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DISCRIMINATION AND THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

FSU AND ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANTS IN ISRAEL

Thesis for Master of Arts Degree

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INTRODUCTION

In a globalized world, where national borders and identities are blurred, the discourse about belonging, identity and the effect of global migration flows on world's societies has become more and more relevant. Alongside the struggle to define their own hybrid identity, one of the main challenges of immigrants in modern times is the process of integration into host society. While traditionally, scholars have focused on objective integration indicators, such as economic success (e.g. Borjas, 1994; Chiswick, 1998; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2011), over the past few years, subjective parameters have been considered to be of no less importance to the understanding of the immigrant's assimilation process (e.g. Raijman & Pinskey, 2011; Amit, 2012; De-vroome et al., 2014).

Discrimination against others, based on their skin color, race, gender, religion or belief, is considered to be a major social illness. According to the literature, the source of discrimination is divided into two main reasons; prejudice and cultural or economic threat (Quillian, 1995; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). Although the two sources can be viewed as distinct, in practice, both theories influence one another. Discrimination, as an important indicator of social integration, can be measured as an objective parameter, in terms of compared income and labor market participation, or as a subjective parameter, by the discriminate individual's reported experience. It is important to investigate the subjective experience of discrimination as it can affect the individual (in our case the immigrant) social participation and even can influence his mental and physical health (Liebkind et al., 2004; Berry & Sabatier, 2010).

Studies on the subject of destination language proficiency among immigrants have led to wide consensus, supported with empirical evidence, that the acquisition of the host country language is crucial to a better and successful integration process (Chiswick, 1998; Chiswick & Miller, 2001; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; De-vroome et al., 2014). Not only that the acquisition of new language is an important tool in order to have a basic communication, it is also viewed as a meaningful form of cultural capital and symbolic asset, which can entail social power and hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1991). Therefore, the acquisition of the new language can improve the immigrant's social skills, perceived social status and hence, reduce his/hers experience of discrimination.

Here, we aim to investigate **the effect of destination-language proficiency on perceived discrimination within two distinct immigration groups in Israel, the FSU immigrants as opposed to the Ethiopian immigrants**. By conducting a logit regression analysis, using data from the New Immigrants Survey (2010-2011) and the Israeli census of 2008 conducted by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, we analyze the role that destination-language proficiency (alongside all other relevant factors) plays in the story of the social integration of the two investigated immigration groups.

The comparison between the two groups allows us to discuss the impact of the country of origin, it's economic, political and historical background on the human capital of its emigrants and thus, on their starting point at their new environment. While the set of personal characteristics, which are affected by origin and background, can vary within each group, immutable group visibility, i.e. skin color, is a common characteristic of the whole Ethiopian group. Unlike the Ethiopian group, FSU immigrants can blur their origin by, for example, speak fluent Hebrew language and adjust their accent, and by doing so, avoid prejudiced and stereotyped negative feedbacks to their social performance. Taking this issue under consideration is crucial to our analysis of origin-based and racial discrimination.

Our results present an interesting outcome regarding the impact of language proficiency on the immigrant´s experience of discrimination. We have found that only in formal interactions or situations, where power involved, Hebrew proficiency takes an important role in reducing perceived discrimination. These formal social spheres were found to be characterized with the highest rates of reported discrimination, indicating that where discrimination is found to be relatively high, language proficiency has a significant influence. In addition, our results confirm the findings from previous studies comparing the two investigated groups showing that, there are fundamental differences regarding reported levels of discrimination alongside, reported levels of Hebrew proficiency. FSU immigrants experience less discrimination due to their origin and have reported on higher levels of Hebrew proficiency in comparison to the Ethiopian group. Finally, We have not found differential effects of Hebrew proficiency on perceived discrimination between the two investigated groups, due to statistically insignificant results in the regression analysis, regarding the Ethiopian sample.

BACKGROUND

1. The Setting – Former Soviet Union and Ethiopian immigrants in Israel

The story of the formation of Israel, by the Jewish 'returning diaspora', is viewed as a prototype of immigrant society, as it was formed mostly by immigrants and its population is mainly inhabited by those immigrants and their descendants (Semyonov et al., 2015). The fact that Israel have a high proportion of foreign-born population has drawn the attention of many social researchers and demographers in particular. The Israeli 'law of return' grants any immigrant from Jewish ancestry and their non-Jewish family members an Israeli citizenship and the right to settle in Israel. The motives that drive these immigrants are mainly religious and ideological, although many have found Israel as an opportunity to improve their sense of belonging and their economic condition (Amit, 2011; Semyonov et al., 2015).

The present study aims to investigate the two most recent and large-scale groups of immigrants to arrive in Israel: the FSU and the Ethiopian flows of immigrations. Since 1989, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, migrated nearly one million immigrants from FSU countries to Israel. The FSU immigrants are today's largest group of immigrants followed by the Ethiopian group that consist of nearly 85,000 immigrants arriving Israel since 1980 (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

The two groups of immigrants are fundamentally different in many respects. As discussed above, in the past three decades FSU immigrants arrived in Israel in mass numbers, mainly due to new economic opportunity and to political uncertainty at their country of origin (Remennick, 2004; Amit, 2012). It is considered to be a highly educated and skilled group, as 60% of the newcomers had an academic degree and held a professional occupation prior to migration. However, studies point that, mainly due to lack of Hebrew language proficiency and therefore lesser contact with native Israelis, the occupational integration of FSU immigrants was not very successful, as the majority of them are making their living with low-skilled jobs (Remmenick, 2004) and their struggle with closing earnings gaps with native born populations is still an on-going process. Immigrants from FSU who arrive in younger age are more capable of bridging this economic gap as their process of cultural integration has found to be significantly better comparing to older cohorts of immigrants (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2011). Besides it's human capital impact on Israeli economy and society, the post-soviet immigration has influenced the country's demographic composition, as their share in the population has reached to 40% in some cities.

