A Comparative Analysis of Delinquency Among Youth From the Former Soviet Union and From Ethiopia in Israel

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Israel is a nation characterized by great ethnic complexity. It consists of the dominant group of native Israelis and various other immigrant ethnic groups from the former Soviet Union (FSU) and the immigrants from Ethiopia. These 2 immigrant ethnic groups differ from each other both with regard to their adaptation to and the impact of Israeli society on them. The aim of the present article is to examine the delinquency among youth from the FSU and from Ethiopia in Israel and factors that may influence their delinquency. The analysis of official data and self-reported studies indicate that the youths from the FSU and Ethiopia are overrepresented in delinquency and this can be attributed to risk factors related to the lack of integration in the Israeli society.

KEYTERMS Delinquency, Israel, Ethiopia, former Soviet Union

INTRODUCTION

Israel is a multiethnic nation comprising the dominant group of native Israelis and various other ethnic groups that differ with regard to both relative size and the culture from which they came (Leshem & Shuval, 1998; Shechory, Nachson, & Glicksohn, 2010; Smooha, 1978). In Israel the term immigration has a unique connotation. Immigration is a universal phenomenon, but for Jews immigration to Israel has a special meaning. For many generations, it plays a significant role in the nation’s value system and it is encouraged by both relig.

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Immigration between economic motiv
both religious and non-religious laws. In this context, a Jewish immigrant to Israel is referred to as an "oleh," or one who ascends, which denotes the act of moral ascent associated with immigration to Israel as the "Promised Land" (Ram, 1995). These unique terminologies (oleh and Promised Land) reflect the importance ascribed to the immigration to Israel. It means that immigration to Israel is not simple immigration, but it is something that every Jew should wish and dream to achieve. Therefore, both Jewish immigrants and the task of "immigrant absorption" ("klitat aliyah") are held in high regard (Ben-Amiezer, 2008).

Both ideologically and practically, immigration to Israel constitutes a justification for the existence of the State of Israel and is a central value that is grounded in the Law of Return (1950), which was passed soon after Israel gained independence. According to the Law of Return, Israel would serve as a safe harbor for every Jew worldwide, grants every Jew the right to settle in Israel, and confers automatic citizenship upon his or her arrival. In addition, the rights granted by the Law of Return also apply to the child or grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, and the spouse of the child and grandchild of a Jew. According to the religious definitions, these rights are applicable even in cases where the spouse is non-Jewish or the offspring (children or grandchildren) are non-Jewish. Thus, the Law of Return to Israel in fact allows the immigration of non-Jews.

The 1950s saw the mass immigration to Israel of one and a half million Jews from Morocco and various other Arab countries. Immigration from the former Soviet Union (FSU) took place in two waves, in the 1970s and in the 1990s, as did the immigration of Ethiopian Jews, in 1984 and in 1991 (Weiner, 2008). The population of Israel, therefore, is characterized by its status as an immigration country, and in 2006 only one-third of the population was of Israeli origin, while the remainder of the Jewish population comprised immigrants or children of immigrants (The 2007 Israeli Statistical Yearbook, 2007).

The present article focuses on the occurrence of juvenile delinquency among youths from the FSU and Ethiopia and identifies the risk factors that may influence their delinquency by examining the differences between the two groups, their diverse cultural backgrounds, and their level of integration into the Israeli society.

**IMMIGRATION POLICY IN ISRAEL**

Immigration is the forced or voluntary, permanent or long-term movement between countries. The motives for immigration are varied: they include economic motives, social motives, family and friend influences, and the motive
of lifestyle preferences (De Jong & Fawcett, 1981). This move usually involves leaving one social framework and entering into another social framework.

Immigrant Absorption

The cultural changes that occur among immigrants as well as their integration into their new society are influenced by the absorption policy of the host society and is reflected in its expectations of the immigrant group. The absorption policy also has far-reaching implications for the culture to which the immigrants are exposed. For example, a housing policy based on the melting pot concept results in the dispersion of the new immigrants, while a housing policy based on pluralism will result in concentrated clusters of immigrants. In fact, an immigrant housing policy determines the subculture to which the new immigrants will be exposed (Lecherer, 1993).

The immigrant absorption policies of Israel in the 1990s purported to differ from previous ones in that they were designed to preserve the culture of the new immigrants. They reflected a different approach (from past policies) that included integration, pluralism, and particularism (Kaplan & Rosen, 1998). They supported interethnic equality, cultural diversity, and increased cohesion in the Israeli society (Peres, 1976). Allegedly, this approach was meant to make matters easier for new immigrants and to help them integrate better into the Israeli society.

