
Tainted Blood: The Ambivalence of Ethnic Migration in Israel, Japan, Korea, Germany and the United States¹

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In Russia, everyone called me Jewish. But now that I'm in Israel, people say I'm Russian. It's painful².

Fast jede Art von Gemeinsamkeit und Gegensätzlichkeit des Habitus und der Gepflogenheiten kann Anlass zu dem subjektiven Glauben werden, dass zwischen den sich anziehenden oder abstossenden Gruppen Stammverwandtschaft oder Stammfremdheit besteht. (Weber 1962:107)

In public discourse and modern sociological literature, the concept of ethnicity is often treated as a category attached to persons or certain groups in a quasi-biological sense. In particular, this is the case when ethnicity is used as a substitute for race and thus inherits the Darwinian connotations of that concept. Modern thinking about genetics has a tendency to return to this type of argument. In this tradition, even social scientists have attributed certain positive or negative characteristics to whole groups.³ Studies of immigrant groups based on survey or census data often carry a tendency to treat ethnicities as groups with certain inherent characteristics, comparable to treating collective public opinion in quantitative research. In particular, this is done in studies which rely only on one set of data limited to just one country. Criticizing these tendencies, Katznelson has warned that social scientists should begin their analysis with events in the “early, fluid period of immigration, which have a determinative impact on subsequent patterns of group behaviour and not restrict their studies to the groups’ behaviour

patterns.“(Katznelson 1973: 24) Another way for more in-depth analysis is to compare groups in a given situation in several countries.

Classical social science literature has insisted that ethnicity not be a fixed part of a person or a group, but a social construct. Thus Max Weber remarks that ethnic and national belonging share a belief character (Weber 1962:305ff) and Benedict Anderson describes nations as „imagined communities.”(Anderson 1983) Indeed, Hobsbawn’s idea of “invented history” has had an important influence on the literature about the construction of social reality. Still, in the literature on ethnic groups, and the discourse on ethnicity the concept of ethnic identity is often treated in a rather unflexible way. However, ethnicity and ethnic identity - a term taken from the field of psychological deviance problems - are dynamic phenomena.

In much of the literature on immigration, scholars and writers are concerned with the adaptation of certain groups to a new environment, following the classical study on “The Polish Peasant in Europe and America”, and its theories about family structures, “disintegration” and “social reorganization.”⁴ Although the dominant American perspective on ethnicity changed from a WASP-centered assimilationist perspective to form a white ethnic pluralist perspective (Alba 1990), it was always concerned with the problem of immigrant identities between the country of origin and the country of immigration. Thus immigrants are identified with the traditions of their country of origin, or traditions supposed to be of that country - a process that can easily lead to stereotyping, particularly when researchers share ethnocentric prejudices.

To get a deeper insight into the processes of migration and ethnicity formation, it is particularly helpful to study the processes of ethnic migration, or re-migration, which bring co-ethnics back to their homeland. In the case of Greece and Turkey in the early 1920s, the processes of national homogenization were agreed between the two governments and conceived to provide for a state of peace and the end of conflict. In this case, however, religion was taken as the defining criterion of transfer, demonstrating the passing over from the older type of religious conflict and allegiance to the modern nation-state

type.

Although we find processes of ethnic re-migration with respect to the nation state since the end of World War I (under the paradigm of self determination of nations as a result of the dissolution of the Habsburg and Romanov dynasties which lead to an “unmixing” of peoples) there has been little systematic study devoted to these policies.⁵ Following the prevalent national self understanding of the singularity of a given nation (although the nation state has become a universal concept), most ethnic migrations or re-migrations have been treated as special cases. However, re-migration clearly show similarities between nation states, the first of which is the expression of frustration like the one quoted at the beginning of this paper and one which finds parallels in all such movements across countries.

To compare various ethnic migrations, groups coming home to the motherland thus can give us some systematic insights in the making and unmaking of ethnicity. Before drawing conclusions, let us first look into five cases that have been selected as most different cases: three in the Judeo-Christian context, and two in East Asia, two in settler states and three in old nations.

1. Ethnicity in Israel: The Case of *Beta Israel* (Ethiopian Jews - *Falashas*):

The discovery that all their blood donated to help other Israelis had secretly been destroyed by the authorities caused an uproar among the *Beta Israel* or Ethiopian Jews (*Falashas*) in Israel who had recently immigrated. (Klein Halevi 1998: 125) The blood donated and then not accepted was highly symbolic.⁶ The reason the authorities gave upon discovery of the tainted blood was an additional insult: fear of AIDS contamination among the *Falashas*.

The Israeli attitude towards the *Beta Israel* were ambivalent. On one hand, the Israeli state had airlifted the “lost tribe”, after the breakdown of the Ethiopian dictatorship, at high cost and with great fanfare, and pointing to the civilizing mission the Israeli state performed by transferring this group from a medieval situation to a modern country (Operation Salomon). Once again, the Zionist idea of creating a safe haven and a national state for all Jews became operative. The basic idea

that all Jews should be united in the promised land was put into practice, thus defining all Jews as co-ethnics, in contrast to the indigenous population. Thus Israel followed Weizmann's dictum to make Palestine as Jewish as England was English. In his novel *Altneuland* Herzl had painted the idyllic existence of one single happy Arab among the hospitable Jews. The "law of return" as the first law of the State of Israel consecrated this idea, based upon an intense feeling of shared discrimination of Jews, and a common heritage, leading back to Father Abraham, his son Isaak, and to Joseph and his eleven brothers - itself a comprehensive story about family values.

