

Infiltrators Go Home! Explaining Xenophobic Mobilization Against Asylum Seekers in Israel

Yoav H. Duman

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2014

Abstract This article explores recent outbreaks of protest and violence against asylum-seekers in Israel. I posit that while existing approaches to anti-immigrant mobilization that primarily emphasize material and cultural forms of inter-group competition offer important explanatory foundations, they are insufficient to account fully for these outcomes. Instead, I argue that Israel's explicit interests vis-à-vis recent influxes of asylum-seekers, namely, forestalling long-term settlement and avoiding the liberalization of its asylum regime, generated two mechanisms that ultimately sparked xenophobic mobilization. First, center-right politicians disseminated and progressively intensified exclusionary discourses and legal practices as a means of mobilizing popular support for exclusion and delegitimizing asylum claims. These practices problematized asylum-seekers' presence through their construction as security, demographic, and economic threats, and generated increasing societal concerns. Second, a concurrent 'hands off' approach excluded asylum-seekers from access to state services, denying them material and social support while limiting their access to the labor market. This approach occasioned multiple adverse consequences for both asylum-seekers and host communities, and prompted perceptions of state incapacity to implement its own exclusionary policies. The analysis suggests that the interaction between these two mechanisms, coupled with concurrent legal constraints on long-term incarceration and repatriation, furnished the motive, opportunity, and legitimacy for anti-asylum-seeker mobilization.

Keywords Asylum seekers · Undocumented migration · Xenophobic mobilization · Migrants in Israel · Asylum policy · Immigrant exclusion

On May 23rd 2012, 1,000 South Tel Aviv residents gathered to protest the presence of the large communities of Sudanese and Eritrean asylum-seekers residing in their neighborhoods. Anti-immigrant demonstrations have become a regular spectacle in this working-class area, which is now home to a majority of the 55,000 asylum-seekers

Y. H. Duman (✉)
Department of Political Science, University of Washington, Seattle, USA
e-mail: duman@u.washington.edu

who have entered Israel since 2005. The protesters demanded the repatriation or incarceration of the asylum-seekers, commonly referred to in Hebrew as *mistanenim* (infiltrators). Events escalated following inflammatory speeches by Members of Knesset (MKs) from the Likud party. MK and former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokeswoman Miri Regev declared, “The Sudanese are a cancer in the body of our nation...we won’t let them destroy us and attack our women and children” (Brenner 2012). MK Dani Danon proclaimed, “...we must deport them immediately, before it is too late. Israel is at war with an enemy country of infiltrators whose capital is Tel Aviv” (Adato and Tezna 2012).

In the hours that followed, enraged citizens assaulted asylum-seekers, vandalized their businesses, and attacked police officers (Lior 2012). The riots followed an attack in which Molotov cocktails were thrown at asylum-seekers’ homes and a community kindergarten (Kubovich 2012). These events were followed by similar acts of violence across the country. By November, some 46 violent attacks had been reported (Vialer-Pollak 2012).

Anti-immigrant mobilization is a new phenomenon in Israel. Historically, due to the Arab–Israeli conflict, xenophobic violence has targeted Palestinian populations in Israel and the occupied territories but not immigrants.¹ Neither large-scale waves of Jewish immigration nor large cohorts of labor migrants have engendered significant xenophobic mobilization. Why then has the presence of asylum-seekers sparked these observed violent xenophobic responses?

This question is intriguing for several reasons. First, despite the presence of 200–300,000 migrant workers during the last 20 years,² many of whom were undocumented, neither ethnic/racial difference nor material competition has triggered substantial xenophobic responses (Kemp 2010; Rosenhek 2007; Sabar 2004).³ Second, as a result of Jewish experiences of persecution and displacement, one might expect Israel to be more amenable to the notion of protecting persecuted populations. This expectation is heightened following Israel’s pivotal role in drafting the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Ben-Dor and Adut 2003; Hathaway 2005). Examining responses to asylum flows also affords an opportunity to explore the implications that emanate from Israel’s contradictory democratic and ethno-national political ideals when confronted with the exogenous pressures that pit the two against each other. Finally, since mass asylum-seeking is new in Israel, the analysis of state and societal responses allows us to examine the evolution of a nascent asylum regime and trace the challenges and outcomes it generates.

Below, I suggest that Israel’s explicit interests, namely, forestalling long-term settlement and avoiding the liberalization of its asylum regime, have produced two mechanisms that have facilitated the emergence of xenophobic mobilization. First, the intensification of exclusionary practices (discursive and legal) vis-à-vis asylum-seekers

¹ Xenophobic violence against Palestinians is a recurring phenomenon. According to police data, in 2012, 56 violent attacks against Palestinians occurred in Jerusalem alone (Glickman 2013). Similarly, in 2011, 411 settler attacks against Palestinians were reported (United Nations 2011).

² According to Sabar (2008, 2010), among the foreign worker population, the number of African migrants ranged from 14,000 to 20,000, the vast majority of whom were undocumented. Her research reveals little evidence of overt racism or systematic discrimination against African migrants in particular.

³ Bar-Zuri (1996) has found that on average, Israelis’ attitudes toward labor migrants are positive, particularly when compared with attitudes toward the Palestinian workers the migrants replaced.

employed by mainstream political actors has resulted in popular anxiety, facilitating a social climate that is conducive to mobilization against asylum-seekers and eventually against the government itself. Second, Israel's interest in asylum-seeker exclusion has concurrently facilitated a *hands-off* approach, which denies asylum-seekers access to most state services and support. This approach has imposed both substantial social and material burdens on some of Israel's most disadvantaged local populations, and engendered perceptions of state incapacity to implement its own exclusionary policies. Thus, intensified exclusionary discourse and practices coupled with the ramifications of the absence of government provisions, as well as concrete legal constraints on long-term incarceration and repatriation, provided the motive, legitimacy, and opportunity for xenophobic mobilization to emerge.

The analysis below employs a process tracing methodology that sets out to decipher the causal relationships between processes and outcomes through the detailed analysis and sequencing of political and legal decisions, public statements, and the concrete policies that have been implemented.⁴ This approach seeks to explore the relationships between various causal factors and processes and identify their role in producing the observed outcomes.

The empirical evidence presented in this study was gathered during three field research visits to Israel I conducted between 2011 and 2013, at which time I collected three forms of primary data. First, I conducted over 30 open-ended in-depth interviews with various local and national policy makers, representatives of NGOs that offer asylum-seekers support, and prominent leaders of the anti-asylum campaign. Second, I conducted archival research during which I collected documents, transcripts, and reports produced by local and national government agencies and NGOs, court rulings and legal briefs, and newspaper reports. Finally, I performed multiple observations of events related to the issue of asylum-seekers, spanning relief groups that assist asylum-seekers, meetings and rallies of pro-asylum groups, neighborhood meetings, and demonstrations against asylum-seeker presence.

The article will proceed as follows. The first section outlines existing explanations for xenophobic mobilization. The second traces the historical evolution of Israel's policies toward asylum. The third analyzes the government's discourse and practices toward asylum-seekers. The fourth examines the emergence of anti-migrant mobilization in Israel. The final section offers conclusions and integrates the empirical and theoretical findings.

Explaining Anti-immigrant Mobilization

In response to increasing xenophobic mobilization across migrant-receiving countries, scholars have advanced numerous theoretical frameworks in order to explain its emergence and perpetuation. From anti-immigrant riots (Dancygier 2010; Karapın 2000; Koopmans 1996) to the rise of the European xenophobic right (Carter 2005; Norris 2005; Kitschelt 1995) and restrictive policy responses (Hopkins 2010; Karapın 2000), practitioners set out to explain both country-specific outcomes and variation between and within states. These analyses explore multiple facets of the phenomenon

⁴ For a detailed discussion of this approach, see George and Bennett (2005).

such as the conditions under which migrants are perceived as threatening (Dancygier 2010; Karapın 2000), factors that activate mobilization, and the role of elites in exacerbating or ameliorating conflict (Hopkins 2010; Koopmans 1996).