Although Israel is perceived as constituting a shelter and homeland for every Jew, as stated in the Law of Return, immigrants to Israel have also encountered problems similar to those faced by immigrants in general, such as economic, cultural, and social problems. Despite being a country based on the ideology of immigrant absorption, new immigrants were not always welcomed with opened arms. This is reflected in the existing intercultural and interethnic tensions that first emerged immediately following the waves of mass immigration to Israel after its inception in 1948. These were primarily between immigrants from Europe and the United States (Western ethnic groups) and those from Islamic countries in the Middle East and North Africa (Oriental ethnic groups; Schwarzwald & Amir, 1984; Smooha & Kraus, 1985). This ethnic relationship was characterized by discrimination regarding prevalent perceptions about the different groups: “Westerners” tended to be contemptuous of “Orientals” and kept their distance, while the Orientals adopted the negative views about themselves and displayed social preference for Westerners (Bizman & Amir, 1984). Since then, the social tensions that prevailed over the relationship between the two main ethnic groups have lessened considerably. However, immigration from the FSU and from Ethiopia has become a new source of social tension over the past decade (Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1997).
Immigrants From the FSU

Large waves of Jewish immigration to Israel began at the second half of the 20th century, after Israel's independence in 1948. Most were motivated by Zionist and economic considerations. The first immigration consisted of Holocaust survivors who came from various European countries. At the beginning of the 1990s, mass immigration from the FSU began after the disintegration of the Soviet Union (USSR) and the collapse of the Iron Curtain. At that time, some 475,000 new immigrants came to Israel (The 2003 Israeli Statistical Yearbook, 2003). Since then about 1 million immigrants from the FSU have arrived in Israel (The 2007 Israeli Statistical Yearbook, 2007).

Some of the social hardships encountered by immigrants from the FSU come from the cultural and social differences between their country of origin and Israel. Several researchers (Orchan, Palgi, & Getz, 1992; Zilberg, 2000) described a situation of uncertainty and ethnic seclusion that has resulted from the difficulties involved in adapting to the lack of formality and the absence of sternness in the Israeli society. Moreover, the integration crisis increased the FSU immigrants' tendency to lean on the ethnic group to which they belong (Mirskey & Prawer, 1992).

Immigrants From Ethiopia

The Beta Israel of Ethiopia lived in the rural areas of Ethiopia. Some among the Ethiopian Jews believed that they descended from the union of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, while others believe they descended from the tribe of Dan, one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel. For centuries, the world Jewish community was not even aware of the existence of the Jewish community of Ethiopia in the northern province of Gondar. However, even when their existence was known, Israeli religious authorities were reluctant to acknowledge them because the Ethiopian Jewry had developed religious practices and traditions that are very different from those of Orthodox Judaism. In fact, they were not recognized as Jewish until the Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Ovadia Yossef, decreed that they were descendants of the Tribe of Dan and should be allowed to emigrate to Israel under the Law of Return, Israel's immigration statute that guarantees citizenship to any "verifiable" Jew. In 1975, Israel officially recognized the Ethiopian Jews as Jewish (Mulugeta, 2004).

The Ethiopian immigrants, numbering around 57,000, arrived in Israel in two major waves: "Operation Moses" in 1984–1985 and "Operation Solomon" in 1991 (Ben-Eliezer, 2008; The 2003 Israeli Statistical Yearbook, 2003; Schindler, 1993; Weil, 1995). In the first wave—Operation Moses—some 8,000 immigrants arrived in Israel, including children who came without their parents after having been exposed to harsh conditions
and death in camps in Sudan. Their separation from their families who remained in Ethiopia resulted in feelings of pain and guilt, which made their absorption in Israel more difficult. The second wave of immigrants (some 15,000) arrived as part of Operation Solomon in 1991 (Ben-Eliezer, 2008; The 2003 Israeli Statistical Yearbook, 2003; Schindler, 1993; Weil, 1995). This operation marked the end of a long period of separation from families that immigrated to Israel in the first wave. The immigration from Ethiopia to the Israeli reality was accompanied by huge changes. "The immigrants from Ethiopia arrived in Israel with dreams and hopes of a 'Zion Jerusalem,' of 'righteous Black Jews,' and of 'the part joining the whole'" (Ben-Eliezer, 2008). However, like the immigrants from the FSU, they have faced many difficulties in the Israeli society, thus making integration into the Israeli society extremely difficult for them. In addition, several studies have identified a relationship between social integration difficulties and a high level of involvement in criminal activities among immigrant youth from these countries (Aviad-Wilchek, 2005; Edelstein, 2005; Flashman, 1994; Habib, Ben-Rabi, & Argov, 2001; Horowitz, 1998; Lifschitz, Noam, & Habib, 1998; Mirsky, 1995).