On the other hand, ambivalence about Jewish immigrants from Africa and Asia was nothing new. From the beginning, the *Beta Israel* had not been treated as equals and as full members of the national community. The religious authorities had not accepted them as bona fide Jews, and offered them a ceremony of confirmation of their Jewishness, and thus not accepted their own century-old tradition. In daily life they felt a widespread bias and a colour bar working against them.

Discrimination is not experienced solely by the *Beta Israel*. Their story sounds familiar to Jewish Israelis who originate in Arab countries like Morocco, Iraq, Egypt or Yemen, who had been brought to Israel forty years before, more energetically organized by the Israeli government and less voluntarily than European Jews. (Segev 1986: 90; Refael 1981; Hachohen 1994) These Middle Eastern Jews were regarded as backward by Israeli social scientists and the state elite, their habits and mores being described as "bizarre", "mysterious", and "passive", and set as "traditional" against the "modern" elites. Consequently, Shmuel Eisenstadt opted for full absorption of this group which would include a complete loss of identity of the Sephardi and Misrahi communities. Eisenstadt saw the immigrants from the Middle East as "a more or less uniform sociological bloc", although he also spoke of ethnic groups among the Jewish population in Israel.⁷ Unlike Moroccan Jews migrating to France or Iraqi Jews migrating to Britain who are identified as Jews, the "oriental Jews" in Israel have largely been looked upon in the spirit of *Orientalism*. (Said 1978)

In an alternative set of explanations, the deficit has been explained not so much by cultural factors but by exclusion from the

central networks of power in state and society which lay in the hand of the state elite⁸, largely of Russian-Jewish descent, and the business elite, largely of German-Jewish descent. In the resettlement of large groups of Middle Eastern Jews within the development towns, a spatial dimension of exclusion was added. In 1999, the Labour leadership apologized for the discrimination of the Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews in the formative years of the Israeli society. What brought the ill feelings to a high point, was the discovery that babies had secretly been taken away from their Yemeni families, and been given to families of European origin - under the idea that they would have a better education if growing up in an environment of the European type. Yet, another highly symbolic scandal.⁹ Further, studies also point to the fact that European-Jewish immigrants had a chance to climb up the social ladder, whereas Oriental Jews lost status upon immigration. (Inbar/Adler 1977) Students of Middle Eastern background were largely placed into special education schools which did not lead to higher education. In addition, the upper levels of the army were dominated by European origin Jews from the cities and the *Kibbutzim*.

Even when the Israeli authorities tried to make good on their mistakes decades before, investing three times more in the immigrants from Ethiopia than in those from Russia, and housing in the Tel Aviv area instead of the development towns¹⁰, the ethnic bias did not disappear. Offering special aid towards a „difficult group“ the Israeli government entered the delicacies of positive discrimination, causing critique on the side of the Russians, and not satisfying anyone.

What is then, after all, the ethnic group in this context? Jews came to Israel, fled to Israel or were brought to Israel under the assumption of a common ethnic belonging, out of the diaspora. This was backed by powerful symbols, colonialist ideas of making the desert blossoming, including the myth or the reality of a common origin. And yet this state and these symbols were biased. Even when the founders of the State of Israel rebelled against their own *shtetl* heritage, omitted Yiddish as their traditional language, adopted a Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew, tried to build a new society based upon equality and to educate a “new Jewish man and woman”, they produced exclusionary effects. Some groups became more equal than others. The intense feelings of discrimination produced new, clearly identifiable ethnic groups and solidarities, which, in turn, created their own horizons

of religious orientations, ethnic leadership, politics and values. The most important and most colorful party in this context is *Shas* (the Party of Tora Believing Sephardim). Foreign minister Levi's group speaks for the Jews from Morocco, and there are now two parties of new immigrants from Russia, *Yisrael ba Aliya* and *Yisrael Beitenu*. Thus ethnicity is a highly ambivalent term. It can be used to point to the nature of the Israeli state and society, interpreted as an ethnocracy (Yiftachel 1998: 33-58), and it can point to the special identity of a part of that society.

2. Ethnic Japanese in Japan: *Nikkeijin*

Let us now compare the entirely contrasting immigration environment of Japan. Within the industrialized world, Japan pursues a deliberate non-immigration policy which has largely been successful in quantitative terms, resulting in a very low percentage of immigration.¹¹ The only group that was given easy access in 1990, in a time of extreme labor shortage, were the *Nikkeijin* -ethnic Japanese. In a deliberate policy decision, emigrants of Japanese origin of the second and third generations were allowed to enter the country and to work. These immigrants were labelled *issei*, *nissei* and *sansei* in Japanese neologistic short-terms, meaning first, second and third generation of Japanese-origin emigrants to the Americas. Ministry officials argued correctly that the Japanese decision was in line with the Italian opening for the countries emigrants to Latin America up to the third generation.¹² Later, the *yonsei*, or fourth generation, was added.

