1995:8; & Gdor, 1996).

Place of residence also proved to be an important variable (handicap) for education because of the Ministry of Education's neighborhood school policy for elementary schools. The concentration of Ethiopians in development towns and in poorer neighborhoods of less well to do

cities and towns in central Israel meant that most Ethiopian children would be assigned to schools serving low income disadvantaged and mostly Oriental (non-European) Jewish Israeli pupils. Moreover, being restricted to Israel's state religious schools, placed Ethiopian pupils in the smaller of the two educational systems. This policy insured their greater segregation within schools and individual classes (Jewish Agency Subcommittee on Ethiopians, 14 June 1991; & Holt 1995:100).⁷

More importantly, the overall educational level of the state religious school system and academic training of its teachers, is far below that of its secular counterpart (Wagaw, 1993:141). It has more than double the percentage of low performing and problem pupils who compose two thirds of the student body (Jewish Agency Subcommittee on Ethiopians, 14 June 1991; Schwartzwald, 1984:102; Ministry of Education, 1996; & Wagaw, 1993:131).

In addition, in both state educational systems there is a wide divergence in terms of quality between schools in different locations. The level of teaching, resources and pupil performance is much lower in the periphery and much higher in the center, especially in the more established and well-to-do areas (Iram and Schmida, 1988:37-42).

The situation was even more complex. First, the recognized ultra-Orthodox school systems with extensive networks in areas where Ethiopians lived refused to accept Ethiopian pupils unless they converted. Second, some state religious schools, like those associated with the Noam Group, were reluctant to take Ethiopian pupils. Initially, the Ministry of Education did not oppose this policy. Third, some larger municipalities concentrated Ethiopian pupils in the weaker schools of the state religious system. This probably reflected concern with "white flight" (Halevi, 1996:19;

⁷ From the mid 1980s until the late 1990 between 15 to 20 percent of Israeli Jewish pupils studied in the state religious system, 68 to 75 percent in the state secular and 5 to 10 percent in the recognized private religious schools (Wagaw, 1993:131 & Ministry of Education, 1996:117).

Wagaw, 1993:142,143ff.; & Holt, 1995:101ff). Fourth, in schools accepting Ethiopian pupils, authorities placed them in special preparatory classes for the first year, in accordance with Ministry guidelines. This placement, however, often lasted for several years (Jewish Agency Comptroller, 1992; Kaplan and Salamon, 1998:8-10; JDC, February 1997; Gdor, 1996:31; Wagaw, 1993:138ff.; & Ministry of Absorption, 1996). More importantly, teachers in these classes were poorly trained, often part time and many may have lacked certification (State Comptroller, 1985:700). Fifth, many municipal school systems placed many normal Ethiopian pupils in special-education classes, "the educational equivalent of a death sentence" (Gdor, 1996:31; Kaplan and Salamon, 1998 & State Comptroller, 1985:700).

Operation Solomon in May 1991 exacerbated this situation by increasing the number of Ethiopian pupils by two or three times. Almost all were absorbed in state religious schools located in the periphery and in poor neighborhoods of central Israel. No one enforced the Ministry of Education's quota of 25 percent Ethiopian pupils per school (Immigration Cabinet of 23 August 1992). Many schools became more than 60-70 percent Ethiopian. As late as 1996-97 at least 60 schools in Israel had more than 25 percent Ethiopian pupils; in 1997 18 schools had above 40 percent. Interestingly, in August 1997 the state religious school authorities issued guidelines ending a cap on the percentage of Ethiopian pupils in a classroom (Algazy, 1998; Interview with official at Ministry of Education, July 1997; Jewish Agency Comptroller, 1992; Kaplan and Salamon, 1998; & Gdor, 1996:28).

Other factors also contributed to problems in educating Ethiopian pupils. For example, Ethiopian families from Operation Solomon would move (or be moved) on the average of four times in six years (JDC, February 1997). In response, some receiving communities refused to accept new pupils in the middle of the school year (Summary of Interdepartmental Team of

October 16, 1991). This left many children out of school for months (Jerusalem Post, 10 March & 10 August 1992; Letter of Uri Gordon to Zevulun Hammer, 26 February 1992; & Jewish Agency Comptroller, 1992) Finally, the entire educational system and particular state religious schools suffered from a lack of planning, preparation, space and resources (Memo, Moshe Nativ to Arnon Mantver, 28 August 1991; Coordinating Committee and Cabinet Notes, 26 June 1990; & State Comptroller 1985:397-398 & 1991:435ff.).