A central point of contention concerns the underlying factors that produce perceptions of immigrant threat. Scholars disagree as to whether these primarily emanate from ideational factors concerning identity and social cohesion, or rather from material-economic factors. Proponents of the former stance argue that hostile attitudes toward migrants stem from beliefs that the latter jeopardize a cohesive national society and traditional cultural values (Ignazi 2003; Sides and Citrin 2007; Wimmer 1997). From this perspective, citizens who subscribe to ethnic conceptions of national membership are more likely to perceive immigrants as posing a cultural threat vis-à-vis autochthonous society (De Figueiredo and Elkins 2003). Immigrants are viewed as inassimilable carriers of alien culture and ethnic or racial difference who transgress a reified vision of *the national order of things*, and threaten to disrupt traditional values, norms, and social organization. In response, cultural protectionists are liable to support movements that advocate restrictive immigration policies and exclusionary measures (Sides and Citrin 2007).

Other scholars maintain that xenophobic attitudes are primarily motivated by competition over scarce material resources (Betz 1994; Dancygier 2010; Hanson, Scheve, and Slaughter 2007). They suggest that individual perceptions of relative deprivation as well as socio-structural conditions influence the propensity to perceive immigrants as threats. On an individual level, those who view their material well-being as imperiled by competition with immigrants such as low-skilled workers, individuals with poor educational attainment, and the unemployed are more likely to support anti-immigrant agendas (Betz 1994; Lubbers et al. 2002). On an aggregate level, it is argued, support for anti-immigrant mobilization is correlated with migrant population size, unemployment and inflation rates, and political dissatisfaction (Jackman and Volpert 1996; Knigge 1998). From this perspective, mobilization is fueled by concerns about immigrants reducing the share of collective goods allocated to autochthonous populations, intensifying labor market competition, and depressing wages. Dancygier (2010) contends that economic scarcity interacts with political rights and participation. Thus, the likelihood of anti-immigrant mobilization increases when immigrants hold voting rights and resources are allocated by the state, thereby enabling them to alter distributive outcomes. Under these conditions, locals are likely to support exclusionary policies that give rise to distributive outcomes that favor the autochthonous population.

Neither approach, however, is sufficient to explain anti-immigrant mobilization in general or in Israel in particular. First, cultural approaches do not account for the variation in the perceived level of threat posed by different immigrant groups or by the factors that generate these differential perceptions and activate mobilization. Second, ethnicity and culture might be epiphenomenal, serving as proxies for groups' economic positions (Dancygier 2010). In the case of Israel, culture and difference alone appear insufficient to account for the variation in mobilization against asylum-seekers and labor migrants. Migrant workers constitute a distinct and diverse population, which, at its peak, was fivefold more numerous than today's asylum-seeker population, and many of whom were African. Their presence, however, did not constitute a source of concern regarding cultural and social disintegration or spark significant protest or

overt racism, despite ongoing institutional discrimination and exclusionary discourse from above (Rosenhek 2007; Sabar 2004).⁵

Material explanations alone are also insufficient for explaining the observed outcomes. First, socio-structural variables do not substantially vary within and across developed countries, rendering them insufficient to explain cross-national or temporal variation (Norris 2005). Second, they do not specify how the material competition activates xenophobic mobilization in-practice. Third, empirical research has not yielded consistent results since variables are not systematically correlated with outcomes (Knigge 1998; Norris 2005; Van der Brug et al. 2005). In Israel, material approaches cannot explain the variation in responses toward asylum-seekers and migrant workers. Both populations reside in the same neighborhoods and perform low-skilled jobs, objectively constituting equivalent levels of competition.⁶ In fact, migrant workers are more numerous, eligible for more state-funded benefits, and employed at significantly higher rates, theoretically posing a more robust economic threat. Furthermore, macroeconomic data suggest that both inflation and unemployment have declined in recent years.⁷ While these critiques do not falsify material explanations, they suggest that objective material indicators alone might be insufficient. This article seeks to bridge this gap by exploring mechanisms that impute meaning to these material processes, engendering intergroup rivalry.

A second point of contention concerns the role of elites in facilitating or ameliorating xenophobic conflict. While material and cultural approaches often perceive anti-immigrant mobilization as emerging from below (Dancygier 2010; Karapın 2000), opportunity structure scholars and social constructivists highlight the role of elites in producing these outcomes. Koopmans (1996) argues that elites create the social climate that engenders concerns over immigration, thus affording xenophobic actors opportunity and legitimacy:

Objective conditions such as the presence of foreigners...will only be perceived as a social problem and as an issue on the political agenda if they are defined and interpreted as such by political elites...Because of the fact that the issue is high on the political agenda, the political and media resonance of racist actions is likely to be very high, and the chances that racist mobilization will be rewarded by restrictive action of the authorities toward foreigners and refugees are favourable. (Koopmans 1996: 201)

⁵ One possible explanation for these disparate public reactions could stem from the divergent ethnic and racial composition of the two groups. While both the labor migrants and asylum-seekers are primarily composed of visible minorities, the latter are mostly of African origin. However, survey research concerning attitudes toward particular groups of foreigners indicates that among the various labor migrant groups, Africans were not perceived as constituting a particular threat. In fact, Israelis identified Romanians, who are considered to be ethnically closer, as the group constituting the highest level of perceived threat (Schnell 1999). This might suggest that existing racist attitudes and discourse toward African asylum-seekers are epiphenomenal and not directly related to pre-existing racist attitudes among Israelis toward Africans, but racist perceptions that emerged in response to elite incitement and the framing of the former as immanent threats. However, more research is required concerning the role played by color and gender in producing hostility and xenophobic mobilization in Israel.

⁶ For more information on the ethnic and social characteristics of labor migrants (both African and other) and their spatial distribution, see Fenster and Vizel (2007), Kemp and Rajman (2008), Sabar (2007), and Schnell (1999).

⁷ Data provided by the Israeli National Bureau of Statistics 2006–2012.

Hopkins (2010) similarly emphasizes the role of elite construction in imputing meaning to material transformations. He argues that restrictive immigration campaigns are the consequence of the confluence of demographic transformations and discursive problematization. Thus, perceptions of immigrant threat are contingent on discourse that contextualizes material reality, sparking social concerns. In contrast, Kitschelt (1995) contends that the propagation of anti-migrant discourse by mainstream elites in fact reduces the potential success of radical xenophobic mobilization since they occupy the potential political space, rendering mobilization superfluous.

Rosenhek (2007) posits that both mechanisms might be at play. Pursuant to his approach, in the case of migrant workers, moderate discursive and institutional exclusion by mainstream politicians have rendered anti-immigrant agendas superfluous, as Kitschelt predicts. However, he also suggests that the intensification of mainstream discursive and legal exclusion could potentially facilitate the emergence of xenophobic conflict, since increased social concerns and panic legitimize political space for xenophobic mobilization, and fear of punishment subsidizes. This suggests a possible curvilinear relationship between exclusion from above and xenophobic mobilization. However, the necessary level of exclusion and the sufficiency of this mechanism remain open questions.