These ethnic Japanese migrants were accepted because of their ethnicity, with the assumption that they would not disrupt the uniquely and homogenous Japanese society. The *Nikkeijin* were considered to be close to the social fabric of Japan. In the word of the conservative majority party's (LDP) policy committee on foreign workers:

If we accept Asians in large numbers ... it would destroy the ethnic composition of Japan which is close to an ethnically homogeneous nation-state. However, if it is our *Nikkeijin* brethren, even if they can't speak Japanese adequately, we are not as concerned."(Tsuda 1999: 12)

In the same sense, ministry officials spoke of the *Kettoshugi*, the

principles of blood and lineage, and the “privileging of foreigners with blood ties”.(Tsuda 1999:12) Japanese policy makers wanted to avoid trouble, and to illustrate the dangers they always pointed to Germany that let “too many” Turks immigrate. The interpretation of the German decision as a cardinal mistake has become commonplace in the Japanese literature. The LDP committee chairman argued:

Even those who oppose the acceptance of foreign workers will probably not have many complaints with the special treatment of the *nikkeijin* who have properly internalized Japanese customs...(E)ven if their citizenship is of a different country, they should be easy to admit as our brethren.(Tsuda 1999:13)

Tsuda interprets this as the Japanese government’s effective use of an ideology of transnational ethnic affinity, to make the “open admission of the *Nikkeijin* politically acceptable (Tsuda 1999: 13) - in contrast to closing the front doors to all other Asians. There was also talk of a guilt and an obligation towards the emigrants from Japan, as the Japanese government had forced them into emigration.¹³

This ethnic brotherhood, however, was flawed, as the immigrants (or ethnic re-migrants) were expected to perform the „Three K Jobs“: *kiken*, *kitanai*, *kitsui* (dangerous, dirty, difficult). Although most of the *Nikkeijin* came from middle class families in Brazil, Peru and other Latin American countries, many were highly educated (Denigot 1999: 329), and many enjoyed employment in white collar jobs, yet in Japan, they were placed in undesirable jobs that could not be filled by indigenous Japanese workers. That was the motive to recruit the the *Nikkejin*. In an earlier work on the *Nikkejin* I have described such a niche at Yaizu, a fish processing town on the Pacific coast where the fetid smell of the fish made the workplace unattractive for indigenous Japanese.(Thraenhardt 1999,1:219ff) Although *Nikkeijin* are treated with respect and politeness, particularly in the large companies, and on average earn a bit more than indigenous blue collar workers because of long overtime hours, they carry an image of failure in Japan. In the Japanese public, their history is largely interpreted as a double negative: moving from poor Japan to relatively rich South America in the fifties, and moving back from relatively poor South America to rich Japan in the nineties.(Tsuda 1998:317ff) Most Japanese look at them in

a rather paternalistic style, as a people who did not succeed and thus should be content to work in jobs unwanted by Japanese nationals.(Tsuda 1998: 329 ff)

Moreover, the working environment is ambivalent to the *Nikkeijin*'s plight. For example, 61 % or 170.000 of these co-ethnics were not covered by health insurance in 1999¹⁴, although being entitled to it legally. Some children do not attend school, or drop out, and thus will have problems in the future. Those who suffer accidents often do not get their rightful insurance payments. Although the *Nikkeijin* are much better off than illegal workers or foreign "trainees" in Japan, as they enjoy a legal status and full wages, they are clearly conceived as a marginal group, brought in to fill undesirable jobs - although not the worst ones which are filled by illegal migrants. Many of the *Nikkeijin* must hand over a high percentage of their earnings to employment brokers who traditionally organize seasonal, temporary, and part time work in Japan.

Little wonder that in the first years working in unskilled jobs was seen as a shame and embarrassment within the Japanese-Brazilian community and an indication of economic failure.(Tsuda 1999: 14) However, as the Yen became stronger in every economic cycle, and the Brazilian currency tumbled again in January 1999, working in Japan became more and more attractive. It was seen as a chance that should not be missed and thus a *culture of migration* was developed.¹⁵ In 1995, the immigrant population in Japan was roughly 220.000 or approximately one-third of the economically active Japanese-Brazilian population. Their remittances of two billion U.S. accounted for two-thirds of the Brazilian trade deficit of that year. (Denigot 1999:313) The arrival of massive unemployment in Japan in the mid-nineties did not change the trend. The yen rose sharply again, 100 Yen nearly equating one Dollar or one Euro (year 2000 figures) and the Brazilian currency had to be devalued once again after some years of stability, thus increasing the incentive to work in Japan. Many well-educated younger Japanese would not accept blue collar jobs and rather remained unemployed. Consequently, the *Nikkeijin* are more inclined than ever to stick to their Japanese jobs. Some also act as middlemen and begin developing ethnic businesses. An example is the Servipan Bakery in Hamamatsu who makes fine French (or Brazilian) style bread and sells it throughout Japan.¹⁶

On the other hand, Japan is an expensive place to bring up children and retire. Further, for many *Nikkejin* life is much affordable in Brazil. Thus many savings have been invested in houses, cars or other luxury goods in Brazil thus binding the migrants to their former country. As 80 % of the *Nikkeijin* are Catholics, their religious tradition is also bound to Latin American culture and the Portuguese (or Spanish) language. Three weekly newspapers in Portuguese serve the immigrants, carrying Japanese job offers and *Nikkeijin* marriage advertisements. Japanese often remark that the *Nikkeijin* are vivid, loud, stereotype them as samba dancers. As a result of the *Nikkejin* re-migration to Japan a transnational community has developed in a decades time, and it can be expected that this will continue, with a tendency to gravitate to Japan as the economic heavyweight.¹⁷