Exacerbating this situation was the poverty of most Ethiopian families. While Israeli public education is free, parents have to purchase books and supplies. As many as 40 percent of Ethiopian pupils may have lacked these funds (Sever, 1997:519).

It is misleading, if not ludicrous, therefore, to claim "that never before has a group of immigrants [the Ethiopians] been greeted by such expanded and extended benefits..." (JDC, February 1997). Placing students with inadequate educational backgrounds and weak family situations into deficient schools with weak pupils resulted in minimal learning experiences (Gdor, 1996:28-31 & Wagaw, 1993:144ff; Kaplan and Salamon (1998), and Halevi 1996).

In late spring 1992 the Absorption Cabinet of the Likud led Shamir Government decided to allow Ethiopian parents to send their children to state secular schools. This did not mean that the National Religious Party controlled Ministry of Education would comply. This policy would be adopted, however, by the Rabin Government and its Ministers of Education following the June 1992 election (Jerusalem Post, 18 June 1991; Jewish Agency, Subcommittee on Ethiopians, 31 May 1991; & Agenda of Absorption Cabinet of 23 August 1992). In 1993 approximately 95 percent of Ethiopian pupils were in the State religious schools. The percentage dropped to 85 percent in 1995 and 76 percent in 1996 (Jerusalem Post, 18 June 1991; Jewish Agency Subcommittee on Ethiopians, 31 May 1991; & Agenda of Absorption Cabinet of 23 August 1992).

Youth Aliyah Boarding Schools

A second major component of educational policy for Ethiopians concerned the compulsory participation of Ethiopian youth between the ages of 12-18 in the Jewish Agency's Youth Aliyah religious boarding schools and institutions (Ministry of Absorption, 1987). In contrast, Youth Aliyah accepted only those few Soviet Jewish immigrants who wanted to apply and who met a profile of need (Jewish Agency, Forum of Director-Generals, 23 April 1990). Established in the 1930s to absorb Jewish refugee children from Hitler's Germany, Youth Aliyah absorbed youth of successive immigrant groups. With the drop in immigration in the 1970s, it cared for disadvantaged Jewish-Israeli youth that failed to adjust to regular schools (Halevi, 1996:18). While operating several youth villages and schools, Youth Aliyah also subcontracted with many external institutions operated by non-profit and political organizations including the National Religious Party.

Several factors prompted the "Ethiopian" policy. First, in Operation Moses many young people arrived without their parents (Uri Gordon "Absorption... Youngsters" & Absorption Department, Social Work Division "Survey of Ethiopian Immigrants 1984"). Second, the decision reflected long held assumption that the boarding schools could provide a better environment than immigrant parents and the family! (Youth Aliyah, 1995:7 ff.). Third, at the time, Jewish Agency funding of Youth Aliyah relieved the government of the expense and the municipalities of the responsibility of educating large numbers of "weak" pupils in local schools (Youth Aliyah, 1995:7). Although an expensive enterprise, having "Ethiopians" in Youth Aliyah helped Jewish Agency overseas fundraising efforts. Fourth, the utilization of religious boarding schools affiliated with the National Religious Party brought them important resources. In some cases it kept them from

closing (Youth Aliyah, 1995:5,57; Kaplan and Salamon, 1998:10; Algazy, September 11, 1998; & Memo of Moshe Nativ, Director General of Jewish Agency, 18 May 1980).