While framing and contextualization from above can play an important role in constructing immigrants as threats, their success is also contingent on their ability to resonate within the general population. Thus, it is not sufficient to examine abstract mechanisms of negative framing; we must also explore how they materialize within particular contexts. While processes of elite framing are prevalent across national contexts, the specific forms they assume and their ability to achieve public resonance are largely dependent on their interaction with particular historical experiences, and pre-existing political and social fault lines that are domestically salient. Social boundaries that demarcate who belongs, who is excluded, and perceptions of threat posed by *others*, do not emerge in a vacuum but are predicated on deeply embedded culturally and historically specific collective understandings and experiences (Banton 1996; Wimmer 2013; Zolberg and Woon 1999). For instance, Koopmans and Statham (1999) have found that the divergent success of radical right parties in Italy and Germany emanates from the two countries' "different configurations of ethnic and political foundations of citizenship and nationhood" (226). Similarly, scholars have argued that recent outbreaks of xenophobic violence in South Africa are related to particular conceptions of belonging and membership, and to the character of the social boundaries that developed during the Apartheid era and in the aftermath its collapse (Neocosmos 2008; Nieftagodien 2008).

It is therefore inadequate to examine elite framing practices abstractly. Instead, we must also locate and explore these practices within the particular context in which they emerge. In the Israeli case, for instance, it has been argued that the Arab–Israeli conflict constitutes the most fundamental and salient fault line that has played a constitutive role in the state's cultural, social, and political formation and evolution (Shafir 1996; Shafir and Peled 2002). In fact, the conflict constitutes the primary fault line along which political groups in the country are defined, differentiated, and structured. For this reason, it is not surprising that it has played a crucial role in shaping societal responses toward asylum-seekers in two principal ways. First, political elites have strategically employed discursive practices that implicitly or explicitly link asylum-seekers to the security and

demographic threats posed by the conflict in order to exacerbate both social anxieties and the salience of their negative framing strategies. Second, beyond this instrumental use of the conflict to rally public support, the long-term internalization and routinization of the conflict shapes the way Israeli elites understand and react to the challenges of asylum. From this perspective, elites interpret the transformations engendered by asylum through the lens of the conflict, which shapes both their calculations and the practices. Together, these two processes have produced what I define below as the Palestinianization of asylum-seekers.

I argue that explaining the emergence of anti-immigrant mobilization in Israel requires synthesizing propositions from the resource scarcity, political opportunity, and social construction approaches. The analysis below suggests that the eruption of xenophobic violence did not emanate from unmediated cultural or material competition, but from the confluence of intensified exclusionary practices from above, increasing local disruptions, and skepticism concerning the government's capacities and resolve. The first mechanism is the exclusionary discourses and practices espoused by center-right politicians to avert both the liberalization of the asylum regime and long-term settlement problematized the presence of asylum-seekers, constructing them as security, demographic, and economic threats. By employing these salient frames and espousing exclusionary solutions, the government sought to generate public support for asylum-seeker exclusion and perceptions of state control, despite the legal constraints on the implementation of measures such as repatriation and incarceration. Notwithstanding initial public skepticism, the asylum-seekers' presence was ultimately problematized, aligning public opinion with government preferences and increasing public anxiety.

However, in contrast to Rosenhek, I maintain that the intensification of exclusionary discourse alone, while necessary, was insufficient to induce xenophobic mobilization. Instead, I posit a second mechanism that facilitated the aforementioned outcomes, namely, the material consequences incurred by the state's *hands off* approach toward asylum-seekers. This approach, which denies asylum-seekers access to state services and support while simultaneously limiting their access to the labor market, has imposed high material and social costs on host communities. These material consequences, together with the exclusionary social climate, have reinforced perceptions concerning the asylum-seeker threat and state incapacity to implement its own exclusionary policies, facilitating mobilization against both the former and the latter.

Asylum in Israel 1948–2006

Israel was created as a refuge for Jews and maintains a complex relationship with non-Jewish immigrants and refugees. In fact, the state has yet to adopt comprehensive asylum or immigration policies vis-à-vis non-Jews. Instead, immigration has primarily relied on the Law of Return (1951), which facilitates Jewish immigration exclusively. Within this legal framework, Jewish newcomers are not considered immigrants or refugees but *olim* (ascendants), a category that is reserved solely for Jews.

The absence of asylum procedures is particularly intriguing given Israel's active role in drafting the nascent international refugee regime, following Jewish experiences of genocide and displacement (Hathaway 2005). Israel itself, however, never incorporated the convention (1951) or its protocol (1967) into domestic law; neither did it

institutionalize asylum procedures until 2002 (Kritzman-Amir and Kemp 2008). Two pertinent factors may explain this outcome. First, despite the state's democratic character, its ethno-national Zionist ideology requires the exclusive bolstering of its Jewish population through *aliya*, and the Judaization of space (Yiftachel 2006). Second, refugees inspire a distinct type of fear, since Israel itself produced large numbers of refugees during the 1948 war. The ongoing presence of Palestinian refugees raises concern over the possibility of asylum-seekers opening the Pandora's box of Palestinian return (Paz 2011).

During the first 30 years of Israel's existence, the lack of asylum mechanisms scarcely had any ramifications since only a few individuals applied for asylum (Adut 2007). Non-Palestinian refugees first gained attention in 1977 when Prime Minister Menachem Begin granted asylum to 66 Vietnamese boat people, later accepting 100 more (Ben Dor and Adut 2003). Similarly, in the 1990s, Israel temporarily hosted almost 200 refugees from Bosnia and Kosovo, and in 2000 incorporated 6,000 refugees from the South Lebanon Army, following its unilateral withdrawal. However, these constituted exceptional ad hoc responses to acute humanitarian crises and did not fundamentally impact Israel's asylum regime (Herzog 2009). Beyond these cases, Israel took in few asylum-seekers prior to 2000. The UNHCR processed these requests, and small groups from conflict zones were granted Temporary Protection (TP) (Ben Dor and Adut 2003).

In 2002, a new policy divided the responsibilities between UNHCR, which was responsible for initial determinations, and the Interior Ministry, which finalized decisions. Kritzman-Amir and Kemp (2008) characterize this as a *permanent temporary asylum regime*: "The new policies and regulations Israel developed in relation to asylum-seekers and refugees since 2002 constitute it de-facto as a state of temporary asylum" (59). The regime's temporariness emanated from a lack of prospects for long-term settlement, temporary visas, encouragement of asylum-seekers to resettle abroad, and reliance on TP. Additionally, the policy excluded subjects of enemy *states*, severely limiting potential applicants. The new regime, however, did not increase refugee recognition.⁸ Overall, between 1948 and 2008, Israel recognized approximately 170 refugees. In 2005, however, the asylum regime was jeopardized as increasing numbers of Sudanese asylum-seekers entered the country.

Sudanese and Eritrean Asylum-Seekers in Israel

In 2005, a 3-month demonstration of Sudanese asylum-seekers outside the UNHCR in Cairo was violently dispersed, resulting in 28 casualties (Azzam 2006). In consequence, asylum-seekers increasingly used Sinai-based smuggling rings in order to enter Israel (Adut 2007). Ehud Olmert's centrist government immediately identified the potential threat to Israel's asylum regime, which sought to halt the flows. In May 2006, following the entrance of 176 asylum-seekers, Interior Minister Ronnie Bar-On expressed government concerns:

The problem is that today in Egypt there are three million Sudanese refugees...if we don't stop this phenomenon at the border...we will encourage a flood that we don't want. It will be impossible to remove them from our territory...we can't contain this (Knesset of Israel 2006a).

⁸ Between 2003 and 2006, 0.4–1.3% of individual applicants were recognized (State Comptroller 2007).

An internal government memo stated: “If Israel is unable to stop the infiltrators or deport them, there is a serious fear of *flooding* the country with Sudanese”.⁹ A former Israeli diplomat and UNHCR commissioner posited that “continued flows at the current rates will cause the collapse of Israel’s asylum system; it is clear that this cannot continue” (Kaminski 2007).