**DELINQUENCY AMONG IMMIGRANT YOUTH FROM THE FSU AND ETHIOPIA**

Juvenile delinquency in Israel refers to all types of offenses committed by a young person legally defined as a minor. In Israel the age of criminal responsibility is 12 years and juvenile delinquency relates to offenders from the age of 12 to 18 years. Reports indicate that both the youth from the FSU and Ethiopia are engaging in a high rate of delinquency. The main sources and information used in this article to examine the extent and nature of delinquency are police official statistics and information from self-report studies.

**Nature and Extent of Delinquency**

**Official Data**

Official statistical data received from the Israel police pertaining to the decade from 1996 to 2007 indicate an increase in the percentage of police files opened for teenagers from Ethiopia and the FSU. Table 1, for example, indicates that the percentage of files opened for juvenile immigrants from the FSU constituted 13.7% in 1996 and 21.7% in 2007 of all files opened during those 2 years. The percentage of files opened for youth from the FSU was highest in 2003 and reached 30% of all the files opened for juveniles during that year. The percentage of youth from the FSU in the general population rose from 10.4% in 1996 to 12.8% in 2007 while their files increased from 14% and 21% of all juvenile files opened in 1996 and 2007, respectively (see Table 1). The percentage of these immigrant youth is higher than the percentage of the general population.

With respect to the percentage of the general population, 1.2% in 1996 and 2.1% in 2007, the data are overrepresentative of the general population.

On the other hand, the increase in the percentage of these immigrants is due to a sharp increase in the number of offenses of the immigrants.

Table 1. The percentage of juvenile immigrant youth compared to the general population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Files Opened for Juvenile Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 1 Files Opened for Native-Born, FSU, and Ethiopian Youth, 1996–2007 (Percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Native-Born and Others (%)</th>
<th>FSU (%)</th>
<th>Ethiopian (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>85 (9506)</td>
<td>13.7 (1,531)</td>
<td>1.2 (130)</td>
<td>100 (11,176)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>82.5 (9,115)</td>
<td>15.7 (1,734)</td>
<td>2 (220)</td>
<td>100 (11,069)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>81.5 (10,351)</td>
<td>16 (2,032)</td>
<td>2.5 (319)</td>
<td>100 (12,701)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>77.7 (10,741)</td>
<td>19.1 (2,636)</td>
<td>3.2 (439)</td>
<td>100 (13,816)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>77.4 (11,027)</td>
<td>19.2 (2,737)</td>
<td>3.3 (470)</td>
<td>100 (14,234)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>76.4 (11,358)</td>
<td>20.4 (3,041)</td>
<td>3.2 (478)</td>
<td>100 (14,877)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>67.4 (8,639)</td>
<td>27.7 (3,553)</td>
<td>4.8 (618)</td>
<td>100 (12,810)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>64.8 (9,156)</td>
<td>30.1 (4,248)</td>
<td>5.1 (720)</td>
<td>100 (14,124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>66.3 (10,166)</td>
<td>27.6 (4,238)</td>
<td>6.1 (929)</td>
<td>100 (15,333)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>67.8 (9,629)</td>
<td>26.2 (3,750)</td>
<td>6 (853)</td>
<td>100 (14,212)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>71.2 (8,963)</td>
<td>23.5 (2,955)</td>
<td>5.2 (656)</td>
<td>100 (12,582)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>74 (8,804)</td>
<td>21 (2,582)</td>
<td>5 (584)</td>
<td>100 (11,970)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1). The data, therefore, show that the percent of delinquents among immigrant youth from the FSU almost doubled their representation in the general population in 2007.

With regard to immigrant youth from Ethiopia the situation is even more severe. The Ethiopian immigrant population constitutes around 1% of the general population in Israel between 1996 and 2007. However, the percentage of files opened for immigrant youth from Ethiopia rose from 1.2% in 1996 to 4.8% in 2007 (see Table 1). These data indicate a high overrepresentation of these youths of almost five times their percentage in the general population in 2007.

On the surface it may be expected that as time passes, the longer the immigrants have been in Israel and the more that they are absorbed into the Israeli society, their representation in the group of law violators would decrease. However, the differences between these groups in 1996 were significant, chi-square of 78.0, significant at .001 level (2 degrees of freedom) with a sample size of 11,176. For 2000, the chi-square was 410, significant at the .001 level (2 degrees of freedom) with a sample size of 14,234, and for 2007 it was 676.5, significant at .001 level (2 degrees of freedom) with a sample size of 11,970 (almost nine times higher than in 1996). Based on these statistics, the rate of delinquency in 1996 for native-born Israeli and others was 1.9 per 1,000, 1.9 for FSU youth, and 2.3 for Ethiopian youth. By
TABLE 2 Youth Files by Type of Offenses Involving Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Ethiopia and Israeli-Born, 2000–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Violence %</th>
<th>Sex %</th>
<th>Drugs %</th>
<th>Property %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopian</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli-born</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopian</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli-born</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopian</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli-born</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopian</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli-born</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>54.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli-born</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopian</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli-born</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>FSU</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopian</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli-born</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. From the Israeli Police, 2010.