Some would claim that for teenage Ethiopians Youth Aliyah provided a place of refuge, total absorption and education (Absorption Department, Social Welfare Division "Annual Report on Immigration from Ethiopia," 13 February 1984). Others were more critical. First, by 1984, Youth Aliyah served mostly poorly adjusted Israeli problem youth. In 1988, one critic had warned that to put Ethiopian teenagers in Youth Aliyah would socialize them into the "lowest level of Israeli society" (Jerusalem Post, 8 December 1988). Second, Youth Aliyah policy placed most Ethiopian youth in "dead end" non-academic "vocational programs that preclude academic careers" and future job opportunities (Halevi, 1996:17; & Iram and Schmida, 1998:59-62). This policy would change only after 1992. For example in 1990-1991, 13 percent of the Ethiopians studied in academic tracks and 87 percent in vocational. The percentage in academic tracks rose to 40 percent in 1994-95 and to 80 percent in 1996 (Youth Aliyah, 1995:39& Kaplan and Salamon, 1998:9). In 1991 only 4.5 percent of Ethiopian pupils had the potential for full matriculation (Youth Aliyah, 1995:39). In 1994 32 percent of Ethiopian pupils (versus 80-85 percent of Israelis) were eligible to take matriculation exams. This number reached 48 percent in 1996.

Regardless, many Ethiopian pupils study at the Universities. Although often ill prepared universities provide extensive preparatory and other support programs along with extensive scholarships (Youth Aliyah, 1995:42ff. & Jerusalem Post, 5 September 1995).

Third, placement in state religious institutions concentrated and segregated them. As late as 1994, Ethiopian students made up over 70 percent of the student body in Youth Aliyah religious institutions (Gdor, 1996:37). Some weaker educational facilities became 80 to 100 percent Ethiopian (Kaplan and Salamon, 1998:8). Fourth, this policy separated Ethiopian children from

their families, which "disrupted cultural continuity and undermined the community's close family structure..." (Halevi, 1996:17). Fifth, this was another example of denying Ethiopians freedom of choice. It was the first time in Israel's history that the government required an entire group of immigrant youth to study at boarding schools (Youth Aliyah, 1995:26).

By 1991-1992, some Israeli politicians pressured Youth Aliyah to accept more Russians and Israelis (Letters, MK Michael Bar Zohar to Coordinating Committee, 19 February 1990 & Hella Kleeman to M. Kaplan 2 December 1991). Youth Aliyah began to place some Ethiopian youth in secular institutions (Jerusalem Post, 16 September 1991). Following pressure from some senior staff in the spring of 1992 Youth Aliyah decided to absorb only needy and or disadvantaged Ethiopians (Report of D. Hagoel to Board of Governors, 30 April 1992).

Explanations

Holt (1995:97) argues that "social and spatial segregation patterns among the Ethiopian Jewish community in housing [in Israel]..." was unavoidable given "... the combined social and structural dynamics of immigrant-veteran relations." While not discounting policies which created dependence, he argues (1995:102) that both veteran and immigrants in initial encounters "have incentives to shield themselves from the full impact of strategies designed to facilitate social and economic "integration." Due to their low educational levels and relative poverty, the immigrants stick together in order to better cope with the host society. They favor clustering and oppose change as does the host society. "The dynamic is bi-directional; both strong and weak groups reinforce cultural boundaries in their mutual encounters..." (Holt 1995:103). Kaplan and Rosen (1994:86) support this position when they conclude that "...the primary factor influencing Ethiopians' choice of housing has been their decision to live near close relatives."

The findings here confirm that many Ethiopians chose to live in close proximity to other Ethiopians and that many Israelis rejected them as neighbors. Yet, evidence here also indicates that the government of Israel provided Ethiopian immigrants with few alternatives and choices to enable them to avoid spatial segregation. Those not wanting to live near relatives or friends in spatially segregated areas lacked realistic opportunities for housing in better neighborhoods.

Rather than being inevitable, the spatial segregation of Ethiopian Jewish immigrants resulted from policies taken by the Israeli government. While favoring dispersed housing in established communities the government housed them in weaker towns and poorer neighborhoods throughout Israel. Although officials did not favor spatial segregation of Ethiopians, a dispersal policy in well-established communities became politically “unacceptable” to the several governments of Israel and to the Jewish Agency-- none were willing to implement such a policy (Banfield, 1974:260ff. & Dror 1968:35ff). On one hand, too few Israeli organizations and political groups favored and supported a housing dispersal policy. There was in fact no important lobby or individuals fighting for these policies and goals.