While FSU immigrants came from a relative advanced country, the majority of the Ethiopian immigrants came from rural areas and nomadic culture. After the recognition of their 'Jewishness' in 1973, The opportunity to immigrate to Israel, fulfilling their religious aspirations and escaping hunger, economic sanctions and civil war, became within reach for many Ethiopian Jews. Upon arrival, they had no formal education or economic resources, and as they were perceived as vulnerable population they were sent to absorption centers in order to learn Hebrew and other social skills (Offer, 2004).

Although they had some initial guidance, scholars have shown that there are major gaps between the Ethiopian immigrants and other Jewish ethnic groups, regarding educational and occupational attainment; they have lower levels of education, lower employment rates, and are more likely to have low-skilled occupations (Semyonov et al., 2015; Offer, 2004; Amit, 2012). In addition, the Ethiopian group are a visible ethnic group, hence, they are facing another obstacle in the process of economic and social integration (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2002). At the same time, a recent study compared the self-identity of three ethnic groups in Israel (Amit, 2012), and found that the Ethiopian immigrants defined themselves more as Israeli than did the two other groups (FSU and western countries), as they wish for social integration by all means.

2. Theoretical Analysis

2.1 Perceived discrimination

Forms of discrimination on basis of race, gender, social status or any others are viewed as serious social problems. Discrimination results in excluding individuals from social opportunities available to others, based solely on innate or personal characteristics which associate one to a specific social group. Discrimination, when it occurs, is often not directly observable but manifests itself indirectly and can be experienced in many forms and areas of social life.

Exploring the experience of individuals who are potentially at risk of discrimination, rather than the side who holds prejudice and tend to discriminate others, has become the interest of social-psychology theoreticians in the past few decades. Crocker and Major (1989) suggested that members of stigmatized or negatively stereotyped groups face attributional ambiguity to their actions on a regular basis. According to this concept, one can interpret feedbacks from advantaged group members as a pure reflection to his/her behavior and skills on the one hand, or as related to prejudice and discrimination, on the other hand. In this sense, the integration process of immigrants

could be negatively affected by the ambiguity of feedbacks if they believe that discrimination exists against their social group members. Steele and Aronson (1995) were the first to argue that stereotype threat is related to the reduction of intellectual and social performance. Members of stigmatized groups who feel themselves to be at risk of confronting social stereotype, due to their belonging to a specific group, are likely to be more anxious about their performance and as a result not to achieve their full potential. A crucial dimension of perceived discrimination and the interpretation of feedbacks is visibility. Visible group characteristics, such as skin color, religion and accent, have a great effect on one's awareness to other's judgment feedbacks (Steele & Aronson, 1995), and thus perceive himself as subjected to constant social discrimination.

Scholars have shown that the perception of oneself as a target of discrimination is reliably associated with low levels of social integration as an outcome of developing a sense of alienation and rejection from the destination country's native society. Not only, it also documented that reported poor life satisfaction, high levels of stress and anxiety and even poor health condition are associated with discriminative feelings (Liebkind et al., 2004; Berry & Sabatier, 2010).

Cultural assimilation is a multi-dimensional concept which can be investigated from many angles. Reported experienced discrimination is an important indicator of integration, although most studies have focused on other perspectives. One main point of view, is the focus on economic success and levels of participation in labor market as an indicator of social integration (Chiswick, 1998; Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Silberman et al. 2007; Amit, 2010; Semyonov et al., 2015). Others, have focused from another point of view, on subjective reported levels of national identification (De-vroome et al., 2014) or life satisfaction at host country (Amit 2010; Amit & Bar-Lev, 2014). De-vroome et al., (2014) have shown that immigrants who perceive themselves as targets of discrimination are more likely to report low level of national identification and are less socially integrated. Raijman and Pinskey (2011) have used 'perceived discrimination' as the dependent variable in their qualitative study of Christian immigrants from FSU in Israel. They have shown that non-Jewish perceive themselves as bigger target of discrimination, in many social aspects, than the Jewish group of immigrants. These results not only shed light on the Israeli immigration case, but also highlight the importance of immigrant's personal characteristics as markers of group distinction, and therefore play a significant role in group boundary construction.

By comparing the experience of discrimination of two major (and culturally distinct) ethnic groups of immigrants we can add an important layer to the story of social assimilation and social composition in Israel. The set of macro level characteristics that an immigrant carries with him

from his home country are referred in the literature as the 'origin effect' (Van Tubergen & Kalmijn, 2005). These factors, which contain the ethnicity and cultural background of the immigrant, are considered in this paper as the main category of comparison.

Multiple theories attempt to explain the reasoning behind exclusionary attitudes toward immigrants. Eventually the explanations can be divided into two perspective of out-group threat, economic competition on one hand, and cultural preferences along with prejudice on the other hand. According to the economic approach, individuals who hold a vulnerable position in the labor market can develop negative attitudes toward out-group members who can pose a real economic threat on them, for instance, taking over their jobs. The economic threat, that is affected by the competition over scarce resource, is against individuals, groups or both and can be based on reality or perceived by the individual (Quillian, 1995; Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007). If so, negative attitudes toward individual immigrants should also impact on ethnic antagonism (between groups), when a specific ethnic group is composed of more individuals of the same socio-economic status as they posing a threat on a specific labor market sector.

