Dear Dr. Allison McCulloch

I hereby submit my revised manuscript entitled – “Israeli Immigration Policy at Odds: Emerging Jewish Communities and the 'Return' of the Converts from Latin-America” – for publication in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*.

I would like to thank you and the reviewers most sincerely for your careful review of the manuscript and for the constructive comments. I had modified the manuscript according to your comments and in keeping with the reviewers’ valuable insights. As you are about to see, I accepted most of reviewer's 2 suggestions and all of reviewer's 1 comments, with the exception of comment 4 about the methodological section. Following your request to increase the robustness of the methodological discussion, and following reviewer's 2 suggestion to extend the explanations regarding the usage of critical policy analysis, I substantial reviewed and edited this section. Furthermore, I changed most of the abstract following reviewer's 1 important insights about my main argument and the need to emphasize the exclusionary practice of the Israeli return policy.

In what follows, I outline the changes made to the manuscript in keeping with yours and the reviewers’ comments.

I hope that the revised version is satisfactory, but please do not hesitate to let me know if you think there is a need to incorporate additional changes. Finally, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the reviewers. I believe my paper was substantially improved following the incorporation of their suggestions, and I had the privilege to learn greatly from this process.

Your Sincerely

Renen Yezersky

Reviewer 1

I was pleased to learn that reviewer 1 found my argument interesting. I would like to thank reviewer 1 for his thorough feedback and informative comments. His suggestions to reconstruct the manuscript were very helpful.

1. Following the reviewer's suggestion I added a paragraph to the introduction section. I emphasized the point regarding the exclusionary practice of the Israeli immigration policy to favor Western migrants, so as to the complexity posed by the emergence of new Jewish communities in developing countries. I further clarified this argument following the reviewer's third comment: I added a paragraph about the selection policy toward North-African (1954-1956) as example for the state's preference of Western migrants. As a result, pages 4-7 collapsed to the section about ethnic immigration policy.

2. In respond to the Review's comment I added justification for my case study selection at the beginning of the Methodological section (page 6). As the reviewer mentioned, it was necessary to explain how the Latin America case pertains for other converts communities in Africa and Asia.

3. As mentioned on the first comment, I completely accepted the reviewer's suggestion and paged 4-7 incorporated to the above section.

4. As opposed to reviewer 1, the editor and reviewer 2 suggested to extend the methodology section, therefore, I could not apply this comment.

5. In respond to the reviewer's comment I added a paragraph to the methodological section and the case study sections about the role of NGO's that de facto implementing the immigration policy.

6. In respond to the reviewer's suggestion I deleted all repetitions and clarified the point about the contradictory outcomes of the Israeli ethnic immigration policy. I added this clarification to the first two paragraphs at the discussion section.

7. Following the reviewer's comment I send the reviewed manuscript to a second editing.

Specific comments:

* Because pages 4-7 collapsed to the above section I deleted this paragraph and instead elaborated about how the dynamic between exclusionary and inclusion resulted in constant reformulation of the Israeli ethnic immigration policy.
* The term "purity" used by Brubaker and Yadgar. I placed it in quotes throughout the manuscript.
* I added the paragraph to page 3 according to the reviewer's advice.
* I added clarification about the different threats at the last paragraph of the section.
* I added clarification that I am referring to people that were not recognized as Jews until lately.
* In respond to the reviewer's comment I would like to explain that my intention was to elaborate about the implementation of the immigration policy throughout the case study section. I did not find it helpful to interrupt the theoretical discussion (pages 3-6) by addressing the de facto implementation and privatization reforms of the Israeli immigration policy. Therefore, I have found it more reasonable to combine these issues under the description of the Jewish Agency new position.
* I placed the term in quotes.
* The footnote section was edited.

Reviewer 2

I would like to convey my gratitude's to reviewer 2 for his thorough feedback. His insights about the amendments required for the methodological section and case study analysis were very helpful.

1. In respond to the reviewer's comment I added a sentence at page 3 about the role of gathering of the exile. However, I did not elaborate furthermore as the reviewer suggested because I did not wish to focus on the declared objectives of the Law of Return. In my view, I presume there will always be gaps between policy formulation and its implementations, and that policy is constantly change in respond to external events and political shift. In my research I wished to describe how the Law of Return is carried out today, and how it can be manipulated by the NGOs that implementing it.

2. Following the reviewer's comment I did emphasized the role of the Israeli government to block the immigration of emergence Jewish communities. Moreover, and as addition to comment 6, I added a paragraph at the methodological section about policy as a comprehensive arena in which non-governmental actors might be highly involved at the implementation process. However, I did not apply most of the further suggestions mentioned in this comment. First, I did not argue the Jewish Agency is a part of the Israeli government, and therefore, I added a clarification about its authority and position (page 15). Second, I do not believe I used misleading data regarding non-Jewish immigrants. I rechecked Asher Cohen's reference to the CBS report about two thirds of non-Jewish migrants on 2003; and I corrected my data according to Netanel Fisher, who mentioned in his book that since 2002 approximately 50% of all migrants are non-Jewish [Asher Cohen. 2006. *Non-Jewish Jews: Israeli Identity and the Challenge of Expanding the Jewish Nation*. Shalom Hartman Institute, Faculty of Law, Bar-Ilan University, page 77; Netanel Fisher. 2015. *Israel*’*s Conversion Challenge: Policy Analysis and Recommendations*. The Israeli Institute for Democracy.]

3. In respond to the reviewer's comment about the usage of strong language, I changed some of the term "threats" to "need" or "challenges", especially on pages 2-6. I would like to mention that the term "threat" is taking from the work of Yaacov Yadgar [Yaacov Yadgar. 2002. “Between ‘the Arab’ and ‘the Religious Rightist’: ‘Significant Other’ in the construction of Jewish-Israeli national identity.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 9:1, 52–74.]

4. Following the reviewer's comment I added literature of Devorah Hacohen, Avi Pikar and Yaron Tzur, page 3.

5. The list of quotes on page 12 meant to demonstrate two points: the first in mentioned above the paragraph, before the quotes, about the barrier posed by the established Jewry to the Jewish Agency in recruiting emerging Jewish communities to immigrate. Further explanation provided at the discussion section, where I have argued that the allegation against the established Jewry conceal the responsibility of the Israeli government.

6. I found this comment very helpful. I edit the information about the researcher approach and added few paragraphs: I presented extended definition for policy as a comprehensive arena comprises of multiple factors and participants; I explained how the critical analysis will address the role of NGOs, as each one demonstrates different ideological group; I justified the case study selection and the way in which it reflects how policy can become an arena of competition; and I clarified why and how I am focusing on the policy outcome.