On the other hand, too many Israelis would have opposed a dispersal program that spread Ethiopians among middle-class and better-off neighborhoods and communities in central Israel. Ethiopians themselves may have opposed such an effort. In addition, there were political and economic incentives to concentrate Ethiopians in spatially segregated neighborhoods and peripheral development towns.

Similarly, this study has shown that the educational policies of the Israeli government denied Ethiopian children access to better educational opportunities, placed them in an inferior school system and segregated them. This resulted from two decisions taken by leaders of the government and Jewish Agency. One required all Ethiopian children to study in the state religious

school system. The other mandated compulsory enrollment of all Ethiopian teenagers at religious boarding schools.

The decisions denied Ethiopian pupils the option to attend the much larger, more diverse and academically superior state secular school system. This resulted in attendance at inferior schools and greater segregation.

These policies denied Ethiopian immigrants freedom to choose the school system for their children. Most Jewish Israeli citizens and immigrants from the former Soviet Union and elsewhere have exercised this right since the early 1970s.

Hammer set education policy for the government in a manner serving the broad interest of his own party. In this case, however, his policy had the support of the entire Government and opposition Labor Party. No political party or major political interest objected.

With the election of Rabin and the return of the Labor Party to the Government in 1992, Meretz, a left wing party opposed to religious coercion and influence in society, took over the Ministry of Education. It officially ended the requirement that Ethiopians had to study at state religious schools. It also reinforced recently altered boarding school requirements that allowed Ethiopian parents freedom of choice as to a boarding school option and access to secular boarding schools. The inroads made already by the National Religious Party and religious school system might explain the relatively small percentage of Ethiopian children who transferred. Alternatively, parents may have preferred religious schools.

In their classic study of policymaking in Israel, Benjamin Akzin and Yehezkel Dror (1966:7-10) viewed party politicians as the key and dominant actors with bureaucrats playing a secondary role (Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman, 1981; Dror 1968; & Sharkansky 1997). In his

later works, Dror (1978: 95) and Sharkansky (1997) describe a shift toward increased bureaucratic influence.

While politicians made some important macro policy decisions in housing, most policies described here were put together and implemented by professional administrators. The administrators seemed to dominate. In contrast politicians and their appointees made the major macro policy decision on the absorption of Ethiopians into the educational system. Professional administrators then implemented these decisions. Politicians continued to dominate in much the way that Akzin and Dror (1966:7-10) described in their classic study of Israel's party controlled bureaucracy.

The findings here also support the claim that ethnicity, class and race continue to be important factors in Israeli politics in general and Israeli housing and educational policies in particular. Following Operation Moses, some mayors and residents in peripheral development towns and poorer communities in the center, opposed the placement of additional Ethiopians in their community. In some cases mayoral opposition was a means of receiving (extorting) more resources; the Agency and the government often compensated municipalities for accepting Ethiopians. They also developed a municipal quota policy (10-15 percent of the local population) for settling Ethiopians in public housing and for providing mortgages (Summary of Meeting of Subcommittee, Ministry of Absorption, 24 April 1991).

While most officials play down the racial discrimination factor, one former senior Absorption Ministry official claims that opposition by Israelis prevented implementation of the policy objective of having no more than three Ethiopian families per building. Race *per se*, however, may not be the key to explain the discrimination against the Ethiopians.

More important than race is the relative political importance, influence or power of the respective ethnic or racial group within the Israeli political-administrative system. This is clearly evident in the different experiences of the European and Oriental Jewish immigrants of the 1950s and the Ethiopian and Soviet immigrants in the 1980s.

Large numbers of Oriental Jews from the Middle East and North Africa immigrated in the 1950s and 60s. Then, the Israeli Ashkenazi Jewish establishment settled the poorer, less educated and often darker-skinned Oriental Jews in separate peripheral communities and placed their children in inferior schools (Iram and Schmida, 1998). It forced many religious immigrants to send their children to secular institutions. Like many Ethiopians, some had their names changed (to David and Sarah) and their birth dates disregarded in ID cards which listed month and date of birth as 00 00. Like the Ethiopians in the 1980s, earlier immigrants were too dependent and weak to resist (Halper, 1985 & Wagaw, 1993:119).