The cultural approach suggests that fear from intruding national and cultural ideas and values that can put in danger the local and homogeneous culture is the main reason to the adoption of negative sentiment toward out-group members. Scholar who are on the side of the cultural approach claim that national identity has the strongest impact on popular sentiment and that the sense of cultural threat (derived mainly by nationalist politicians or religious fundamentalists) eventually lead to cultural segregation, negative sentiment toward out-group members, prejudice and discrimination (Quilian, 1995; Fetzer, 2000). In addition, anti-immigrant attitudes are more likely to rise when immigrants come from nations of different historical civilizations. Also, inter-group conflicts between societies increases when there are more identities differences, based on different languages, religions, customs and history (Rustenbach, 2010).

The large-scale immigration flows that arrived in Israel during the 90's have changed the face of Israeli society, it became less hegemonic, even more heterogeneous and highly divided society. FSU immigrants, as they arrive in mass numbers, were the first to suffer from social alienation and discrimination. Although they were subjected to social discrimination, due to their cultural background, high socio-economic achievements and mainly to cultural resemblance to the Ashkenazi society (European descendants Jews), they could have absorbed into Israeli society in a much easier way then other groups of immigrants (Smooha, 2008).

Meanwhile, Ethiopian immigrants came from a distinct side of the world, carrying with them a set of values and customs that are culturally different to those of Israeli hegemony. The encounter with Israeli society have revealed new mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination based on culture differences but mainly on race. Their blackness, that was a new appearance in the Israeli environment, was (and still) the key element to their experience of social discrimination, the questioning of their Jewishness and their culturally acceptance (Ben-Eliezer, 2004). Therefore, and based on the presented background of the two immigration flows, we expect to find higher rates of reported experienced discrimination among the Ethiopian group.

2.2 Destination language proficiency

Boundaries between groups are the source of social alienation, negative attitude, prejudice and eventually discrimination toward ethnic minorities, i.e. immigrants and their descendants. These boundaries, as discussed above, are based on fear and can be bridged by successful integration and meaningful contact and interactions between individuals from both groups. Social contact gives information on one's personal characteristics and a positive contact should lead to a better inter-group perception which can reduce prejudice, and hence reduce discrimination (Pettigrew, 1998; Rustenbach 2010). If we take one step further, we can argue that language is the key to meaningful social connections, better communication, and a main factor in the process of integration into host society.

Evidently, language skills are an important form of human capital. The acquisition of a new language (the country of destination native language) plays a central role in the integration of immigrants in the new social and economic environment (Chiswick, 1998). In recent years there have been a number of studies that focused on the role of language proficiency in the demographic field. Dustmann and Fabbri (2003) have analyzed the determinants of fluency in English for non-white immigrants in the UK, and how it relates to their economic success and labor market performance. They found that for all groups language proficiency is associated with higher employment probabilities and with higher earnings. From another point of view, De-Vroome, Verkuyten and Martinovic (2014) have shown that for both Moroccan and Turkish groups of immigrants in Holland, Dutch language proficiency, perceived discrimination, and contact with natives proved to be important conditions for national identification (as their indicator for assimilation).

Israel, as a country that was formed by massive flows of modern immigrations, has drawn the attention of immigration researchers. Destination-language proficiency has been found to have a great positive effect on immigrant's earnings and economic incorporation in Israel (Chiswick, 1998). Regarding this topic, when comparing country of origin of post 1990 immigrants, the FSU immigrants are more likely to become economically active than all other groups, while Ethiopian descendants are the most disadvantaged group in attainment of high status occupations and earnings (Semyonov et al., 2015). Alongside economic success, social integration in the form of national identity, life satisfaction and sense of belonging to host country are found to be influenced by levels of Hebrew proficiency by all groups of immigrants, from FSU, Ethiopia, France and Western countries (Remennick, 2004; Amit 2009; Amit 2012; Amit & Bar-Lev, 2014).

As discussed earlier, visibility is one of the main obstacles of the immigrant's process of assimilation into host society. Three domains of visibility need to be taken under consideration; skin tone and origin visible characteristics per se, accent and language proficiency and origin influence on characteristics of appearance. While the first domain is unchangeable, the other two can be bridged over time and with the immigrant's abilities and ambition to adapt (Hersch, 2011). Smooha (2008) has argued that the physical resemblance of FSU immigrants to old-timers native Israelis, provided them with a better starting point in the new environment, comparing to the 1950's north-African immigrant flows in Israel. In addition, FSU immigrants are already 'appearance advantageous' comparing to other visible immigrants (Ethiopian in our case), by acquiring Hebrew language and accent they can hide their origin, and hence be less exposed to stereotyped based negative attitudes.

Researchers have shown that levels of destination-language proficiency are differential between groups of immigrants. for instance, Van Tubergen and Kalmijn (2005) have focused on the macro level determinants that affects immigrant's destination-language speaking ability. They have shown that the country of origin's characteristics plays a central role in the acquisition of the new language, such as modernized economy and advanced education system which influence positively. In this sense, the origin effect should give the FSU group an advantage over the Ethiopian group. It is also argued that distance, physically (between the countries of origin and destination) and linguistically, is a key factor when the effect of country of origin is examined (Chiswick & Miller, 2001; Van Tubergen & Kalmijn, 2005). Geographic distance has a negative effect (because of potentially remigration), an issue that has no influence in the case of this paper due to distance similarity between the two countries of origin and low possibility of remigration

of the two groups, owing to the nature of the Israeli 'Law of return' that grants any Jew an Israeli citizenship upon formal immigration. Altogether, it is important to mention that between the two groups, FSU immigrants have higher rates of continuing migration, mainly to north American countries. The 'continued immigrants' are mainly young and educated middle class immigrants that seek to better their socio-economic status, and their answer is to immigrate from Israel (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2008). As this group mainly consist of higher educated immigrants it is more likely that their Hebrew proficiency is already higher than their less educated peers.