2007, the rate for Israeli-born youth and others was 1.4 per 1,000, 3.2 for FSU youths, and 9.1 for Ethiopian youths.

An interesting picture also emerges with regard to the distribution of offenses in each group. Table 2 describes the distribution of offenses from all the police files opened for immigrant youth from Ethiopia, the FSU, and Israeli-born delinquents between 2000 and 2007. The two major offenses in Table 2 are violence and property-related crimes. The table also shows that a higher percentage of Ethiopian youths were arrested for violent offenses than any other group, while a higher percent of youths from the FSU were arrested for drug offenses than any other group. In addition, a smaller percentage of Ethiopian youths compared to Israeli-born youths were arrested for illegal drugs. Most delinquents in all three groups, however, were arrested for property offenses.

SELF-REPORT STUDIES

Apart from official statistics, information regarding the involvement of these two groups of immigrant youth also come self-report studies. A study indicates that the earlier the immigration occurred for Ethiopian children (Operating...ize in part... that immigrants from Ethiopia have the same material culture and economic resources. Immigrants from Ethiopia come as a first wave from the former Soviet Union and Sudan. The gap between them and the already in Israel (e.g., living in the kibbutzim, the settlement movement and the urban core) justifies the representation of them as a "new" group in Israel.

The results of another study that mainly focuses on religious education, found that the institutionalization of religion in the education system (e.g., the schools, the central role of religion in the education system, and the religious education, and the role of religion in the education system) can also be seen as an advantage. The study also found that the religious education, and the role of religion in the education system, and the religious education, and the role of religion in the education system, can be seen as an advantage.

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LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Official data are limited because they do not include all the individuals. The study provides information about the police and other official statistics because...
(Operation Moses in 1984), the higher the tendency for them to specialize in property crimes. The researcher attributed these findings to the fact that immigrants who came to Israel in Operation Moses suffer more from material deprivation—objectively and subjectively—compared to those who immigrated in Operation Solomon (in 1991), because those who came in the first wave abandoned all their possessions ahead of their journey through Sudan. They arrived in Israel with nothing and there was a considerable gap between their expectations and the reality they had to face in Israel (e.g., living in temporary housing in mobile homes, unemployment, culture shock, and economic deprivation). Those who came in Operation Solomon already had previous knowledge about life in Israel and the gap between them and the Israeli population was, therefore, narrower. Among the "hard core" juvenile offenders (those with 10 or more offenses) there was a high representation of Operation Moses immigrants compared to children born in Israel to parents who came in Operation Solomon (Edelstein, 2002).

The Forum for Children and Youth (Habib, Ben-Rabi, & Argov, 2001) that mainly examined delinquency among immigrant youth from the FSU found that adolescent boys engage in group delinquency, with the organizational structure of a gang. It also reported that adolescent girls tend to attach themselves to groups of boys who abuse them sexually, to drop out of school, and to wander the streets. Tartakovsky and Mirsky (1999) also described a Mafia-like organization among groups of immigrant youths from the FSU who arrived in Israel without their parents. The researchers reported that these groups have a hierarchical structure and are involved in antisocial behaviors (hooliganism, drug and alcohol abuse, thefts). Tartakovsky and Mirsky (2001) also reported that these adolescents have formed bullying gangs, which have a hierarchical structure, and engage in bullying, physical violence, alcohol, drug consumption, and petty theft.

There are also Ethiopian youth gangs in many of the cities, such as Rehovot, Rishon LeZion, Netanya, Beer Sheva, Hadera, and Tel Aviv. In neighborhoods with a high concentration of Ethiopian immigrants, Israeli criminals actively recruit Ethiopian youths into drug sales and other criminal activities. Moreover, in 2006 about 10% of juveniles serving time in prison facilities were of Ethiopian descent while they only made up 2% of the general minor population (Branovsky, 2007).

**Limitations of Data Sources**

Official data, such as police statistics, should be used with caution because they do not include many instances of delinquency for a variety of reasons. These include cases of delinquency that were never reported to the police and cases that are reported but are not recorded in the official statistics because of police leniency toward juveniles. Even when these data are
examined with caution and despite the drop in the number of criminal files, the number of juvenile files opened in Israel during this time period (1996–2007) is indeed high in and of itself. In 2007, for example, 11,970 police files were opened for youth offenders, and of these 2,584 (21%) were for immigrant youth from the FSU and 584 (5%) for immigrant youth from Ethiopia. It is clear that both groups are overrepresented in delinquency.