The immigrants at this time from Europe had a very different experience. Despite a general negative attitude toward immigrants and a stigma associated with Holocaust survivors (Segev, 1993), new immigrants from Europe received more favorable treatment in both housing and education (Lazin, 1997). They had many more human resources, options to go to other countries, relatives in the country and shared many cultural values with veteran Ashkenazi Israelis.

This pattern repeated itself in the 1980s. Both Ethiopians and Soviet immigrant children faced a less than receptive educational system operating a policy of assimilation that expected them to abandon their old ways (Eisikovits and Beck, 1990:178ff. & Sever, 1997:511). Yet, in practice, the experience proved different for both groups.

The larger number of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union (see Appendix) after 1988 had substantial and growing political influence in the Israeli political-administrative system.⁸ Their political clout in national politics (and later in municipalities) helped mold an initially less than supportive educational system on all levels to meet their needs.

As a group, the students arrived from the former Soviet Union with a rich educational experience and had well educated parents. Most families had freedom of choice as to where to live and in which school system to study. The majority settled in central Israel, which has the better schools and job opportunities. Over 90 percent chose to study in state secular schools. They had the option of sending their older children to secular or religious boarding schools (few did) or having them study at local schools. While they too suffered from poor teachers, inadequate Hebrew instruction and weak support, they were able to study some subjects and take some of the matriculation exams in their mother tongue. Their large numbers overloaded the system and resulted in more of a process of a multicultural form of assimilation (Eisikovits and Beck, 1990:178ff).

In sharp contrast the much smaller Ethiopian immigrant community had little political influence. They were settled in the periphery with its poor schools and fewer job opportunities.

⁸ They had considerable human capital (highly educated) and most had preferential ethnic identity. Most Jews from the former Soviet Union are Ashkenazim. A large minority is not. The latter are from the Islamic republics and Georgia.

Most Ethiopian pupils lacked educational experience and had illiterate parents. They became wards of the 'second-rate' state educational system of the National Religious Party. While some argue that the system wanted to respect Ethiopian traditions and did, religious educators saw themselves as returning the Ethiopians to traditional Judaism. Basically, the Ethiopians lacked political clout and influence to resist and bargain with those wielding power.

The absorption of Ethiopian children into Israel's educational system involved a white, modern, educated, Western country absorbing Black Africans with little formal education and human capital. In some ways the Israeli case differs from the experience of African immigrants and refugees in other Western countries due to the common "Jewishness" of both the host and immigrant group. By the mid 1980s, Israel actively assisted the immigration of Ethiopian Jews and granted them full citizenship and considerable aid in housing, health care and social welfare. In other ways the Israeli case is not so different. Ethiopian children were placed in the weaker schools within an inferior educational system. Many studied in segregated classes and schools with poorly trained teachers. Consequently, they were denied educational opportunities offered veteran Israeli and other non-Ethiopian immigrant children.

The experience of Ethiopians in Israeli absorption system resembles that of many racial and ethnic minorities in other countries (Gibson and Ogbu, 1991; Rivera-Batiz, 1996; Iredale and Fox, 1997; First, 1988; Olsen, 1988; Bhatnagar, 1983). A crucial question is whether they will become more like involuntary or voluntary (immigrant) minorities? (Ogbu, 1991:4). The immigrant sees "increased residential segregation and occupational restrictions" as temporary obstacles that will change with his/her education and advancement (Ogbu, 1991b: 250). In contrast the involuntary minority develops an identity and culture to cope with denigration and subordination. They loose

hope and lower their expectations and accept their inferior status (Ogbu, 1991:278). Their marginality becomes stabilized (Sever, 1997:512 & Matute-Bianchi, 1991:238ff).

Evidence cited here suggests the potential for Ethiopian Jews in Israel becoming an involuntary marginalized minority. Weingrod (1995:253ff.) argues that they have already been marginalized. On the other hand, changes in educational policies after 1992 and the programs of the universities to accept and support Ethiopian students may suggest that the situation will change and society will open up opportunities for the Ethiopians. As Shimahara (1991:348) and Lipset (1973) have shown with marginalized minorities in Japan and the United States respectively, opportunities may change their orientation.