Linguistic distance is more complex because of the uniqueness of each case. If we are to compare the linguistic distance between Hebrew and Amharic and Hebrew and Russian it could be argued that each language is closer to Hebrew from different direction. On the one hand, Hebrew and Amharic are from the same linguistic family tree, the Semitic family. Thus, according to the historical evolution of languages, as discerned by linguists, Hebrew is linguistically closest to Amharic and Arabic (Beenstock et al., 2001). On the other hand, Russian, which is from distinct linguistic family (the Balto-Slavic) than Hebrew, have a great influence on the structure of modern Hebrew because of the first massive immigrations from Eastern Europe to Israel (the Ashkenazi immigration), since the end of the 19th century, which have formed the first society of modern Hebrew speakers.

Alongside group level and origin effect, it has been found that individual characteristics have no less of importance regarding the acquisition of new language. Educational level (which is to some extent reflecting wealth effect), age at migration and duration of residence in country of destination (exposure effect) are crucial when destination-language proficiency is examined (Chiswick & Miller, 2001). Altogether, after taking into consideration the group level and origin effect we would expect that individual characteristics, exposure effect and level of education (which is partially affected by the origin effect), to have greater influence on the results of levels of Hebrew proficiency.

Individuals who desire to assimilate and have interest in having social interactions with the receiving country society will have higher motivation in learning the country's language. Motivation to learn a second language in is positively correlated with the individual's attitude toward the people who speak this particular language (Gardner et al. 1999). If so, immigrants who find the local society to be open and receiving will be motivated to learn the local language. Mesch (2003) have found that among FSU immigrants in Israel, perceived attitudes of the society toward immigrants were significantly related to Hebrew proficiency. Accordingly, the interrelationship

between the main variables of this paper may be bidirectional. On one hand, language proficiency may affect the immigrant's experience of discrimination. On the other hand, as discussed above, perceived discriminatory attitudes toward immigrants can influence the immigrant's motivation to learn the local language. Regarding this issue, we cannot distinguish here between the two cases as our data are cross-sectional, yet it is taken under our consideration.

Here, we aim to investigate **the association between destination-language proficiency and perceived discrimination within the FSU immigrants as opposed to within the Ethiopian immigrants**. In light of evidence showing that destination-language proficiency has major effect on the integration process of immigrants, the goal is to reveal the layers behind ethnic discrimination while examining whether the role of language proficiency differs between two ethnic groups of immigrants.

In light of the various theories discussed above in the context of the FSU and Ethiopian immigrations in Israel, we present several research hypotheses, as follows:

(1) Hebrew proficiency will be negatively related to perceived discrimination for both groups. The more fluent the immigrant in Hebrew, the less he will subjectively experience discrimination in all areas of social life.

(2) The association between Hebrew proficiency and perceived discrimination will be weaker among Ethiopian immigrants than among FSU immigrants, due to greater ethnic visibility of the former group.

(3) Origin effect will predict perceived discrimination. Ethiopian immigrants will report experiencing more discriminative attitudes than FSU immigrants.

(4) The immigrant's socio-economic status, i.e. level of education and occupational status, will negatively predict perceived discrimination. The higher the immigrant's level of education and whether he/she is working, the less they experience discrimination.

(5) Hebrew proficiency will be positively correlated to the immigrant's socio-economic status. The higher the immigrant's level of education and whether he/she is working, the more fluent he/she will be in Hebrew

(6) Hebrew proficiency will be negatively correlated to the year of immigration and positively correlated with age (birth cohorts). The longer the immigrants have been in the country and the younger he/she is, the more fluent he/she will be in Hebrew.

METHODOLOGY

1. The Data

Data for the present analysis were taken from the New Immigrants Survey (2010-2011) and the Israeli census of 2008 conducted by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics. The New Immigrants Survey is the first survey of its kind following the massive waves of immigration that have begun in the early 1990th. The main purpose of the survey was to examine the integration of immigrants since 1990 by analyzing their social and economic life and the characteristics that affect the process and pace of integration. The study is based on a representative sample of FSU and Ethiopian immigrants aged 25-75. For both groups, the criteria for determining layers were republic (FSU) or country (Ethiopia) of origin and year of immigration (arrived after 1990). The sample consisted of 3104 immigrants, the FSU group is 81% (2515 immigrants) and accordingly, the Ethiopian group is 19% (589 immigrants) of the sample.

2. Variables

The New Immigrants Survey have provided information regarding demographic and immigration characteristics and the 2008 census have completed the model with additional socio-economic and labor force activity information.

The dependent variable in this study is divided into five different *perceived discrimination* variables. The five questions were dichotomous, asking whether the immigrant have faced discrimination due to his/her origin. The immigrants were asked regarding facing (1) discrimination at work, (2) at government office, (3) at shopping places, (4) at places of entertainment and (5) at any other place.

The independent variables are as follows:

Hebrew language proficiency – An index calculated from three questions regarding the level of speaking, reading and writing Hebrew. The Language proficiency scale is from (3) "do not know at all speaking, reading or writing in Hebrew" to (15) "fluent in speaking, reading and writing Hebrew". Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was found to be high (R = .96). As we considered this variable to be our key independent variable any missing information regarding at least one language fluency indicator (speaking, reading or writing) was omitted from the sample.

Religion – Dichotomous variable (dummy variable); whether the respondent is Jewish or not (Jewish=1, not Jewish=0).

Education level - Rated on a scale of 1-3. Since the distributions of education levels between FSU and Ethiopian immigrants are so different we have constructed two scales with different values, one for each group. For FSU immigrants, in a scale of 1-3: (1) no diploma, primary, intermediate and secondary school; (2) high-school diploma and post-secondary; (3) undergraduate academic and higher. For Ethiopian immigrants, in a scale of 1-3: (1) no diploma; (2) primary or intermediate school diploma; (3) secondary school and above. Since our sample has a minimum age limit of 25 years, in theory, all respondents have had enough time to complete post-secondary or undergraduate studies.