Self-report studies provide more information than is revealed in official statistics. Furthermore, self-report methods can be used to obtain information in situations in which the participant observation method is not practical. The main disadvantage of self-report studies is that they have a number of potential validity problems associated with them. Respondents are not always truthful with sensitive issues, such as crime and delinquency. In addition, research participants may not be able to provide the level of detail or use the concepts that the researcher is interested in. In general, the validity of self-reports is sometimes questionable. Because of these problems, self-report data have to be used with caution. These limitations, however, do not indicate that all self-report data are invalid, only that they cannot be trusted in all cases. Therefore, information from the self-reported studies used in this article to discuss delinquency among youth from the FSU and Ethiopia must be interpreted with caution.

UNDERSTANDING THE DELINQUENCY OF THESE TWO IMMIGRANT GROUPS

The data presented previously point to significant involvement in delinquent behavior of immigrant youth from both the FSU and Ethiopia. Various studies have attempted to explain the causes of delinquency among immigrant youth by focusing on factors that were specific to each immigrant group. Studies on immigration and crime, for example, show that children of immigrants who come from a culture different from that of the absorbing culture tend to commit more offenses than their parents (first-generation immigrants), and their delinquency rates are similar to and sometimes even exceed those of the local population (Edelstein, 2002, 2004; Sellin, 1938).

Akhatar (1995, 1999) described immigration as a time of "psychic flux." This is especially relevant and even more acute for immigrants who come from a different culture and have limited financial resources, low levels of human capital, and no resources on which they can rely on in times of need (Alba & Nee, 1997; Nee & Sanders, 2001). Studies show that the greater the gap between the country of origin and the country of immigration and the greater the difference between the values and norms of the country of origin and those of the absorbing country, the more difficult the cultural adaptation of the immigrant will be (Alba & Nee, 1997; Borjas & Hilton, 1996). The
of criminal time period 11,970 (21%) were youth from quency. d in official information at practical. a number of problems, self- ver, do not be trusted used in this quency.

A Comparative Analysis of Delinquency

One of the major problems immigrants from the FSU and Ethiopia face is the lack of full absorption or integration into the Israeli society. These two groups have experienced a great deal of adversity since arriving in Israel, but their experiences differ. Various studies and statistical reports collected over the years since the onset of the large immigration waves from both the FSU and Ethiopia illustrate the stress and the crises that the youth in these two groups experienced as well as their difficulties in integrating in the larger society (Aviad-Wilchek, 2005; Edelstein, 2005; Flashman, 1994; Habib, Ben-Rabi, & Argov, 2001; Horowitz, 1998; Lifsitz et al., 1998; Mirsky, 1995). The absorption process may be impeded by family dysfunction, educational marginalization, economic deprivation and spatial segregation, racism and discrimination, and lack of Israeli identity, which can act as risk factors for delinquency.

Risk Factors

Risk factors are established factors that help to explain why a problem exists. However, risk factors are not correlational and not necessarily direct causes of delinquency. Instead, risk factors contribute to a problem (see Mercy et al., 2002). The study of risk factors, therefore, is critical to the understanding of a problem and the creation of prevention programs to address that problem. Risk factors related to delinquency increase the likelihood that a young person will engage in delinquency. Risk factors can exist in the family, individual, and the community.

FAMILY DYSFUNCTION

The family is one of the most important institutions in the society. However, an inadequate family dynamic caused by poor parental practices, such as a lack of supervision, inconsistent discipline, weak family bonds, family violence, and family divorce, can lead to delinquency. For many of the youth from Ethiopia, broken homes and family dysfunction seem to relate to their absorption difficulties in the Israeli society.

Several studies that examined adolescents of Ethiopian origin focused on the absorption difficulties, both cultural and economic, experienced by their parents, the loss of parental authority, and the father’s important status in the family. For example, Lifsitz et al. (1998) described the harsh family background that characterizes immigrant adolescent boys from Ethiopia who have committed offenses. These researchers report that one-fifth of these youths come from single-parent families and 25% live in homes where
there are six or more children, some two-thirds of the families do not have a wage-earner, and most parents lack basic Hebrew language skills. They also mentioned that immigration difficulties and the many cultural differences between Ethiopia and Israel had an effect on the family structure including the parents' inability to assist their adolescent children, to be involved in their lives, and to be an authority figure on which their children may lean on.

Another study that examined criminal patterns among youth from Ethiopia found that one of the most important variables is the father's ability to function in light of the enormous social and cultural changes he experiences and his ability to adapt to these changes or at least to accept the changes in his children. In addition, it was also found that the crisis is even more acute among those Ethiopian youth who immigrated at a very young age or who were born in Israel. These Ethiopian adolescents have acquired norms that are different from those of their parents and their desire to integrate into the Israeli society and to resemble their peers have created serious intergenerational conflict (Edelstein, 2002).