3. Ethnic Immigrants in Korea: No Brotherly Treatment.

South Korea is a latecomer to the industrial world. A colony up to 1945, and destroyed by a cruel war rolling over the country four times between 1950 and 1953, South Korea had its industrial growth in the 1980s. The country's transition to democracy and an environment of human (and workers') rights only took place in the late 1990s. Up to the 1980s, South Korea was a country of emigration, and South Korean workers were an important asset for the South Korean construction companies in the Middle East and elsewhere. Thus the change from a labor exporting to a labour importing country is quite recent. One other sign of the rapid passage of South Korea from a very poor to a very rich country is the fact that it was one of the largest baby-exporting countries in the world, and in December 1999 South Korea passed a law allowing these people to stay in the country for two years.¹⁸

Thus it is no surprise that South Korea was very slow in re-admitting ethnic Koreans who had been brought to *Sachalin* by the Japanese and had been left there at the end of the war when the Soviet Union took over. Although South Korea agreed with Russia regarding a return of the ethnic Koreans, only 500 have actually returned since then, and about 1000 are expected to arrive by February 2001.¹⁹ More ethnic Koreans are still living in Kazakhstan. Two million Korean speaking people live in China, and have in the past been limited to relations towards North Korea. As North Korea is still a Stalinist country, South

Korea is reluctant to admit to many of them, fearing communist infiltration.²⁰

The reason for South Korea to recruit foreign workers was the same as in Japan, and it began only one year later: dangerous, dirty, and difficult jobs could not be filled, and low-paying small and middle size enterprises suffered severe manpower shortages. As in Japan, even when unemployment soared in the late nineties, the well-educated young indigenous people shied away from such jobs. In addition, the import of foreign labor helped to uphold the division of the labor market, and reinforced the bad reputation of the dangerous, dirty and difficult jobs.

Again as in Japan, and for similar reasons, the government opted for a preference for ethnic Koreans:

The thinking was that, as ethnic Koreans, these workers would pose no threat to South Korea's tight-knit, homogeneous society. Chinese Koreans were portrayed as long lost brethren, who should be magnanimously and warmly received by South Koreans. (Lim 1999:336f)

Ethnic Koreans from China enjoyed a preference. However, the legal environment created for the co-ethnics was decidedly worse than in Japan: the government only softened the border controls. That meant that foreign workers lived in an illegal status although the authorities had let them in deliberately (In Japan this is the status of many of the country's non-Japanese workers, mostly visa overstayers). The ambivalence of this policy reflected strong divisions between the government and certain social groups. The Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Energy and Resources, and the Korean Federation of Small Businesses (KFSB), for example, supported a more explicit, formal policy regarding foreign labor, while the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Justice, and some labor organizations opposed any policy that recognized the legal status of foreign workers. Not surprisingly, the lack of consensus strengthened the hand of the later group, at least temporarily, since it was easier to do nothing than to develop a formal policy.²¹ This situation resulted in a severe wage discrimination against immigrants workers who were paid only 20-30 % of the South Korean wage.

The social reality and mistreatment of the immigrant workers was endemic. In one survey conducted by two South Korean professors, 42 percent of a random sample of 1,985 foreign workers indicated that they had been beaten on the job.²² Abuse of foreign workers had become so pervasive that the KFSB published a pamphlet that, among other things, advised employers not to beat their workers. (Lim 1999:337) At times, mistreatment of foreign workers has led to deadly consequences - but not only for workers from China. In one notorious case, the captain of a South Korea tuna boat was murdered, along with ten other sailors (including seven South Koreans and three Indonesians), after one of the Chinese-Koreans complained about harsh working conditions. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, this was not an isolated incident: in 1995, there were at least 125 violent incidents on South Korean ships, resulting in the deaths of twelve South Korean nationals (this number includes only incidents in which South Korean crewmen were attacked by foreign workers). Many, if not most of these incidents involved clashes between South Korean and Chinese-Korean crewmen.²³ Relations between Korean and Chinese-Korean crewmen have been marked as fratricide.(Lim 1999: 337)

These harsh realities of abuse, violence, and discrimination led to a highly unfavourable climate, and the criminalizing of foreign labor, particularly the ethnic Koreans from China. Kim Dae-Joong, editor-in-chief of one of South Korea's leading papers, *Korea Focus* told his readers that he once "called for the magnanimous accomodation of ethnic Koreans living in China ... paying them wages comparable to Korean workers"(A benevolence that never happened). He goes on to report that later "he changed his mind, and now warns his countrymen to be wary of two-faced Chinese Koreans who would slip the South Koreans in the face even if we are helping them" (Dae-Joong, 1996). Dae-joong then accuses the Chinese Koreans to be sympathetic to North Korea, and points to an increase in crimes committed against South Koreans in China, noting that these crimes are carried out by primarily by ethnic Koreans envious of South Korea's economic success. He then argues that preferential treatment of Chinese Koreans by South Korea might endanger the ethnic Korean community in China and cause a process of becoming loose or disintegrating. In the end, Dae-joong warns „We should never confuse the concept of a nation-state with that of ethnicity, and South Korea should not think and behave ... as if the people there are Korean people.“(Dae-joong 1996:143-145) This type of

attitude became dominant in South Korea although it is challenged by the Catholic church, some trade unions, and humanitarian organizations.(Lim 1999:351 ff) Thus in the case of South Korea, ideological feelings and the identity of a small but successful nation overwhelmed the ideas of ethnicity or language based solidarity.

4. Germany: The End of Cold War Solidarity

Germany's history of ethnic immigration is closely related to the political turmoils since World War I which began in 1918 when the French authorities expelled all Germans from Alsace-Lorraine. This expulsion was based upon an ethnic definition of someone having two German parents. Voluntary migrations followed thereafter totalling some 200,000. At the same time, some one million Germans, including many Jewish Germans, left the territories ceded to Poland.. Moreover, the World War I allied powers expelled all Germans from the former colonies in Africa and the Pacific.