Occupational status – Dichotomous variable (dummy variable); whether the respondent is employed, full or part time, or not.

Year of immigration – A continuous variable that indicates on the year that the immigrant arrived in Israel, from 1990 to 2008.

In addition, *age* (5 year cohorts) and gender (male=1) were included in the multivariate model. A binomial logistic regression was used in the multivariate analysis, since the dependent variable is dichotomous. A series of regression models was conducted for FSU and Ethiopian immigration groups separately in order to investigate the differences in log odds coefficients between the two groups.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The first section of the findings is descriptive. Table 1 summarize the background, socio-economic and immigration characteristics of the two investigated groups. After comparing the two groups we can conclude that they do not significantly differ in age and gender ratio, although the FSU

immigrant group has a greater portion of women than the Ethiopian immigrant group (about 58% and about 53% respectively). Regarding religion, there is a significant difference in the percentage of Jewish descendants in the two groups; 96.8% of the Ethiopian immigrants are Jewish but only 68% of FSU immigrants ($\chi^2 = 4.9$, $p<0.01$).

Table 1. *Characteristics of FSU and Ethiopian immigrants*

Variables	FSU	Ethiopians	Significance level
Background variables			
Age	52	49	***
Male (%)	42.3	47.4	**
Jewish (%)	68	96.8	**
Socio economic variables			
High Education (%)	39.7	17.2	n/a
Medium Education (%)	44.7	14	n/a
Low Education (%)	15.6	68.8	n/a
Employed (%)	66	56	***
Immigration variables			
Age at Migration	38	34.6	
Years Since Migration	13.1	13.8	
N=3104	2515	589	-

** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Findings from Table 1 show that, consistent with the literature, there is a significant difference in educational level between the two groups. Even after the adjustment of the education variable for each group (as described earlier) we can still see a great difference; about 40% of FSU

immigrants are highly educated while only about 15% of them have reported to have low education. By contrast, only 17% of the Ethiopian immigrant group are highly educated while about 69% are without any diploma ('low educated' in the equivalent education scale). Occupational status is another important social-status variable and as we can see the difference between the groups in this case is found to be significant ($\chi^2= 21$, $p<.01$). 66% of FSU immigrants and 56% of Ethiopian immigrants have reported that they have a paid job.

Differences between the two groups regarding immigration characteristics, i.e. age at migration and number of years in Israel (years since migration), are not significant. Although, it is important to note that both mean age at migration is high (when immigration and assimilation process are under the topic), 38 for FSU immigrants and about 35 for Ethiopian immigrants.

The respondents in the New Immigration Survey were asked to note whether they perceived discrimination due to their origin in the past year, in five different areas of social life. Discrimination at the workplace, in a government or public office, at stores and shopping places, at places of entertainment or at any other place. The differences between FSU and Ethiopian immigrants in the experience of discrimination are summarized in Figure 1.

In all areas of social life, there is a significant difference between the two groups on reported experienced discrimination. We see from the chart that Ethiopian immigrants have reported, in each area, on higher rates of experienced discrimination comparing to the FSU immigrants. At their workplace[2], at government offices and at shopping places the difference between the group is around 15%-20%, while at places of entertainment or at any other area of social life the difference is around 10%.

It is noticeable that when the encounter is more formal and is involved in the interaction (at work or in front of a government official) the perceived discrimination rates are the highest, for both groups. In general, between around 22% to 42% of the Ethiopian immigrants have experienced perceived discrimination at least in one area of social life while for FSU immigrants group the percentages are significant lower, between around 10% and 26%. All mentioned differences between the groups regarding the perception of discrimination, in each of the discrimination indicators, are statistically significant ($p<.01$). These results are as we anticipated and in accordance with hypothesis 3.

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[2] respondent who is currently unemployed could have had a job in the past year, in which he/she could have experience and report on discrimination.

**Figure 1: Percentages reporting perceived discrimination, by origin.**
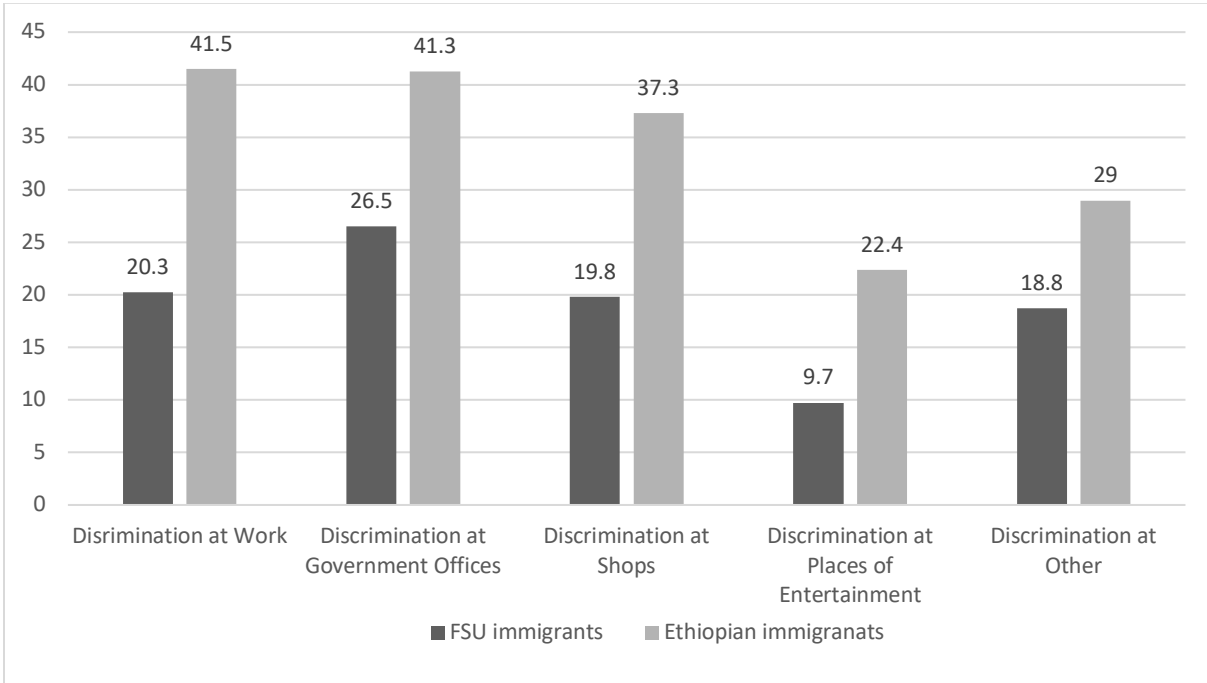
Another required analysis treats of the differences between the groups regarding Hebrew proficiency independent variables. Figure 2 represents the Hebrew proficiency scale, the percentages of each level of proficiency, from 3 (none) to 15 (fluent), divided into the two immigration groups.