Appendix #1: Immigration to Israel

year	total #	# USSR	#Ethiopian	year	Total#	#USSR	#Ethiopian
1948*	101,828			1973	54,866	33,477	
1949	239,954			1974	31,981		
1950	170,563			1975	20,028		
1951	175,279			1976	19,754		91**
1952	24,610			1977	21,429	8,348	125
1953	11,575			1978	26,394	12,192	3
1954	18,491			1979	37,222	17,614	30
1955	37,528			1980	20,428	7,570	258
1956	56,330			1981	12,599	1,770	601
1957	72,634			1982	13,723	782	528
1958	27,290			1983	16,906	399	2,192
1959	23,988			1984	19,981	367	8,240
1960	24,692			1985	10,642	348	1,763
1961	47,735			1986	9,505	201	209
1962	61,533			1987	12,965	2,072	252
1963	64,489			1988	13,034	2,173	603
1964	55,036			1989	24,050	12,800	1,382
1965	31,115			1990	199,516	185,200	4,153
1966	15,957			1991	176,096	147,800	20,026
1967	14,469			1992	77,032	65,100	3,538
1968	20,703			1993	77,000	66,100	700
1969	38,111			1994	80,000	68,100	
1970	36,750						
1971	41,930	12,819					
1972	55,888	31,652					

Sources: Gur-Gurevitz 1996:27; JAFI Communications Division, "Operation Exodus, Background Information" 19 august 1990; Kaplan and Rosen 1994:70; Memo, Arnon Mantver to Uri Gordon 2 February 1992. Sharkansky 1997:72.

*15 May -31 December 1948

**1972-1976

Appendix #2: Summary; location of municipality, # of Ethiopian residents, # of Ethiopian residents in public housing (Amidar and Amigour), # of mortgages issued to Ethiopians who purchased housing in municipality, and socio-economic ranking of municipality.

Municipality	location*	Ethiopian Population** # ph			mortgages issued			Socio-economic		
		wave a	wave b	total	units***	thru 31.12.92	from 1.1.93	total	rank**** 1992	
1995										
Afula	DT P	2100	1150	3250	1,168	69	18	87	4	4
Arad	DT P	250	190	440	116				4	5
Ashdod	DT S	2200	2200	4400	1,367	177	344	521	4	4
Ashkelon	DT S	1500	2200	3700	914	232	191	423	3	3
Bat Yam	C	600	170	770	396	12	53	65	6	6
Beer Sheva	DT P	2700	1600	4300	1,488	104	104	208	3	4
Beer Yakov	C		180	180		1	34	35	5	5
Beit Shan	DT P	200	100	300		43	1	44	1	4
Beit Shemesh	DT S		250	250		25	32	57	3	4
Bnai Brak	C	150	160	310					5	4
Carmiel	DT P	700	250	950	378	77	11	88	5	5
Eilat	DT P		75	75	43	45	1	46	5	7
Gedera	S	635		635		5	123	128	5	5
Gan Yavne	S		340	340			46	46	5	6
Herzliya	C	100	70	170	70	13	15	28	7	8
hadara	C	1000	3200	4200	382	87	557	644	5	5
Haifa	C	300	150	450		9	80	89	7	7
Hod Hasharon	C	50	145	195	58				7	7
Holon	C	600	100	700	96	14	36	50	7	7
Jerusalem	C	200	290	490	100	89	59	148	6	6
Kfar Saba	C		330	330	68	16	55	71	7	7
Kiryat Ata	DT S	300	100	400	143	31	36	67	4	4
Kiryat Bialik	C	100	400	500		13	60	73	7	7
Kiryat Ekron	C	50	650	700		13	82	95	2	4
Kiryat Gat	DT S	1700	600	2300	506	131	52	183	3	2
kiryat Malachi	DT S	500	2000	2500	148	40	285	325	4	2
Kiryat Motzkin	C	250	350	600		21	100	121	7	7
Kiryat Yam	C	800	270	1070	838	49	126	175	5	4
Lod	C	600	500	1100	176	37	151	188	3	4
Maaleh Adumin	S		100	100		8	25	33	6	7
Migdal Emek	DT S	800	300	1100	496	24	29	54	1	3
Mevasert Tzion	C		80	80					7	8
Mizkeret Batya	S		250	250		2	24	26	5	7
Nazerth (upper)	DT P	1000	150	1150	226	22	16	38	4	4
Nes Tziyona	C	100	350	450	69	3	47	50	6	7
Nahariya	DT S	130	20	150	27	24	3	27	5	5
Nesher	S		120	120	125				5	6
Netanya	C	1600	2250	3850	1,123	170	511	681	5	5
Netivot	DT P	300	1050	1350	705	30	25	55	2	2
Ofakim	DT P	250	530	780	617				2	1
Pardes hana kirkur	C	300	1250	1550	125	9	161	170	4	6

Table continues on next page.