Republican Germany did not desire these inflows, and Friedrich Ebert, the first republican president protested solemnly against the French expulsions at the opening of the Weimar National Assembly. Ebert wanted to keep the ethnic Germans in their homes. One motive was the disastrous economic situation within Germany after World War I with spiralling inflation and mounting unemployment which ultimately brought down the republic in 1933. The other was a national motive: If the German population would flee the territories lost, Germany would lose any chance to regain them, as they would no longer have German speaking majorities.

The Nazi regime, on the other hand, opted for large-scale resettlements, trying to bring as many ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) under its control as possible- *heim ins Reich* - and to use them in the *Wehrmacht*. These policies included the resettlement of German speaking populations from other countries, like South Tyrolians living in Mussolini's realm, to the occupied East. At the same time the Nazis expelled large parts of the indigenous population, and organized mass killings of Jews, Poles and Russians. After the war, the allies responded in kind and opted for the largest resettlement in history which was agreed to at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. Thus twelve

million Germans were transferred to occupied Germany (Bi-Zonia and the Russian Zone) with its newly redrawn borders. Sadly, an estimated 1.5 million died during the expulsion. At all post-war allied conferences, Germans were always defined in an ethnic sense.²⁴ Consequently, the allies enforced the settlement of the expellees and the citizenship status of the resettled ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*).²⁵

An example for this clearly defined policy is a U.S. Military Government order:

You will require the persons of German extraction transferred to Germany be granted German nationality with full civil and political rights.... You will take such measures as you may seem appropriate to assist the German authorities in effecting a program of resettlement."²⁶

When the Bavarian government tried to delay voting rights for ethnic German expellees, the U.S. Military Government over-ruled and ordered that they would have full voting rights. Thus the second German republic was confronted with a set of historic *faits accomplis*, and the Constitutional Council's decision to introduce full civil rights for all ethnic Germans who had „found reception“ (*Aufnahme gefunden*) in Germany was inevitable.²⁷ The atmosphere for the expellees, however, was often unfriendly. In the South, the tremendous success of the *Bavarian Party* in 1946-1950 was largely based on its negative attitude towards the incoming non-Bavarians. In fact, one of its founding groups called itself the *Partei der Einheimischen* (Party of the Indigenous). (Thraenhardt 1973:268-273; Unger 1979)

With respect to the Soviet Zone, the West German government in the first years tried to hold back people coming over the border, as it lacked the means to care for them. It was only with the advent of the Cold War and the beginning of the economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*) that West Germany became a country opened to co-ethnics in the East. Parallel to the conclusion of the Geneva Convention in 1951, which was conceived as a shining example of Western humanitarianism, the Federal Republic passed the Federal Expellee and Refugee Law (*Bundesvertriebene und Fluechtlingengesetz*). The Law contained a clause about *vertreibungsdruck* (expulsion pressure) meaning that people of German stock would be accepted who were discriminated against because of: 1) German ethnicity; 2) being

deprived of their property and status; and 3) prohibited to speak their language. A consensus about immigration came into being that was particularly strong about Germans from the East but also included other people fleeing from Communism, like Hungarians in 1956 and Czechs in 1968. Every refugee from the East was considered a proof of the superiority of the Free World. Part of West Germany's detente policies consisted in making payments for ethnic Germans from Romania at 12,000 DM per head and from Poland through lost credits amounting to several billion DM. East German political prisoners were bought out at even higher rates. This policy was largely uncontroversial as long as the Cold War continued and the numbers of immigrants was not very high.

When the Eastern Bloc broke apart in 1989, both of these conditions came to an end. Immigration figures soared, and West German local communities were busying to find shelter for the millions of *Aussiedler* (ethnic German migrants from throughout the former East Bloc and Russia), political refugees, East Germans, asylum seekers and a growing number of Soviet Jews (for a full discussion on Soviet Jewish immigration to Germany see, Harris, 1997). The conservative government which won the elections of 1994 only with the help of the *Aussiedler* vote, directed the negative attitudes of the population at the asylum seekers. Two years earlier Chancellor Kohl spoke of a "state crisis" regarding the influx of immigrants. Limiting the inflows of *Aussiedler* and East Germans was not so much a issue of public debate but of a series of legal changes and administrative limitations beginning in 1990 and continuing up to 1999 that reduced the inflows of ethnic Germans from nearly one million to less than 100.000 per year. Ethnic Germans from Poland and Romania could no longer enter as *Aussiedler* after both of these states had become democracies and had granted rights to their minority populations. In addition, the government set a quota for for the *Aussiedler* from the former Soviet Union who still suffer under the after-effects of Stalin's deportations. Moreover, a language test was introduced which can be taken only once (more than a third of the applicants fail). Whereas the small number of *Aussiedler* entering the Federal Republic during the Cold War enjoyed all the blessings of the German social welfare system, including a one year language program and unemployment insurance, many of these benefits were now cut, and most *Aussiedler* had to rely on social assistance paid by local government.²⁸ Further, acceptance of *Aussiedler* as co-ethnics will be terminated in the year 2010. In public *Aussiedler* are now often

referred to as Russians and strangers not as co-ethnics and their cultural otherness is emphasized. Thus, as Amanda von Koppenfels puts it, acceptance of East European ethnic Germans in Germany was bounded by the Cold War.(Klekowski von Koppenfels 1999:13f)