On a policy level, beginning 2006, Sudanese asylum-seekers were subjected to administrative detention as a result of the Law for the Prevention of Infiltration (1954) replacing the Entry Law (1952) as the primary legal instrument employed vis-à-vis asylum-seekers. The former is a security measure, historically devised to halt the return of Palestinian refugees and to prevent theft and attacks by them after the 1948 war (Morris 1993). While the Entry Law falls under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry and constrains the state’s coercive power, the military implements the Infiltration Law, which contains few constraints.¹⁰ Additionally, the IDF implemented the *hot returns* policy, employing military force to drive asylum-seekers back into Egypt soon after entering Israel. The policy was formalized in mid-2007 with Egypt’s alleged assent. Despite Egypt’s denials, evidence suggests that returns persisted until 2011 (Yaron et al. 2013). Israel also initiated negotiations with Kenya and Ethiopia concerning *en masse* asylum-seeker resettlement (Ilan 2007a). However, between 2006 and 2012, approximately 60,000 asylum-seekers, primarily from Eritrea and Sudan, entered Israel.

Constructing the *Asylum Threat*

As mentioned previously, I contend that elite problematization of asylum-seekers through the implementation and dissemination of exclusionary practices and discourse was indispensable in facilitating xenophobic mobilization. Since 2006, successive governments have progressively employed these practices to deter potential asylum-seekers, undermine their legitimacy, and solicit public support for their exclusion. To this end, center-right politicians suggested that asylum-seekers pose three principal threats: security, economic, and demographic.

Due to the centrality and popular salience of security concerns within Israeli society, it is not surprising that the government employed securitization as a primary exclusionary frame. Asylum-seekers’ securitization has occurred through multiple discursive and legal practices that frame them as *enemy-refugees* and *infiltrators*—categories that are intricately connected to and borrowed from the Arab–Israeli conflict (Sarig 2008). While these practices correspond with global processes of securitization of migration following the end of the Cold War (Castles 2003) and the 9/11 attacks in 2001 (Bigo 2002), they are concurrently shaped by the ongoing conflict and the popular anxiety it engenders (Canetti-Nisim et al. 2008).

These processes are clearly evident in the enforcement of the Infiltration Law, which has historically been associated with the perceived threat posed by Palestinian refugees (Morris 1993) and, by definition, constructs asylum-seekers as security threats. The

⁹ Internal memo by the deputy legal advisor to the government, March 16, 2006 (unpublished).

¹⁰ Israel’s Entry Law (1952) permits incarceration solely for deportation purposes. However, since non-refoulement made repatriation impossible, leading courts to release asylum-seekers, the Infiltration Law was employed to facilitate long-term detention (Kritzman-Amir 2009).

law's military implementation further reinforces this association between infiltration and security, producing a distinct legal and discursive regime that differentiates asylum-seekers from authorized labor migrants and undocumented migrants, who are governed by the Entry Law.

Securitization attempts have also highlighted Sudan's role in producing global terrorism (Knesset of Israel 2006b) and potential terrorist recruitment. This culminated in the collective *assumption of dangerousness* of Sudanese citizens, which was later extended to all *infiltrators* (Sarig 2008). Despite contravening the refugee convention and lacking empirical support, the government defended its position: "Sudan is a central base for global Islamic terrorism...Thus, the assumption of danger posed to public and state security by those who infiltrated with the assistance of smuggling rings that among other things smuggle weapons is particularly high".¹¹ A memo entitled *The Security Danger Involving Sudanese Infiltrators* stated, "We conclude that these are learning organizations. If they have not yet recognized the terrorist potential in the Sudanese infiltrators...they will do so soon."¹² Thus, "everyone who crosses the border is a potential terrorist" (Dayan 2006). In the Knesset, the new Interior Minister, Meir Sheerit stated, "We must remember, infiltrators are part of human trafficking. They [the smuggling rings] bring prostitutes, drugs, weapons...terrorists can also come, and they do" (Ilan 2007b). Likewise, Domestic Security Minister Avi Dichter asserted, "I am certain that among the 3,000 in Israel there are terrorists" (Bershtovski 2007b).

Despite the government's securitization attempts, its actions were initially constrained by skeptical observers. In early 2006, a security-administrative court ruled that while Sudanese can be detained as enemy refugees, Eritreans must be released, thereby simultaneously reinforcing and departing from the securitization of the two groups, respectively. The High Court of Justice demanded that those who passed security screening be admitted through the Entry Law framework, and that judicial review be implemented under the Infiltration Law (Sinai 2006a). Unexpectedly, the new court responsible for reviewing detention dismissed security concerns and recommended the release of all non-deportable asylum-seekers (Sinai 2006c). Although the government has generally eschewed implementing such decisions (Ilan 2007b), they have served as partial constraints on securitization practices.

Despite the centrality of security concerns, the Israeli public was also initially reluctant to internalize securitization. In 2006–2007, the conflict in Darfur gained a great deal of international attention. Soon, several non-partisan organizations emerged, advocating asylum for Darfuris (Willen 2010). Israeli reserve soldiers serving along the Egyptian border published a letter, claiming that "[t]here is no connection between the capture of poor refugees and state security. Sudanese refugees are a problem to which the state, and not reserve soldiers, needs to provide the legal, moral, and humane solutions" (Bershtovski 2007a). The chairman of Yad Vashem (Israel's Holocaust memorial center) similarly criticized government policies, stating: "As Jewish people who have the memory of the Holocaust engraved within us, we cannot look away when refugees from the Darfur genocide knock on our doors" (Bareket 2007). Sixty-three Knesset members, including Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as the ultra-right *National Religious Party*, signed a multi-partisan petition opposing the deportation

¹¹ See the State response to HCJ 3208/06 p.11 (unpublished).

¹² Department of Counter-Terrorism, 2006 memo (unpublished).

of Sudanese refugees (Yacobi 2010). In response, Olmert's government granted asylum to 498 Darfuris as a humanitarian gesture, which was implemented without individual screening,¹³ and ignored non-Darfuris (Yaron et al. 2013).¹⁴ Olmert emphasized the exceptional nature of the measure as well as the repatriation of all other *bogus asylum-seekers*, rejecting a possible liberalization of asylum. In fact, until recently, Israel has refused to process individual Sudanese and Eritrean asylum requests, granting them solely TP (Tsurkov 2012).¹⁵

Securitization's initial failure had minimized its role by early 2008. In fact, processes of de-securitization were evident. The 2008 Infiltration Law proposal stated that only a few of the *infiltrators* potentially pose a security threat (Government of Israel 2008). De-securitization was probably also facilitated by the reality of increasing flows of Eritrean asylum-seekers. Securitization's failure, however, did not halt the state's exclusionary campaign, but instead was replaced by the salient economic and demographic frames.

Coalition members continually portrayed asylum-seekers as economic threats, or *labor infiltrators*, suggesting that they were solely economic migrants. Olmert first evoked this discourse while announcing the recognition of the Darfuris, claiming that all others were *labor infiltrators* (Knesset of Israel 2007). Politicians and policy makers repeatedly disseminated this frame both in the media and in court proceedings¹⁶ (Ben Dor 2009). In an official document concerning deportation, a police chief depicted them as employment-seeking migrants (Sinai 2008). Similarly, Justice Minister Haim Ramon suggested amending the Israeli–Egyptian peace agreement so as to deploy Egyptian troops along the border for the purpose of stopping *infiltrators* “since we are not talking about refugees but job-seekers” (Ilan and Isascharoff 2007). This discourse was particularly resonant among working-class populations residing in areas where most asylum-seekers settled, as the latter were portrayed as the underlying cause of the former's material predicament. Furthermore, economic discourse also sought to undermine the validity of their asylum claims.