EDUCATIONAL MARGINALIZATION

Various studies and statistical reports collected over the years since the onset of the large immigration waves from both the FSU and Ethiopia illustrate the difficulties in integrating into the Israeli educational system (Aviad-Wilchek, 2005; Edelstein, 2005; Flashman, 1994; Habib et al., 2001; Horowitz, 1998; Lifschitz et al., 1998; Mirsky, 1995).

With regard to immigrants from the FSU, it was expected that the absorption processes of this population would be easier because culturally the new immigrants resembled the absorbing society in Israel and the level of education of most of them was even higher than the average Israeli. However, this was not the case. One explanation for their difficulties in integrating into Israeli educational system relates to the differences between the educational systems in Israel and their countries of origin. The Soviet educational system in which they were raised demanded total loyalty to the community and not to the individual or to the family. The Soviet education was also considered formal and rigid, where communication was one-directional, in which teachers maintained control by extolling "obedience" as a virtue, and where the teacher's duty was to educate toward collective-orientated values. The educational system in Israel is characterized by pluralism within a democratic society. In the Israeli schools, the prevalent value system is based on individualism and diversity. Immigrants who encounter such an essentially different educational system often experience a state of culture shock. Eisikowiz and Beck (1990), for example, found that adolescents who were not prepared in advance experienced a traumatic transition that has led to extreme reactions that include despair and anxiety. These FSU immigrants demonstrated a unique situation as well. Although they are generally highly motivated and hardworking, they often are perceived as a difficult group.

The most prominent educational norms of the FSU are the strong adherence to the care of the family and the respect of the family's ethical values. Like the young children of Ethiopian origins and children of old migrant groups, these children are not used to sitting in school for long stretches of time. They are often used to reading for hours with the help of a school reader. The children of the old migrant groups are at a lower level, as opposed to the Ethiopian group (Gottlieb, 2001).

Some studies of Israeli FSU applicants show these two groups are better than the average population. More specifically, the group of children with a higher educational level from the FSU has a lower dropout rate. This group has lower dropout rates because they are better prepared for the Israeli educational system (Sege, 2009). Furthermore, the group with a higher educational level is also more successful in higher education institutions.

Many of the children who do not succeed in some of the Israeli educational levels also experience high level of anxiety and high levels of school dropouts, and some of the reasons for the dropouts are the economic conditions, family difficulties, and delinquency.

ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION

One of the factors that affects the economic condition of the children is the condition of the family. It is common for the children to be involved in the family's economic activities.

At the same time, they are more likely to experience a high level of anxiety and depression. These children also experience difficulties in adapting to the Israeli educational system.
that included the expressions of distress that characterize culture shock. For these FSU youths, the transition has been accompanied by a sense of confusion as well as tension (Lissak, 1995; Lissita & Peres, 2000). The migration, therefore, from post-communist era schools to the Israeli schools has been a difficult transition for these adolescents.

The main goals in the educational system in Ethiopia were to impart norms of social and familial integration (establishment of the family unit, care of the elderly according to tradition), learning about the work ethic, ethical values, and the maintenance of Jewish values and Jewish customs. Like the youth from the FSU, the youth from Ethiopia have had several difficulties in the schools in Israel. In the elementary schools, Ethiopian children are concentrated in weak schools with 20% to 35% Ethiopians. One study of six schools, for example, found that 50% of the Operation Solomon children and 48% of the children whose families came during Operation Moses or before were judged by their teachers as below their class level in reading comprehension. In comparison, only 23% of the native Israeli, non-Ethiopian children were judged by the teachers as having difficulties with reading comprehension. In math, 56% of the Operation Solomon immigrant children and 51% of the Operation Moses children were seen as below class level, as opposed to 21% of the “regular” Israeli children (Jewish Virtual Library, 2010).

Some studies also point to the fact that the school dropout rate among these two immigrant groups is higher compared to that of the general population. Moreover, even among those who are listed as attending school, there is a higher level of “hidden dropouts,” expressed as frequent absenteeism from school. In some cases, over 20% of school-aged Ethiopians in comparison to 7% of the general Jewish population do not attend school (Michael, 2009). Furthermore, a study by the Knesset’s Research and Information Center states unequivocally that there is a direct correlation between the school dropout rates of students from the FSU and the crime rate in this group. Many of these FSU youths never managed to integrate into the system and some of them have turned to the street culture and various forms of crime and delinquency (Branovsky, 2007).

ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION AND SPATIAL SEGREGATION

One of the major problems that these two immigrant groups have to face is economic deprivation and marginalization. A major obstacle for the integration of the immigrants into the Israeli community is the economic status of the groups.