5. America's New Ethnicity and Its Meaning

It may come as a surprise to remember that the *Declaration of Independence* is the only constitutional document of high importance where the binding bonds of blood (*jus sanguinis*) are explicitly mentioned. The dominant opinion today is that the United States is a civic and not an ethnic nation, and that the Jeffersonian ideas are universalistic and not particularistic.²⁹ Yet the Declaration speaks of the *consanguinity* with the British and on the other hand denounces the "merciless Indian savages"³⁰, implicating that the indigenous population had no rights in the newly founded Commonwealth, and - in John Locke's words - might be „destroyed as a Lyon or a Tyger or one of those wild beasts with whom Men can have no Society nor Security."³¹ In this tradition, the American nation was constructed upon the idea, in the words of Thomas Paine, of "brotherhood with every European Christian". The universalistic language of equal rights in Colonial American was more like a heaven of ideals foisted upon an altogether different reality. Rogers Smith describes how this people-building of European-Americans went on over 200 years, and traces it from the language of the eighteenth century quoted above to President Reagan's remarks in 1986 about „divine providence“ and the „special kind of people“ in America. In this historical context, Smith points to the fact that "for over 80 % of U.S. history, most of the world's adult population was legally ineligible to become U.S. citizens explicitly because of their race or ethnicity."(Smith 1999,1:2)

Thankfully, the language of racism is no longer fashionable in today's world, although race is still largely present in the American discourse.³² Ethnicity has, however, taken its place, and is used to describe legitimate forms of otherness. The notion of ethnic has changed its place in American English and is no longer used in a perjorative sense, as it was around the turn of the century, but in the sense that everybody has or should have an ethnicity, or even several ethnicities.³³ Richard Alba has described and interpreted the phenomenon that in today's 'white' (European stock) America, ethnic identity has acquired

an important place in the mapping of the social world, carrying the meaning that everybody has a legitimate place in the pluralist world as long as he or she is “white” (Asians and some successful ‘others’ can be co-opted). He himself uses the term ‘white’ for European-Americans. Using one colour to map the world logically invites other colours, and creates an imagination of black, red, brown etc.³⁴

Ethnic preference can also be detected in immigration law, even if it is hidden under the notion of promoting diversity, as with the special quotas for Irish, Italians, and Poles. Thus the United States is more open for Europeans than for non-Europeans in visa-free travel, in other special arrangements, particularly family immigration, and in public discourse. It must be seen in this context that an immigrant Englishman like Peter Brimelow can make a successful career as an anti-immigrant (or rather white supremacist) pop author and still call himself a „true American.“ (Brimelow 1996)

Yet there are limits to this kind of openness which result from the logics of the U.S. system. The U.S. is open to successful entrepreneurs and to useful specialists but not as open to economically less valuable people. Further, the U.S. is closed to people considered politically dangerous or to those who would constitute a burden on the public purse.

6. The Ambivalence of Ethnic Immigration

Comparing the five cases which have been selected on a least similar basis, we find that all five nations - as well as others - do have ethnic preference in their immigration policies, in one way or the other. It would be easy to find more examples in many more countries, like Spain, Italy, Finland, Hungary and China. How the preference is developed depends on a variety of factors: economic and employment policies, international relations and security, divided nations, historical legacies, the definition of the nation, ideological factors, and the social welfare system which can provide special benefits.

All nations also experienced traditions of inequality and unequal acceptance including or excluding subgroups, or marking them - depending also on a variety of factors and traditions. Here, we have to distinguish between the universalism included in most modern liberal constitutions and official statements, and the national discourse that excludes or includes certain groups. All national identities carry special characteristics such as language, religious beliefs, cultural links, past antagonisms or dependencies, racist cultural traditions, political preferences and past political failures or successes.

In the long run, the interaction of these factors determines the policy outcomes. Even though we acknowledge discrimination, integrative systems of the economy, social welfare, education, and military service will lead to integration over time. If immigrants enjoy political membership rights, they will be able to make their voices heard through political pressure. If migrants live in a liberal and open economic system, they can succeed through hard work, particularly if they are able to build up social networks and social capital. Huge disparities of living standards between the countries of emigration and immigration will result in a tendency to migrate (push factors) even if the political environment in the new host country is rather unfriendly. Yet the combination of access, discrimination, and feelings of otherness can lead to the construction of new ethnic groups as ethnicity is first and foremost a form of organizing social life rather than an inborn characteristic. (Verdery 1994:54) Today's easy and cheap far distance travel can lead to a prolonged intermediate situation, and to flexible, changeable and situationally adaptations. (Verdery 1994:35) On the other hand, the nationalization and the internationalization of culture and particularly youth culture provides for integrative mechanisms that were unknown in former generations.

Nation states know a formal system of membership which defines rules for entry, exit and accord specific rights. Besides that, however, there are other categories:

- knowledge of the national language (or languages), preferably with the right accent, enabling members to participate in daily life and thus being accepted as "one of us", and taking part in the national

discourse,

- physical appearance conforming to the stereotypes of a given nation,
- conforming to the prevalent religious outlook or legitimate pluralism, not belonging to excluded groups or belief systems,
- conforming to the national political consensus of the time,
- being able to participate in the economy and not becoming too much of a burden to the social welfare system.