Policy makers have also emphasized the highly salient demographic *threat* allegedly posed by asylum-seekers. Olmert equated asylum-seekers with “a tsunami that will only get worse...we must use every measure possible to stop this...we are able to stop Palestinians but have failed to stop the entrance of over 10,000 infiltrators in a couple of months” (Sofer 2008). Others emphasized the demographic threat that additional flows would generate. As Minister Sheetrit suggested, “A year ago, we had 300 people... Today we have 300 a week...if we don't stop it now, we will reach 3,000 a week... Israel as a Jewish state can't take in hundreds of thousands of people” (Eg lash and Izenberg 2007).

In addition to discourse, both Olmert and his successor Netanyahu reinforced the perceived threat posed by asylum-seekers by implementing policies that historically have been exclusively applied to Palestinians, generating what can be defined as the

¹³ Despite claims of identifying 498 legitimate refugees, applicants were not systematically screened (Ben Dor 2009).

¹⁴ Yaron et al. (2013) suggest that in some cases, the temporary status was later revoked.

¹⁵ For an in-depth analysis of Israel's asylum policies and practices, see: Berman 2012.

¹⁶ Intriguingly, throughout this period, foreign workers were not portrayed as threatening. To the contrary: as the director of a refugee assistance center pointed out, relatively speaking, their situation improved following the marginalization of asylum-seekers (personal interview with author, December 28, 2011).

asylum-seekers' partial *Palestinianization*. First, beyond employing military violence and *hot returns*, Olmert sought to remove constraints regarding the use of firearms against asylum-seekers (Wolf 2008). Second, the Infiltration Law and other legal instruments designed to control Palestinians have been employed to facilitate administrative detention and large-scale incarceration of asylum-seekers (Sinai 2006b). Olmert's coalition also endorsed a revised infiltration law that further criminalized asylum-seekers, imposing 5–7 years' imprisonment (Government of Israel 2008). While legislation was halted, a revised version that imposes 3 years of mandatory imprisonment was enacted in January 2012, and again amended in December 2013.¹⁷ Third, Israel duplicated the security barrier it had constructed in the West Bank along the Egyptian border in order to block asylum-seekers' entrance. Finally, as with Palestinian refugees, security concerns were invoked as a means of undermining the legitimacy of their claims.

The use of policies and discourses that seek to link the security and demographic threats that emanate from the Arab–Israeli conflict and the challenges posed by asylum-seekers are significant for two reasons. First, they appear to have been adopted instrumentally as methods of bolstering public opposition to asylum-seekers due to the domestic salience of the conflict and the security practices associated with it. By virtue of Israelis' recent historical experiences, the use of terms such as infiltrators, terrorism, and demographic threat evoke deeply internalized public concerns and fears. Since most Israelis perceive the Arab–Israeli conflict as a significant threat to the state's survival (Canetti-Nisim et al. 2008), the linkage between the conflict and asylum has served to exacerbate the perceived danger posed by the latter. Second, it appears that policy makers themselves are not exogenous to the social context in which they are embedded and that their own analyses and reactions have been profoundly shaped by their experiences in relation to the conflict. From this perspective, it is hardly surprising that elite responses have made extensive use of security- and demography-related discourses that emanate from the ongoing conflict, or that they have borrowed from the repertoire of practices that have been designed to control the Palestinian population. The conflict has generated a salient framework wherein exclusionary discourse can be disseminated and from which practices can be drawn, and it has shaped the very way both elites and the public perceive and interpret the challenges of asylum.

While Olmert's coalition's practices regarding asylum-seekers did not trigger xenophobic mobilization, it did produce its foundations. Despite the legal constraints on repatriation and the state's refusal to process asylum claims, political elites continuously employed frames constituting asylum-seekers as demographic, security, and economic threats, while delegitimizing their asylum claims. Government representatives advanced exclusionary policies, demanded repatriation, drew parallels to the Palestinians, and employed dehumanizing xenophobic discourse portraying asylum-seekers as *flooding*, *occupying*, *penetrating*, and *infiltrating* the country. These discursive constructs and practices formed the bedrock that was later fostered and intensified by Olmert's successors and xenophobic entrepreneurs, who ultimately facilitated anti-asylum mobilization.

¹⁷ The revised Knesset of Israel (2012) was struck down by the High Court in September 2013 due to its disproportionality. In response, the Knesset promulgated a revised version in 2013, reducing mandatory imprisonment but sanctioning indefinite detention in partially open, but isolated, facilities.

The formation of Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing coalition government in March 2009 boosted exclusionary discourses and practices and revived securitization. In contrast to previous securitization attempts, it encountered little mainstream opposition due to both the long-term negative framing that enhanced popular perceptions of the threat posed by asylum-seekers and the increasing numbers of asylum-seekers entering the country.¹⁸ Throughout its tenure, Netanyahu's coalition progressively intensified its predecessor's exclusionary practices. Beginning mid-2010, exclusionary discourses and practices intensified significantly, further augmenting public opposition to and fear of asylum-seekers.¹⁹ Throughout this period, Netanyahu, Interior Minister Eli Yishai, and other coalition members repeatedly espoused views, broadly disseminated by the media, that asylum-seekers constituted an existential threat to Israel.

For instance, a couple of days prior to the riots of May 2012, Netanyahu stressed:

The phenomenon of illegal infiltrators from Africa is extremely grave and threatens all components of Israeli society, national security, and national identity...if we don't stop the problem, 60,000 infiltrators will become 600,000 and bring about the destruction of the Jewish and democratic state (Nesher 2012).

While visiting the southern city of Eilat, where asylum-seekers constitute approximately 12 % of the population, Netanyahu stated, "The illegal infiltrators from Africa are invading the Negev's cities as well as cities across Israel, they alter the population balance, and take jobs away from Israelis...we must stop the flood of infiltrators" (Curiel 2011). Similarly, Interior Minister Yishai claimed, "The infiltrators together with the Palestinians will rapidly bring us to the destruction of the Zionist dream. Since the Second Temple we have not been confronted with such danger" (Yerushalmi 2012).

An official ministry statement declared:

This is an all-out war and I will use all means at my disposal to fight this danger. Infiltrators are an existential threat to the Zionist enterprise...it will not take long for them to demand independence...I will not allow a reality in which entire regions fall into the hands of people who came here illegally, [and] which with the support of various [human rights] organizations strike roots and undermine our existence (Ministry of the Interior 2011).

Netanyahu and Yishai further aggravated public anxieties by disseminating partial data concerning the demographic challenge posed by asylum-seekers. Like Olmert, they included Egypt's overall Sudanese population (42,000 asylum-seekers and 2–3 million migrant workers) when estimating future flows. Netanyahu warned that without a security fence, two million asylum-seekers would enter the country (Vialer-Pollak 2010). When a Knesset report revealed that the number of asylum-seekers in Egypt was lower, it was secreted.

¹⁸ While only 50 asylum-seekers entered Israel in 2005, and 700 in 2006, 2007 witnessed a dramatic increase in asylum flows as 5,208 entered the country that year followed by an additional 9,264 in 2008 (Natan 2009).

¹⁹ For evidence concerning the intensification of exclusionary discourse during this period, see Yagna (2012), Tsurkov (2012), Wurgfat (2011), and ACRI (2012).

Netanyahu's coalition also intensified economic discourse. During a cabinet meeting, he asserted, "Israel is a small country. We cannot allow ourselves to be flooded by illegal labor infiltrators. This threatens our society, our economy, and our security" (Soplamvi 2011). "Ninety-nine percent of infiltrators are labor infiltrators. Infiltrators come here because they know it's good to live in Israel, because we are humane" (Wolf 2010). Beyond these primary discourses, Minister Yishai and other elites disseminated frames concerning alleged criminal and health threats posed by asylum-seekers. Yishai claimed, "They will come now...hundreds of thousands of foreigners with hepatitis, tuberculosis, HIV, and drugs...[A]re Israeli citizens willing to accept 2.5 million Sudanese and Eritreans?" (Meranda 2009). In an interview, he stated:

South Tel Aviv has become the country's garbage can. To all those who criticize me...let your children play in the parks where they [asylum-seekers] are. Yesterday a woman called me. Two Sudanese had chased her in Jerusalem... In Tel Aviv, many women are raped but are afraid to report it since they fear the stigma of AIDS (Yerushalmi 2012).