At the time of migration, most of the immigrants from the FSU had a high level of education and had professional jobs in the sciences, medical professions, mathematics, and art in the FSU. The Israeli society has had great difficulty absorbing these immigrants within their professions. Even today,
the human capital of the immigrants from the FSU is only partially utilized in the Israeli labor market. Consequently, a relatively large portion of these immigrants are employed in blue-collar jobs, which require skills below their levels of qualifications (Dayan, 2004). They, therefore, have experienced a disparity between their occupational potential and structural opportunities in the Israeli economy. However, in spite of this, more than 60% reported that they do not regret their immigration to Israel (Naveh, Noam, & Benita, 1995).

Unlike the immigrants from the FSU, the Ethiopian Jews came from a rural society in which the majority of inhabitants are farmers, craftsmen, or merchants. With little formal education, most could neither read nor write Amharic, their native and Ethiopia’s working language, and Hebrew, Israel’s official language. Within the Israeli society, a disproportionate number of them are unemployed because they lack skills appropriate to work in a modern economy. Unemployment among Ethiopian men in Israel ranges from 27% to 66% and less than 25% of Ethiopian women are employed (Chabin, 2008). Consequently, a large number of the Ethiopian Jewish community live below the poverty line in depressed neighborhoods and rely entirely on public assistance (see Offer, 2005). They are perhaps one the poorest group of people living in Israel.

Because of their economic situation, the Ethiopian Jews reside mostly in the segregated neighborhood such as Netanya, Hadera, Rehovot, Beer-Sheva, and Ashdod. Others live in the outskirts of small towns in the country’s periphery (Offer, 2005). Unlike immigrants from the FSU, the government referred Ethiopian immigrants, upon arrival in Israel, to absorption centers. The Ethiopians were, therefore, not allowed to take advantage of the Israeli direct absorption policy adopted at that time, which would allow immigrants to use in-cash grants and other benefits and to be responsible for their own integration. By contrast, in the absorption centers, all the immigrants’ basic needs are provided directly by the government. The placing of Ethiopian immigrants in absorption centers was based on the notion that they were considered too weak to take care of themselves. This policy has been criticized because the absorption centers isolated the Ethiopian immigrants from the Israeli society and forced them to rely on governmental support (Hertzog, 1999). In an attempt to foster the social integration of Ethiopian immigrants into the Israeli society, the Israeli government developed a special absorption plan in the mid-1980s, which included programs such as job training, a mortgage plan with low monthly payments, and college preparatory classes (Lazin, 1997). It also stipulated that the number of Ethiopian Israelis should not exceed 2% to 4% of the total population in each location and that no more than five to six Ethiopian Israeli families would reside in one apartment building (Holt, 1998). Despite all this, the Ethiopian community still constitutes one of the most disadvantaged and segregated segments of the Israeli society (Offer, 2005).
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AS A RISK FACTOR

Because of their physical distinctiveness as dark-skinned Jews with specific cultural traditions, the Ethiopian community is substantially different from any other ethnic group in Israeli society. Consequently, they have experienced discrimination and racism from the larger society, perhaps more than any other immigrant group in Israel.

Research has indicated that the FSU and the Ethiopian immigrants have experienced a great deal of discrimination in the Israeli society. This discrimination is based primarily on stereotypes. Studies that have examined the stereotypes associated with the two immigrant groups, from the FSU and from Ethiopia, have shown that Israeli society does harbor stereotypes about them, which are reflected in the popular press (see review by A. Leshem, 1993).

Most of the studies that have addressed this issue (Bizman & Yinon, 2001; Har Even, 1992; Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1997; Shechory 2005; Shechory et al., 2010) examined the stereotypes that native Israelis associated with these immigrants. It was found that immigrants from the FSU were seen as being well-educated, demanding, and critical while being responsible for the introduction of prostitution and the rise in crime in Israel. The immigrants from Ethiopia, in contrast, were considered friendly, warm, and pleasant, but at the same time it was found that veteran Israelis shunned Ethiopian immigrants because of the color of their skin or because of certain qualities and customs associated with them (Ben-Eliezer, 2008; Noam, Benita, & Wolfson, 1997). According to Ben-Eliezer, the Ethiopian immigrants were regarded as inferior, cognitively and culturally, to the absorbing society and suffered from cultural backwardness, helplessness, and ignorance.

One of the issues that Ethiopian Jews have had to confront relates to their Jewishness. They have had to battle an Orthodox religious establishment that questioned the authenticity of their Jewish roots by requiring them to undergo symbolic conversion to Judaism through the immersion into water. The Ethiopians considered this practice to be humiliating because they view themselves as Jews and had preserved their Jewish identity for hundreds of years. The first wave of immigrants agreed to immerse themselves in a mikveh, or ritual bath, but the immigrants who arrived later refused the symbolic conversion on the basis that the request was insulting (Well, 1997). Ethiopian couples, who want to marry, still have to undergo a check of their Jewishness and sometimes even ritual immersion, which is a form of conversion to Judaism (Simhon, 2007). These discriminatory practices basically undermine their rationale for their migration—Jews coming to the Jewish homeland.