Figure 2 shows that FSU immigrants have a significantly higher level of Hebrew proficiency comparing to the Ethiopian immigrants (χ^2= 183.14, $p<.01$). While about 21% of Ethiopian immigrants do not know at all Hebrew and about 17% of them know very little (4), respectively, only about 9% and 7% of the FSU immigrants are under the same categories. Although there is no a significant difference in the highest level of fluency (about 12% of the Ethiopian immigrants and 14% of the FSU immigrants), we can still see larger portions of FSU in the higher score of language proficiency.

In order to analyze the correlation between the independent variables of the research we present in Table 2 and Table 3 correlation matrix for the two immigrants groups separately. Table 2 displays the correlation matrix between the research variables for the Ethiopian immigrants group and Table 3 for the FSU immigrants group. Both tables show that our main independent

Figure 2: Hebrew proficiency percentages, by origin.
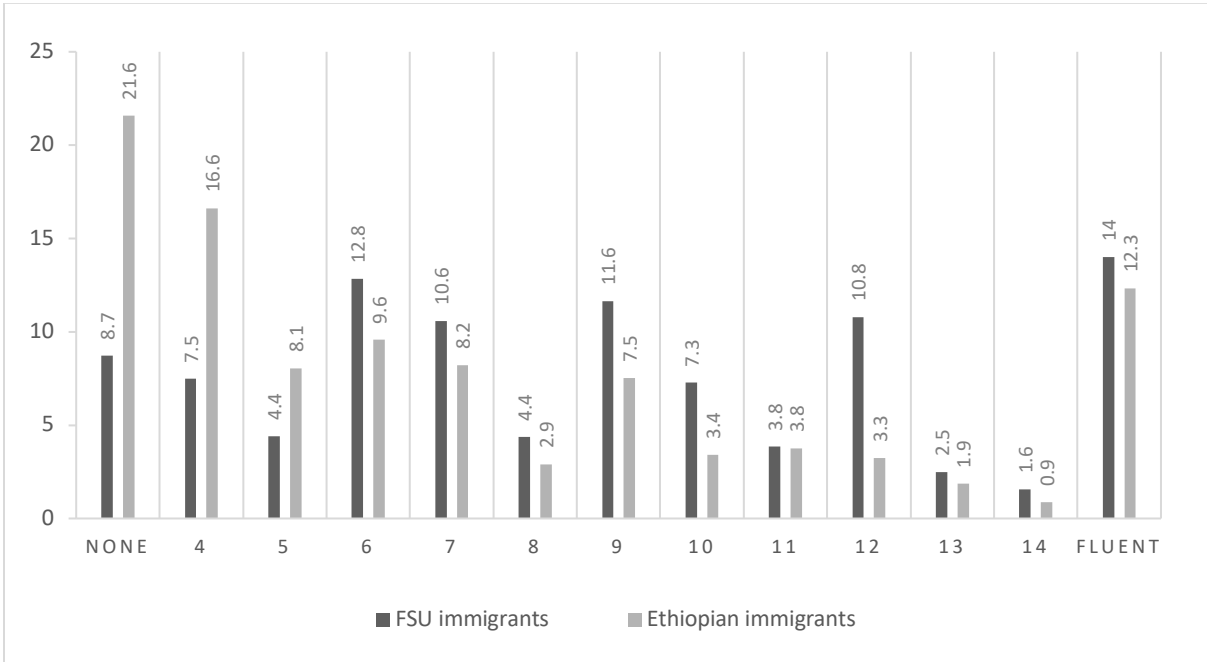
variable - Hebrew proficiency, is significantly correlated with all the independent variables. Significant correlations between socio-economic status and Hebrew proficiency is not fully in accordance with the fifth research hypothesis. Table 2 shows that for the Ethiopian immigrants, Hebrew proficiency is positively correlated with education and occupation status. Table 3 shows that for FSU immigrants, Hebrew proficiency is also positively correlated with occupation status, however it is negatively correlated with education. Although the correlation is rather small in size and could be negligible, a possible explanation may lie in the immigrant's background, i.e. origin effect. As discussed in the background, FSU immigrants are considered to be a highly educated group and for that reason, less educated FSU immigrants could have perceived language proficiency, rather than their former studies and diplomas, as a key factor and opportunity for successful and better social mobility.

For both groups, Hebrew proficiency is positively and significantly correlated with age (birth cohorts) and negatively and significantly correlated with year of immigration. Thus, the younger the immigrants are and the longer they have been in Israel, the higher the level of their Hebrew. This last finding is in accordance with our sixth research hypothesis.