These discursive frames, however, were not limited to Yishai but were internalized, disseminated, reiterated, and emphasized by politicians and the media. For instance, a centrist Knesset member stated, "I have requested an urgent meeting of the Interior Committee to discuss the many cases of robbery, rape, and violence by illegal African immigrants...I have no doubt that the peak of the violence is still lies ahead" (in Tsurkov 2012, 10). Despite the lack of evidence, news outlets disseminated claims of a crime wave, emphasizing reports of crimes allegedly committed by asylum-seekers and augmenting public concerns regarding personal security (ibid.).

Asylum-Seekers, Local Residents, and the Government's *Hands-off* Approach

In addition to the aforementioned practices, Israeli governments have concurrently adopted a *de facto hands-off* approach toward asylum-seekers, following their release from detention. Departing from initial policies of surveillance and employer custody, released asylum-seekers have increasingly been left to fend for themselves.²⁰ Limited detention capacities and court-mandated constraints led to their release within 30 days by mid-2008. However, despite increasing numbers of asylum-seekers residing in Israeli cities, the state has refused to provide them with health, housing, employment, material, or social support services, or compensate the communities in which they reside. This policy emanates from the perspective that providing any support outside detention would encourage asylum-seekers to remain, thereby engendering additional flows. This policy, however, unleashed a host of unintended consequences.

I argue that the *hands-off* approach constitutes the second mechanism facilitating the emergence of anti-immigrant mobilization. First, the dissonance between the state's proclaimed policies on the one hand and its actions on the other invoked a perception of

²⁰ The limitations imposed between July 23, 2008 and July 30, 2009 constitute an exception, since asylum-seekers were forbidden to reside in the central region, known as Gadera-Hadera, and the city of Eilat.

incapacity or unwillingness to implement its own policies. Second, the *hands-off* approach generated significant negative material and social consequences for communities with large asylum-seeker populations, increasing the former's support for and participation in the anti-asylum campaign.

There is ample evidence of this approach. First, asylum-seekers are regularly released without being granted material means of survival. For instance, military personnel have abandoned asylum-seekers in nearby cities and towns (Greenberg 2007), while others are merely supplied with a bus ticket to Tel Aviv (Yacobi 2010). In practice, the lack of government support condemns asylum-seekers to poverty, rendering them dependent on the localities in which they reside and on relief organizations. Second, the state refuses to compensate national and local agencies that offer services to asylum-seekers. In response, some agencies have denied them the few services for which they are eligible (State Comptroller 2013). Therefore, many asylum-seekers endure harsh living conditions in crowded and unsanitary apartments, deserted structures, and bomb shelters, while others remain homeless (Rubin and Merom 2012). These harsh conditions inevitably take their toll on local residents due to the health and safety hazards they cause and the social disruptions they provoke.

Government policies have also exacerbated asylum-seekers' economic position by (partially) denying them labor market access. Although asylum-seekers have never been granted official work permits, protection visas created an ambiguous situation in the past, enabling employment without fear of sanctions. However, since November 2010, visas have included an employment ban. In response, the High Court of Justice prohibited the enforcement of the ban pending solutions that provide asylum-seekers with the means to meet their material needs (Bernovski 2011). Simultaneously, the state increased the criminalization of asylum-seeker employment by augmenting offending employers' legal penalties (Magnezi 2012) and requiring municipalities to desist from employing asylum-seekers (Tsurkov 2012). Similarly, several municipalities announced that businesses that employed asylum-seekers would lose their licenses (*ibid.*). These measures have intensified employer concerns, jeopardized asylum-seekers' employment and material well-being, and rendered them more vulnerable to labor market exploitation and state arbitrariness.

The absence of government provisions, coupled with labor market exclusion and precarious legal status, have rendered asylum-seekers increasingly dependent on human rights organizations to fulfill their basic needs, and exacerbated tensions with local residents. The latter deem the asylum-seekers responsible for social disruptions and deteriorating material conditions. These tensions have increased due to accusations by coalition members who explicitly attribute the social and material challenges in these neighborhoods to the presence of asylum-seekers and accuse human rights groups of assisting asylum-seekers at the expense of the locals.

As local communities have become hostile toward asylum-seekers and human rights organizations, they have concurrently become increasingly skeptical of the government's capacity to implement its official deportation and incarceration policies, despite the purported existential threats posed by asylum-seekers. In reality, the government is trapped between its official declarations concerning repatriation on the one hand and the legal constraints it faces in so doing on the other. Consequently, local discourse reveals a dynamic in which the government's exclusionary frames are internalized

while its capacities and resolve are questioned. The Hatikva Neighborhood Chairman articulated this position:

The situation is not improving; in fact it is getting worse, much worse. We fear the infiltrators who feel they can do whatever they want, there is no enforcement...it has become hell and the government brought them in. From our perspective, they are infiltrators and the government needs to find an immediate solution (Maor 2013).

A local rabbi similarly stated, “We are here to mourn the state...Shapira neighborhood has been conquered, other neighborhoods are on the verge of being occupied... We are here to stop the next murder, or harassment, or theft” (Lior 2010).

This discourse is also evident at the municipal level. Since local authorities’ budget requests garnered scant government response, mayors criticized the state and questioned its capacities while simultaneously framing asylum-seekers as dangerous threats (Yacobi 2010). Eilat’s mayor depicted asylum-seekers as “a barrel of demographic explosives” that will destroy both Eilat and the state as a whole (Mamos 2010). “The government needs to implement its own decisions. We need to treat infiltrators like anyone who penetrates a country illegally, without apologizing” (Hobal 2012). Responding to asylum-seekers’ requests for food and water from locals, he stated, “Following this grave occurrence, when dozens of infiltrators penetrated Eilat’s neighborhoods, when citizens are exposed to violence...I demand that you protect Eilat residents” (Mamos 2011). Similarly, the Chairman of the Association of Municipalities claimed:

The government is creating a social problem, and it is mayors who have to provide the services...it doesn’t make sense that the government’s lack of policy comes at the expense of local authorities. I will act to make the government pay for its failures (Hobal 2012).

Absence of government support and increasing social unrest led Tel Aviv and five other municipalities to initiate a national campaign promoting imprisonment and deportation (ibid.).

The role the *hands-off* approach has played in instigating xenophobic mobilization is particularly interesting from a historical-comparative perspective. While the state adopted a similar *hands-off* approach toward undocumented foreign workers,²¹ until it initiated mass deportation in 2002–2004, the absence of state provisions and resources did not contribute to the emergence of outright hostility toward undocumented migrants (Sabar 2004, 2008). I suggest that the difference between these two cases emanates from three important differentiating factors. First, while the government did employ exclusionary policies and disseminated exclusionary discourses vis-à-vis foreign workers (Sabar 2004; Rosenhek 2007), these were not characterized by the

²¹ It is important to note that prior to the 2002–2004 deportation campaign, there were over 140,000 undocumented immigrants living in Israel (MITE 2005). Between 50,000 and 80,000 of these irregular migrants lived in Tel Aviv (Kemp and Raijman 2008), including 14,000–20,000 African migrants (Sabar 2010).

intensity and frequency of those employed vis-à-vis asylum-seekers since 2006. Second, the *hands-off* approach that existed prior to 2002 was not coupled with the harsh restrictions on the labor market or the threat of long-term incarceration asylum-seekers face today. This enabled undocumented migrants to achieve partial economic integration through labor market participation that significantly reduced their dependence on local resources and government or organizational support. Finally, the intensification of negative discourse and framing in 2002–4 was accompanied by mass deportations that assuaged public concerns and signaled that the state was in control (Kemp and Rajiman 2008; Sabar 2008).