Such criteria form economic, social, cultural, and religious memberships, some of which are incorporated into the legal system of certain countries, such as being Jewish to receive immigrant status in Israel; not having been a member of a Communist youth organization in the country of origin (even if it was mandatory) in the US; or not being part of the communist nomenclatura in order to receive *Aussiedler* status in Germany. In other instances they more closely tied to informal cultural variants such as the “Judeo-Christian tradition” in the US or the tradition of “*Christliches Abendland*” in Germany. In times of crisis, non conforming groups make easy scapegoats and suffer particularly if they do not have formal membership status. In times of political boredom, they easily can become the center of negative attention, as the public discourse tends to look for an outgroup, to prop-up the moral status of the national ingroup. These tendencies can, in a politically correct way, also be hidden behind a universalist discourse.

Ethnic immigrants remain vulnerable to doubts about their ideological correctness, their criminal background, their language competence, and other questions about their belonging to the nation. Intermarriage with non-ethnics is a special problem that can hurt the feeling of their quasi-membership, and the decision about the status of the non-ethnic partners and the “mixed” children is an indicator of the degree of their popularity as members of the national community, as is witnessed in the public discourse in Israel and Germany. Denigot has noted that the emergence of the *Nikkeijin* in Japan has created a new element in the traditional Manichaen view of a unique and homogenous state. (Denigot 1999:333)

Ethnicity is a construct of such layers of legitimacy. (Weber 1962: 308) It varies over space and time, and its definition is always a problem in decisions about legitimate immigration.³⁵ To establish new laws and ethnic preference systems, is putting living and developing

groups and human beings into Prokrustes' bed. Some are too long, and some are too short. And as we know, Prokrustes practice of making them longer or shorter was a painful process.

Israel: Full Citizenship for all Jews upon arrival and assistance at the "absorption" process (law of "return")

Japan: Exclusive right to immigrate and work up to the third generation of emigrants from Japan, work however largely limited to dull, dangerous and dirty work, limited rights

South Korea: Immigration possible as an illegal worker, largely limited to dull, dangerous and dirty work, mistreatment and discrimination (early nineties, improvements on the way)

Germany: Full citizenship for *Aussiedler* from countries where they are discriminated against (*fortwirkender Vertreibungsdruck*) including settlement assistance, dependent on a fixed contingent, a language test, and a German visa.

USA: Immigration preferences for immediate family members. Historical exclusionary policies favored Western Europe and discriminated against Asians, Eastern and Southern Europeans.

Ethno-National Discourse

"Thick" discourse of ethnicity in Japan and Korea, based on ethnic origin, common descent and cultural homogeneity, discrepancy with the degrading experiences of the ethnic "brothers", disappointment upon discovering their cultural otherness. "Thick" discourse in Israel, based on Zionist ideals, the assumption of a common origin, an idea of the promised

land, Eretz Israel, religious or non-religious, of omni-present antisemitism, and the remembrance of the Shoah.

Suppressed ethnic and national discourse in Germany, critique of *Deutschmeierei* against accepting *Aussiedler*, proponents tressing the responsibility of the German state for the persecution of the ethnic Germans in Eastern Europe. Universalist discourse in the settler societies, linked to a sense of mission or “manifest destiny”, a special legitimacy of the first settlers (e.g. pilgrim fathers) and a relationship with the “mother country” (sometimes including a special tension), the cultural commonalty with it, and the preference of WASPs or similar groups (USA).

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Notes:

1. I would like to thank the Schneider-Sasagawa Fund at the University of Muenster for travel funds, the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (*Nichibunken*) for library assistance, and Daniela Ross for a critical reading of the text.
2. Russian-Jewish immigrant in Israel, quoted in Trounson 1999. Identical quotes can be found with many other groups, e.g.: "In

Russia, I suffered because I was a Finn, now in Finland I am considered as a Russian ... well, in a word, it is all a very sad story, ... here, in Finland we are not accepted as Finns” (Interview, quoted in Kyntala, : 12.

3. Thus even a political scientist like Robert Putnam dares to decide that Southern Italian immigrants to the U.S. were a positive selection, whereas the less worthy remain at home. Cf. Putnam 1993. This may flatter the American sense of “manifest destiny” or a “special kind of people” (Ronald Reagan) but it is basically below a social science discourse (see Smith 1999:1). For a meaningful description of the Italian-American way of integration cf. Smith 1987: 63-71.
4. For the development of the discourse see the introduction to Thomas/Znanięcki 1995.
5. For a comparison of the Jewish immigration from the C.I.S. to Israel and the ethnic German immigration from the C.I.S. to Germany see Bade/Troen 1994 and Persson 2000. For a comparison between ethnic migration to Germany, Russia and Hungary see Brubaker 1998: 1047-1065, and Brubaker 1995: 209 ff. Find some comparative remarks on Germany, Japan and Israel in Kajita in: Weiner/Hanami 1998.
6. In 1975, Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren wrote to the Beta Israel telling them, “You are our brothers, you are our blood and our flesh. You are true Jews.” Later that same year the Israeli Interministerial Commission officially recognized the Beta Israel as Jews under Israel's Law of Return, a law designed to aid in Jewish immigration to Israel. The Beta Israel were ready to come home.
7. Eisenstadt 1973: 67. Retranslated from the German. See also Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israeli Society*,
8. The facts and quotes about Israeli immigration are largely drawn from Klein, to appear in: Hunger/Thrdnhardt 2000.
9. Taking away babies and putting them to a European environment was part of the policies discriminating against Aborigines in

Australia and against Natives in Canada. Children were also taken away from their parents by the Nazi authorities in Poland during the war and the Argentinian military government (Arditi 1999).