Initially, the Israeli government placed a large number of Ethiopian children into religious and boarding schools, which has negatively affected their assimilation into the Israeli community (Jewish Virtual Library, 2010). Many
of the religious schools were substandard and the Ethiopian children who attended these state-funded boarding schools were forced to study Hebrew (a language most of their parents did not speak), and their native Amharic and Tigrigna began to disappear. They were also encouraged to forget their “backward and primitive culture.” This situation created a generation gap between the children and their parents. Several of them became confused about their identity, feeling that they were neither Ethiopian nor Israeli. The result has been that many of the Ethiopian youth became maladjusted and turned to delinquency (Mulugeta, 2004).

In August 2009, three Jewish religious schools refused to admit 100 Ethiopian Jewish students. Spokesmen for Israel’s Ethiopian community accused the schools of discrimination. The private ultra-Orthodox institutions, which also receive money from the government, denied that the ban was racially motivated. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the action as “intolerable” and threatened to act forcefully against the institutions if they continued this practice. President Shimon Peres also stated that the schools’ policy was a “disgrace” that no Israeli could accept (Thomson Reuters, 2009). After the Education Ministry threatened to cut their financial support, they reached an agreement with the Education Ministry to accept the Ethiopian Jewish students (The Global News Service of the Jewish People, 2009).

In 1996, a newspaper reported that the blood donated by the Ethiopian Jews to the national blood bank was discarded for fear that it might be contaminated with the HIV virus. In response to this racist practice, over 10,000 members from the Ethiopian community demonstrated outside the Prime Minister’s Office in Jerusalem. Many carried placards stating that they are Black but their blood is red. The blood bank defended its practice by stating that it was done for medical reasons (Ben-Eliezer, 2008).

It is clear that the Ethiopian Jewish community endured several forms of humiliation—from being questioned about their Jewishness and being placed in absorption centers to the revelation that blood from their community was being discarded by blood banks. Youths who perceive that the Israeli society devalues their immigrant and racial group may engage in delinquency as a way of coping with their experiences of racism and discrimination.

ALIENATION AND LACK OF ISRAELI IDENTITY

Many of the Russian immigrants came from a Western society with a culture similar to that of the Israeli culture that was to absorb them. However, research indicates that most of those who immigrated from the FSU in the 1990s did not have a significant Jewish awareness and their immigration to Israel was motivated by economical rather than ideological reasons. They arrived in Israel more as refugees than as immigrants. Some did not regard Israel as their home and even aspired to return to their place of birth or
A Comparative Analysis of Delinquency

Children who study Hebrew in Amharic forget their generation gap and confused Israeli. The Jewish community assimilated rapidly, and the ban was condemned by the Israeli government. Thomson et al. (2004) stated that the Ethiopian Jews might be a unique, over-achieving group, reflecting the traditions of their culture. However, they have maintained their cultural identity and have integrated into Israeli society as a whole.

Delinquency Prevention

Although, there have been attempts by the Israeli government and community groups to empower the immigrants from the FSU and Ethiopia, more needs to be done to effectively prevent delinquency. The focus should be on primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention programs should address the conditions that predispose these youths to delinquency. It should address virtually all aspects of their lives—family, school, work, health, and community. The aims of secondary prevention are likewise general in nature but should target those immigrant youths who are at risk for delinquency. This may involve working with youths who live in socially deprived areas, for example, the Ethiopian youth. Tertiary prevention attempts to prevent repeated offenses and promotes the social integration of young
offenders. Programs and measures focusing on these three types of prevention should work simultaneously if prevention strategies are to be effective in halting the delinquency of these two groups of immigrant youths.

In order to reduce or prevent delinquency among these two groups of immigrant youth, the Israeli society needs to address the broad range of risk factors (outlined previously) using a holistic approach. Prevention of delinquency among these youths requires multifaceted interventions designed to target several factors at a time and to use a variety of approaches. The interventions should also be culturally sensitive so that the cultural practices of these two groups are incorporated into prevention strategies and interventions. The Israeli government should also focus on the processes of integration, especially because integration is a multilayered process, which takes a long time and requires cooperation between the host country and the immigrants. All programs should also promote positive identity among these youths and provide transformative opportunities for these young people to succeed.

SUMMARY

Research conducted in Israel in recent decades clearly indicated that there is a correlation between delinquency and immigrant status. With regard to immigration from the FSU and from Ethiopia, the data show that youth from both groups have encountered integration difficulties that have contributed to their overrepresentation in police arrest statistics. It is the responsibility of the Israeli society to empower these youths, thereby reducing their rate of delinquency. These immigrant youth need to feel that they belong in the Israeli society.

NOTE

1. This was calculated by us using police and population data.

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