Local Responses: the Emergence of Anti-Immigrant Mobilization

While asylum flows into Israel commenced in late 2005, mobilization and protest against their presence only emerged in mid-2009. Initially, protests were primarily local, sporadic, and spontaneous events, lacking clear leadership and organizational infrastructure. As Fig. 1 suggests, initial spontaneous mobilization evolved into an organized, regular protest movement in 2010, significantly increasing in scope and magnitude. It is revealing that the emergence and amplification of anti-asylum mobilization correspond temporally with the intensification of exclusionary practices from above. The latter, coupled with the increasing local material and social disruptions that resulted from the *hands-off* approach, generated and legitimized political space for xenophobic mobilization to materialize. As argued above, the confluence of these processes augmented public panic and increased both xenophobic sentiment toward asylum-seekers and public skepticism regarding the government's capabilities to remove them.

In contrast to the sparsely attended, spontaneous protests that characterized early mobilization, demonstrations have been meticulously planned and funded since

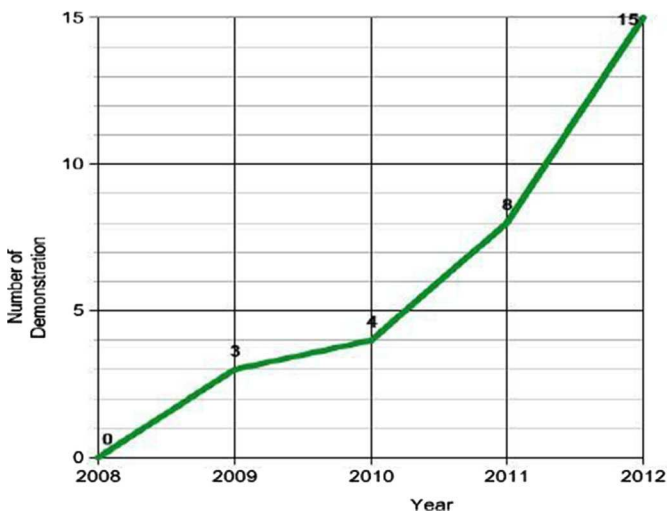


Fig. 1 Demonstrations against asylum-seekers in Israel 2008–2012. *Source:* Data compiled by the author. Data includes protests with more than 20 participants that were reported in at least two news outlets or community websites

December 2010. Between December 2010 and May 2012, anti-asylum-seekers' protests in south Tel Aviv became increasingly frequent, attracting growing local audiences and an array of local and national politicians who sought to capitalize from the agenda's increasing salience. In the first large-scale protest held in Tel Aviv on December 21, 2010, dubbed "Stop Neighborhood Fear—Send the Infiltrators Home", protesters employed this dual critical discourse toward both asylum-seekers and the government. On the one hand, they demanded that asylum-seekers be deported, and employed xenophobic slogans such as *Sudanese to Sudan, infiltrators go home!* and *Save Israel from becoming an Islamic state* (Lior 2010). On the other, they demanded Netanyahu's resignation, bemoaning their abandonment by the state. As mobilization evolved, protestors continued to disseminate these dual demands while evoking increasingly xenophobic discourse portraying asylum-seekers as *dangerous criminals, rapists, and murderers* who threaten locals' material and physical well-being.

The increase in popular opposition to the presence of asylum-seekers, to local mobilization, and to the legitimization of xenophobic discourse from above also generated political opportunities and space for radical right-wing political entrepreneurs who sought to bolster their political legitimacy and popularity by participating in anti-asylum mobilization. Members of *Kach*, a radical-right supremacist movement that has been classified as a terrorist organization both in Israel and abroad, took advantage of this new political space by organizing local community action against asylum-seekers. For instance, Kach's leader created a local security force that patrolled the neighborhoods and employed violence against asylum-seekers (Goren 2011). Likud backbenchers, local councilmen, rabbis, and other ultra-nationalist politicians also realized these potential popularity gains by participating in and co-opting mobilization and organizing rallies and xenophobic provocations. Thus, in contrast to early grassroots mobilization, the movement was co-opted by radical political actors who played a crucial role in reinforcing and expanding mobilization through the routinization, organization, and intensification of protest activities.

Violence against asylum-seekers has also become significantly more pervasive since late 2010. Unlike the rare and sporadic nature of the violence prior to this period, the frequency and intensity of xenophobic attacks has significantly increased since 2011, particularly in 2012 (Vialer-Pollak 2012). These attacks have ranged from random street confrontations and muggings to premeditated assaults with chains and clubs, and extremely vicious attacks such as stabbings, shootings, and arson, leaving many in constant fear (Tsurkov 2012).

Beyond protests and violence, local mobilization has yielded additional exclusionary outcomes. In July 2010, following local pressure, 25 neighborhood rabbis from Tel Aviv issued an edict forbidding Jews to rent apartments to asylum-seekers. In December, city rabbis across the country reiterated the ban. In 2012, neighborhood rabbis in the city of Bnei-Brak created a religious court responsible for punishing those who disregarded the ban. Rabbinical leaders also initiated anti-miscegenation campaigns, warning that interaction between asylum-seekers and locals could lead to marriage, "which is worse than miscegenation with Arabs" (Toker 2012). Many neighborhood associations throughout the country have also initiated non-religious housing bans. Similarly, some communities have declared boycotts against businesses and institutions that employ asylum-seekers.

In 2010, the city of Eilat, pursuant to local residents' demands, banned asylum-seekers from schools. The ban remained in place until its nullification by the High Court of Justice in 2012. While other cities have not followed suit, many have erected bureaucratic barriers instead, thereby supporting the demands of local parents who favor segregation. Similarly, in mid-2012, a Tel Aviv councilman demanded that asylum-seekers be banned from local buses, citing hygiene and health concerns (Tsurkov 2012). In addition to the examples above, local groups have promoted a host of exclusionary initiatives and xenophobic campaigns against asylum-seekers, including expulsion from towns, vandalization of religious institutions, and exclusion from public spaces.

Conclusions

This article explores the emergence of anti-asylum-seeker mobilization in Israel. The evidence presented above suggests that the discourses and policies initiated by mainstream political actors played a crucial role in generating and legitimizing xenophobic mobilization. The collapse of the *permanent temporary asylum regime* due to mass asylum flows, coupled with legal constraints on incarceration and repatriation and fear of asylum liberalization, induced the state to employ a series of exclusionary responses in order to foster a negative public stance toward asylum. These increasingly exclusionary discourses and practices, alongside the material consequences they produced, generated panic across the country and in host localities in particular, creating political space for radical actors who further exacerbated anxieties and bolstered mobilization.

The analysis traces the discursive, legal, and policy mechanisms employed by policy makers to frame asylum-seekers as imminent threats to the state's survival. By constructing the latter as economic, demographic, and security (and later criminal and public health) threats, leaders successfully directed public opinion against them, mustered support for their exclusion, and marginalized demands for liberalizing the asylum regime. These exclusionary practices, however, were also coupled with the government's *hands-off* approach, which precluded asylum-seekers from receiving state services while increasingly limiting their access to the labor market in an attempt to facilitate voluntary repatriation and deter future flows. These policies, however, rendered asylum-seekers increasingly dependent on civil-society organizations, and imposed substantial material and social costs on local communities.