10. Information by Tamar Horowitz, Beer Sheva, at the IZA conference in January 2000. She also pointed to the fact that liberal Jews from the West are even more discriminated against by the rabbinate than the Ethiopians.
11. For an overview see Thraenhardt 1999,1: 203-223; Cornelius in: Ibid./Martin/Hollifield 1994. A recent illustration: In spite of having ratified the Geneva convention, and a Japanese serving as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Japan granted asylum to only eleven people in 1999 (Asakura 1999). In 1998, asylum was granted to 16 people, in 1996 no one, and in 1994 and 1995 to just one person each year (Denigot 1999: 806).
12. Interview with author Japan Ministry of Labor, 1991; Denigot 1999: 307. Spain moved in the same way at this time.
13. Denigot 1999: 309 f. (Her interview with Higuchi Yasushi, May 1993). She also reports that Japanese ministry officials argued that Japan followed the example of Italy, allowing back emigrants up to the third generation (p. 307).
14. Justice and Fraternity, Petition to the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Shizuoka, 30 September 1999 (fukawa@thn.ne.jp).
15. Tsuda 1999: 13. Thus the situation of the first immigration is reversed, when an American author wrote about Japanese migrants to Latin America: "Farmers, who in their own country received perhaps fifteen cents a day, are able to save from one hundred to three hundred dollars a year to send home, while wages are steadily rising." (Anderson 1920: 121).
16. In an old historic link, the word pan for bread has been taken over from the Portuguese into the Japanese in the 16th century, and thus is at home in both languages. I would like to thank Professor Fukawa, Padre Evaristo Higa, Diretora presidente Mutsumi Soma from Servipan and Marly Higashi from the Journal *Nova Visao* for

their informative comments during our visit in Hamamatsu, December 11, 1999. Denigot also speaks of the exploitation of the Latin culture popular in Japan (p. 333).

17. Denigot speaks of a “community highly visible, with an identity in formation, but with her Latin fidelities reaffirmed”. She argues that the “Japanese government involuntarily has created a specific ethnic group” (p. 335, translated from the French).
18. Migration News, November 1999; Far Eastern Economic Review, 21 October 1999; Hyun-seung 1999.
19. Sakhalin Koreans Leaving for Seoul, in: International Herald Tribune, 11 January 2000.
20. “Vor dem Tod noch einmal in die Heimat”. Die Situation der in China und Wuhan zurückgelassenen koreanischen Zwangsprostituierten, in: Asahi Shimbun, 7 May 1999, cited after the German translation in: Asahi Shimbun Dahlem, Nr. 181, 1.12.1999.
21. Lim 1999: 336. Like in Japan, the authorities were looking to Germany’s experience. Lim notes that Korean policy was justified as the attempt to get foreign workers without the “negative side effects ... which Germany experienced in the early 1970s.” (p. 339). For the Japanese situation, see Thraenhardt 1999:1 description of an ongoing battle between the various ministries.
22. Lim 1999: 337. Lim quotes Bruce Cheesman, Plight of Foreign Works: An Issue Ready to Explode - Korea, in: Reuter’s Textline, Australian Financial Review, March 21, 1995.
23. Lim 1999: 337. Cited after “Mutiny on High Seas”, in: Korea Times, August 31, 1996.
24. See Persson in Oltmer 1999: 69-91. See also Schoenberg 1970: 42; Klekowski von Koppenfels 1999: 88.
25. The speech of Secretary of State Byrnes in Stuttgart in 1946 indicating the possibility of a revision of the Oder-Neisse border

must clearly be seen in the context of the Cold War, and a beginning to sway German public opinion. Although the question remained unresolved until 1990, the Western Allies were never committed for a revision of the border, and German public opinion followed in the sixties and seventies. For the British attitude see Persson 1999.

26. Public Record Office, Foreign Office 371/85268/ C 2972: 11f. The quote was made available to me by courtesy of Josef Foschepoth, Stuttgart. See also his article in: Benz 1996: 104-112.
27. See Hinken 1998: 179-264. The Austrian decision of 1945 not to grant full rights to ethnic German refugees and expellees living in Austria had to be revised after a few years, as it became clear that Austria had no chance of getting rid of the refugees. See Bauböck in: Brochmann/Hammar 1999: 105-106.
28. A detailed description of the developments can be found in Thrunhardt 1999, 2: 29-57; Ibid. 1998: 68-86.
29. See e.g. Philip Gleason's remark that to be an American, "a person did not have to be of any particular national, linguistic, religious or ethnic background. All he had to do was to commit himself to the political ideology centered on the abstract ideals of liberty, equality, and republicanism." Quoted after Smith 1999, 1: 1.
30. Quoted after Smith 1999, 1. The arguments at large in Smith 1999.
31. Second Treatise. Cf. Cruise o'Brien 1999: 80; commenting on Anthony Pagden's, *The Struggle for Legitimacy and the Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c. 1700*, in: *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. by William Roger Louis, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press 1999: 34-54.
32. Even in an explicitly multicultural textbook like Seelye/Howell Wasilewski 1996.
33. In this sense, the above mentioned textbook urges students to look after their own ethnic diversity.

34. Alba 1990. For an outsider's surprised and instructive description of the phenomenon, see Kreis in: Thraenhardt 1999: 165-184.
35. E.g. Denigot 1999: 316 ff., on "vrais et faux Nikkeijin".