Table 2. *Correlation matrix between the research variables for Ethiopian immigrants (total N = 589)*

Variables	Hebrew proficiency	Education	Age	Year of immigration
Hebrew proficiency	1			
Education	0.69**	1		
Birth-Cohort	0.64**	0.46**	1	
Year of immigration	-0.29**	-0.23**	0.06	1

** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

The statistical analysis that we conducted for this research was a multivariate logistic regression, performed for each immigration group separately in order to compare coefficients and thus, the influence of each predictor on the reported experience of discrimination. Five regression models were conducted, each model represent a different form of discrimination, hence each model represent a different dependent variable; Model A: '*Discrimination at work'*, Model B: '*Discrimination*

Table 3. *Correlation matrix between the research variables for FSU immigrants (total N = 2515)*

Variables	Hebrew proficiency	Education	Age	Year of immigration
Hebrew proficiency	1			
Education	-0.14**	1		
Birth-Cohort	0.68**	-0.38**	1	
Year of immigration	-0.32**	0.11**	-0.04*	1

** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

at government office', Model C: '*Discrimination at shops'*, Model D: '*Discrimination at places of entertainment'* and Model E: '*Discrimination at other'.* In addition, we conducted for each model a simple regression version, which includes only our main independent variable, Hebrew proficiency, before proceeding to the full model. Table 4 displays the findings from the regression analysis.

According to Table 4, Hebrew proficiency was found to be negatively predicting perceived discrimination in Model A, Model B and Model C for both groups, while it is found to be significant only for the FSU immigrants group in Model A and Model B, after controlling all the variables in the full model. These findings partially supporting our first research hypothesis. Hebrew proficiency is negatively and significantly associated with the experience of discrimination at work and at government offices for the FSU immigrants. For Ethiopian immigrants, the association with Hebrew proficiency was similar, though the results were not statistically significant. Findings from Model D, as they were found to be statistically insignificant, does not support our first hypothesis, they are opposite in sign to the expected direction to Hebrew proficiency prediction of perceived discrimination, for both groups. Model E also shows insignificant findings with respect to our main topic of the research. In general, lower levels of statistical significance that were found in regressions on the Ethiopian immigrant sample may be due, in part, to the relatively smaller sample size of this group.

Age factor was found to be statistically significant only for FSU immigrants in Model A. According to these results, belonging to a younger cohort will predict higher reported rates of discrimination at the FSU immigrant's workplace, yet not in other social life areas. Religion was found to be statistically insignificant predicting perceived discrimination, across all models.

An interesting result was found through Model A to Model D regarding gender. For FSU immigrants, being a man predicts higher rates of perceived discrimination in all social areas that were specified in the survey. For Ethiopian immigrants, these results are statistically significant only in places of entertainment (as presented in Model D).

findings from all models show that occupation status (whether the immigrant has a job or not) does not significantly predicting changes in reported perceived discrimination. On the other hand, surprising findings are presented in all model regarding level of education. For immigrants with low education level the results are not statistically significant, yet for immigrants with high education background table 4 present findings that contradicts the fourth research hypothesis.

Table 4. *Logit analysis of perceived discrimination for FSU and Ethiopian immigrants*

Predictors	Model A		Model B		Model C		Model D		Model E	
	Ethiopia	FSU	Ethiopia	FSU	Ethiopia	FSU	Ethiopia	FSU	Ethiopia	FSU
Hebrew proficiency	-0.08	-0.05**	-0.08	-0.02**	-0.01	-0.01	0.02	0.02	-0.07	0.04
	(-0.04)	(-0.02)	(-0.01)	(-0.02**)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.12**)	(0.09**)	(-0.01)	(0.03)
Demographics										
Age (categories)	0.02	0.07**	0.1	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.08	0.14	0.06	-0.02
Gender (male=1)	0.29	0.28**	0.22	0.26***	-0.09	0.24**	0.6**	0.43***	0.22	0.16
Religion (Jewish=1)	0.17	0.04	-0.47	0.09	-0.74	0.06	-0.69	0.02	-0.73	0.01
Socio-economics										
Education										
low	0.38	-0.08	0.24	-0.02	0.26	-0.03	0.01	-0.11	-0.22	-0.12
high	0.86**	0.19	0.83**	0.48***	0.28	0.42***	0.5	0.43**	-0.08	0.3**
Employed (yes=1)	0.47	0.28	-0.24	-0.06	0.04	-0.01	0.26	-0.02	0.36	-0.08
Immigration										
Year of Immigration	0.03	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03**	-0.01	-0.05**	-0.01	-0.02
(Constant)	-15.3	2.34	2.865	4.84	6.87	9.77**	2.25	7.63**	2.63	6.06

a. ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

b. The table presents the logit regression coefficients.

c. Each model represents a different independent variable; <u>Model A</u>: discrimination at work, <u>Model B</u>: discrimination at government office, <u>Model C</u>: discrimination at shops, <u>Model D</u>: discrimination at places of entertainment and <u>Model E</u>: discrimination at other.

d. In parentheses: the score of Hebrew proficiency in a simple regression model, without controlling all other independent variables.

Models B to E show that high level of education is positively and significantly predicting the experience of discrimination for FSU immigrants, when the reference group (medium level of education) is held constant. With the exception of the workplace, at any other social life area, high level of education will predict higher reported rates of discrimination, for FSU immigrants. For Ethiopian immigrants, similar surprising and significant results are presented in Model A and Model B; high level of education predicts higher rates of reported discrimination at work and at government offices.