Appendix #2 (Continued).

Municipality	location*	Ethiopian Population** # ph				mortgages issued			Socio-economic	
		wave a	wave b	total	units***	thru 31.12.92	from 1.1.93	total	rank****	1992
1995										
Petach Tikva	C	800	900	1700	341	79	101	180	6	7
Ramle	C	800	2600	3400	456	81	326	407	3	4
Raanana	C	100	50	150	12				8	8
Rehovot	C	400	2800	3200	325	42	665	707	6	7
Rishon Lezion	C	400	600	1000	588	112	129	241	7	7
Rosh Ayin	C		250	250		22	47	69	4	6
Safed	DT P		70	70		32	10	42	3	4
Sderot	DT P	300	325	528	321				2	1
Tiberias	DT P		120	120		37	5	42	2	4
Tirat Hacarmel	C	50	160	210		15	23	38	2	3
Yahud	C		130	130	89				5	7
Yavne	DT S/C	300	1750	2050	320	63	226	289	5	6
Yokneam (upper)	DT S		330	330	82	6	32	38	3	4

Sources: State of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics. 1997. Characterization and Ranking of Local Authorities according to the Population's Socio-Economic Level in 1995. Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics; Memo and printout, Michaela Gerzon (Ministry of Housing) to Fred Lazin 4 May 1997; State of Israel, Ministry of Absorption "Spread of Ethiopian Immigrants by Municipality" 13 March 1997; Memo, Amigour to Fred Lazin, 10 September 1997; Memo and printout, Amidar to Fred Lazin 30 September 1997.

***Location:** C central Israel; DT development town; P periphery; S Sseam (edge of central Israel).

** **Ethiopian population** (with at least 50 persons in municipality) as of 13 March 1997. Calculated by Ministry of Absorption. Wave a is from Operation Moses until Operation Solomon. Wave b is from Operation Solomon to March 1997. Figures to not include 2200 Ethiopian immigrants in rural caravan sites and 800 in absorption centers.

*** **PH Public housing** includes Amidar and Amigour regular and NER units.

**** The Ministry of Interior has ranked the 188 municipalities (Jewish, Arab, Druze) according the their socio-economic characteristics. They did factor analysis of seven variables including resident's financial sources, housing, home equipment, level of motorization, schooling and education, traits of employment and unemployment and different types of socio-economic distress. They numbered each community on a scale and clustered them into 8 groups on a continuum with poverty at the lower end and wealth at the other end. Groupings 1-5 are considered

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Ethiopian Jews in Israel are immigrants and descendants of the immigrants from the Beta Israel communities in Ethiopia who now reside in Israel. To a lesser, but notable, extent, the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel is also composed of Falash Mura, a community of Beta Israel which had converted to Christianity over the course of past two centuries, but were permitted to immigrate to Israel upon returning to Israelite religion - this time largely to Rabbinic Judaism. 18. "The Politics of Immigrant Absorption: The Case of Israel" in Richard Isralowitz, Fred Lazin and Ivan Light, eds. *Immigration and Absorption: Issues in a Multicultural Perspective: Proceedings of the UCLA-BGU Conference on Immigration, May 1991*. Beersheva, Humphrey Center for Social Ecology, 1994). 19. "Israeli Democracy: Development and Change Under Stress" in Metin Heper, Ali Kazancigil and Bert Rockman (eds.) *Institutions and Democratic Statecraft*, 1997. 10. "Politics, Race & Absorption: Israeli Housing and Education Policies for Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants, 1984 -1992". The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies (CCIS), UCSD; Working Paper #28 (Nov. 2000). 11. "Regional Development and Absorption of Academics: The Case of BGU."