In addition, year of immigration is negatively related to the experience of discrimination. This negative relation is significant for FSU immigrants according to the findings in Model C and Model D. For FSU immigrants, the earlier the immigrant have arrived to Israel the more he will report on experiencing discrimination at shops or places of entertainment.

DISCUSION AND CONCLUSION

Language, although considered to be a complex communication system, is the basic and key element in humans' meaningful interactions. Moreover, the acquisition of destination language by immigrants has proven to be a meaningful and an important human-capital resource when social integration, economic and earning gaps, sense of belonging to host country or national identification are examined (Chiswick, 1998; Chiswick & Miller, 2001; Remennick, 2004; Amit, 2012; De-vroome et al., 2014; Amit & Bar-Lev, 2014). Over recent decades, the experience of discrimination and the influence of discriminative feelings on one's social participation and integration has started to drawn the attention of social-science researchers. It is agreed by most scholars that discriminative feelings have a direct negative influence on many aspects of social performance, alongside personal mental and even physical health (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Liebkind et al., 2004; Berry & Sabatier, 2010), we decided to investigate how human-capital, and more specific - destination language proficiency, is influencing the immigrant's experience of discrimination. Furthermore, from the same point of view, as the discussed literature mainly focus on objective parameters of social integration, such as earnings, here we try to reveal another layer of the immigrant's social integration using a subjective parameter.

In order to measure the influence of host country language proficiency on the experience of discrimination, and how it differs between immigrants from different origins, we conducted a multivariate logit regression analysis, comparing the experience of FSU and Ethiopian immigrants

in Israel, taking into consideration their cultural differences and the effect of country of origin on the immigrant's innate characteristics and acquired skills.

In the examination of our main findings against the hypotheses of the research we see that hypothesis 1 is partially supported; the level of Hebrew proficiency is negatively associated with perceived discrimination for FSU immigrants at their workplace and government offices, as presented in Models A and B. For Ethiopian immigrants, the results in Models A, B, C and E are in accordance with the hypothesis and we can see, as predicted, a negative prediction of Hebrew proficiency for perceived discrimination. Although, these results are not statistically significant, in which it prevents us from making a comparison of coefficients of the two groups. Results from Model C are in accordance to our hypothesis 1 and results from model D contradicts the hypothesis, however both model, regarding the influence of Hebrew proficiency, are not statistically significant for both groups.

As discussed above, due to partially significant results we could not compare the coefficients of Hebrew proficiency between the two groups in all the models, therefore it was difficult to examine hypothesis 2. In this regard, we assume that with larger sample of the Ethiopian immigrants group we could have get more significant results in our models. Hypothesis 3 is fully supported by our main findings; according to Figure 1, in all areas of social life, Ethiopian immigrants have reported on higher rates of perceived discrimination in comparison to FSU immigrants. The differences between the two groups range from around 10% to around 20%. Findings from Figure 1 and Table 4 also reveal that where there are high levels of reported perceived discrimination, language proficiency have a more solid influence. Highest levels of discrimination were reported by immigrants at their workplace of the immigrant and at government offices. Simultaneously, Models A and B, which represent these areas of social life, show statistically significant results for language proficiency in reducing perceived discrimination for FSU immigrants and same (however insignificant) negative connection for Ethiopian immigrants. Another possible explanation could be in the nature of the interaction; language proficiency has a significant effect in reducing perceived discrimination if the discriminative attitudes took place in a more formal interaction, where power could be involved.

Hypothesis 4, dealing with the immigrant's socio-economic status, was not supported in all five models, for both groups. While the results for occupation status and lowest level of education were found to be statistically insignificant, the statistic relation between highest level of education and perceived discrimination is found to be in opposed to the literature and to our

hypothesis. Higher level of education predicts higher rates of perceived discrimination for Ethiopian immigrants in Models A and B, and for FSU immigrants in all models except Model A. An optional explanation for these results could be in the awareness of social stratification and power among more educated individuals. This positive relation for FSU immigrants is relevant in all areas of social life except at the workplace, which can support the later explanation that where level of education is not relevant in the interaction more educated individuals will be more sensitive to discrimination. for Ethiopian immigrants, same results were found to be relevant also at their workplace, which indicates that for this group, perceived discrimination is even more institutional and their origin and skin color play a significant role.

The immigrant's socio-economic status did emerge as a significant predictor of Hebrew proficiency for Ethiopians, as predicted in hypothesis 5 (Table 2). For FSU immigrants, while occupation status was found positively correlated with Hebrew proficiency, and as opposed to our hypothesis, education level is negatively related with language proficiency, although the correlation is rather weak (Table 3). Regarding hypothesis 6, the study's results fully support the claim that among both groups, the longer the immigrants have been in the country and the younger he/she is, the more fluent he/she will be in Hebrew.

Our full analysis examines five different spheres in which immigrants can experience discrimination. We can conceptually divide the five models into two, institutional discrimination which take place in a more formal interaction (at the workplace and at government offices), and discrimination that can occur in an informal interaction. The first conceptual group, theoretically, implies for labor-market consequences, income and for socioeconomic status. Results from the multivariate logit regression show that host country language proficiency is significantly associated with reduced chances of perceived discrimination especially in this social sphere. If so, although our integration indicator is subjective we are able to relate it into other objective and subjective indicators.

Eventually, the Ethiopian sample size has limited us from comparing the effect of language proficiency of the two groups, since results for this group were found to be statistically insignificant. Although comparing the influence of destination language proficiency between the two groups was one of our main goals of the research, our analysis shed light on the relevance of the origin effect (socio-economic background, different characteristics and even skin color), alongside the acquisition of new human capital to the story of social stratification and origin based discrimination. We assume that further investigation, concentrating on second generation of the

two investigated groups should reveal another aspect of the ethnicity effect on the integration process of immigrants, and the role of language proficiency among native born – immigrants' descendants.