It is unlikely that policy makers anticipated the xenophobic and violent responses that government policies would eventually trigger. They certainly did not expect the protest to problematize the state's own capabilities and resolve. While the government sought to recruit public support for exclusion, incarceration, and possible repatriation, they might have overshot their initial goals. Instead of generating only compliance and support, government practices ultimately augmented public panic by depicting asylum-seekers as dangerous and existential threats, and created significant social and material challenges for host communities. Thus, discursive intensification, together with the *hands-off* approach and legal constraints on incarceration and repatriation, induced the perception that the state had lost control and lacked the capability or willingness to implement its own exclusionary policies. This sparked both xenophobic and anti-government backlash.

On a theoretical level, the analysis suggests that existing explanations require additional specification. The evidence above offers support for the roles of social construction, political opportunity structures, and native-migrant material conflict. Social conflict, however, did not arise from unmediated competition between locals and asylum-seekers, but was conditioned and facilitated by ideational and material factors yielded by official governmental discourses and policies. Following Rosenhek (2007), I posit that the Israeli case exhibits a tipping point in the relation between exclusionary discourse from above and xenophobic mobilization. While moderate mainstream exclusionary discourse can signal state willingness and capacity to cope with migratory challenges, thereby rendering mobilization superfluous, in the absence of tangible policies, its intensification can both exacerbate public concerns and cast doubt on government capabilities.

However, in contrast to Rosenhek, the present findings suggest that intensified discursive practices alone might be insufficient to produce xenophobic mobilization. Instead, it appears that it was their confluence with the material consequences of the *hands-off* approach that ultimately occasioned these outcomes, enhanced local grievances toward both asylum-seekers and the state, and created political space for xenophobic mobilization led by radical entrepreneurs who sought to increase their legitimacy and popularity by fueling these tensions. The analysis, therefore, suggests a mutually reinforcing dynamic according to which exclusionary practices from above activate local actors and entrepreneurs who then aggravate grievances and exert upward pressure to implement even harsher policies. Thus, the evidence from the Israeli case contradicts Kitschelt's hypothesis (1995), since exclusionary practices employed by mainstream political actors do not necessarily constrain xenophobic backlash but can, under certain conditions, facilitate it instead.

This article has sought to contribute to the emerging body of research concerning African asylum-seekers in Israel (Afeef 2009; Paz 2011; Sabar 2010; Yacobi 2010; Yaron et al. 2013). While these contributions have enhanced our understanding of this new and fascinating phenomenon, there are several additional aspects that necessitate further investigation. First, issues concerning the role played by race and gender in producing both elite and societal responses to asylum-seekers require additional scholarly attention. The evidence presented above suggests that race and gender are epiphenomenal and did not play an independent role in instigating and shaping exclusionary and xenophobic responses. However, it appears that once asylum-seekers were constituted as threats, discourse concerning color and gender became more prevalent and significant factors in shaping public hostility and practices toward them.

Second, the evidence suggests that the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has played an important role in shaping elite and popular understandings and responses regarding asylum-seekers. Discourses and practices that are related to the conflict have been utilized in order to increase popular concerns and frame asylum-seekers as existential threats. The relationship between these two seemingly distinct processes should prompt scholars to further explore domestic determinants of xenophobia both in Israel and elsewhere, and the possible interaction between pre-existing patterns of intergroup conflict on the one hand and attitudes and policies toward immigrants and asylum-seekers on the other.

Acknowledgments I would like to thank Gad Barzilai, Paul Burstein, Javier Crespan, Hadar Duman, Marion Duman Eilam, Joshua Eastin, Stephan Hamberg, Trevor Johnston, Joel Migdal, Julie Mostov and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on earlier drafts.

References

- Adato, E. & Tezna, S. (2012). Green light for deportation. *Israel Hayom* 25/12/12 http://www.israelhayom.co.il/site/newsletter_article.php?id=17449&newsletter=24.05.2012 [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Adut, R. (2007). Trafficked women and political asylum-seekers. In S. Willen (Ed.), *Transnational migration to Israel in global comparative context* (pp. 139–157). Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Afeef, K. (2009). *A promised land for refugees? Asylum and migration in Israel*. Geneva: UNHCR.
- Azzam, F. (2006). *A tragedy of failures and false expectations*. Cairo: American University of Cairo.
- Banton, M. (1996). The cultural determinants of xenophobia. *Anthropology Today*, 12(2), 8–12.
- Bareket, A. (2007). Darfour refugees in Yad Vashem: reminds us of our experiences. *Haaretz* 12/3/2007 <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1393974> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Bar-Zuri, R. (1996). Foreign workers in Israel: conditions, attitudes, and policy implications. In R. Nathanson (ed.) *The New World of Work in an Era of Economic Change*. Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Tel Aviv [Hebrew].
- Ben Dor, A. (2009). *Refugees and asylum-seekers—unwanted guests in the State of Israel*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University School of Law.
- Ben-Dor, A. & Adut, R. (2003). *Israel—a safe haven?* Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University School of Law.
- Berman, Y. (2012). *Until our heart is sealed: Asylum procedures in Israel*. The Foreign Workers' Support Center.
- Bernovski, Y. (2011). HCJ decided: Infiltrators employers will not be fined. *Yedioth Ahronoth*, 19/1/11. <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4016095,00.html> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Bershkovski, A. (2007a). IDF reserve soldiers act on behalf of refugees. *Ynet News* 19/6/07 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3414994,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Bershkovski, A. (2007b). Dichter: IDF responsible for keeping infiltrators out. *Ynet News* 17/7/2007. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3426734,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Betz, H. G. (1994). *Radical right-wing populism in Western Europe*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Bigo, D. (2002). Security and immigration: toward a critique of the governmentality of unease. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 27(1), 63–92.
- Brenner N. (2012). Clashes erupt during south Tel Aviv protest; migrants attacked. *Ynet News* 24/5/2012. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4233509,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Canetti-Nisim, D., Ariely, G., & Halperin, E. (2008). Life, pocketbook, or culture: the role of perceived security threats in promoting exclusionist political attitudes toward minorities in Israel. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(1), 90–103.
- Carter, E. (2005). *The extreme right in Western Europe: success or failure?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Castles, S. (2003). The international politics of forced migration. *Development*, 46(3), 11–20.
- Curiel, I. (2011). 'PM says IDF to build fence along Jordan border', *Ynet News*, 15/3/11. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4042799,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Dancygier, R. (2010). *Immigration and conflict in Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dayan, A. (2006). We must treat everyone as if they are terrorists. *Haaretz* 9/10/2006. <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1143811> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- De Figueiredo, R., & Elkins, Z. (2003). Are patriots bigots? An inquiry into the vices of in-group pride. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(1), 171–188.
- Eglish, R. & Izenberg, D. (2007). Sheetrit: We need a fence to keep Africans out. *The Jerusalem Post* 1/8/2007.
- Fenster, T., & Vizel, I. (2007). Globalization, sense of belonging and the African community in Tel Aviv–Jaffa. *Hagar: Studies in Culture, Polity & Identities*, 7, 7–24.
- George, A. & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Glickman, A. (2013). 1.8 % increase in violence toward Arabs, Less than a Quarter have been solved. *Nana 10* 3/3/13. <http://news.nana10.co.il/Article/?ArticleID=962122> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Goren, Y. (2011). Complaint: Marzel inciting xenophobic violence. *Maariv* 31/3/2011 <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/227/972.html> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.

- Government of Israel (2008). Proposal for the Law for the Prevention of Infiltration 381. Resource Document [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Greenberg, M. (2007). Refugees released by IDF in Beer-Sheva, *Haaretz* 12/6/2007.
- Hanson, G. H., Scheve, K., & Slaughter, M. J. (2007). Public finance and individual preferences over globalization strategies. *Economics and Politics*, 19(1), 1–33.
- Hathaway, J. C. (2005). *The rights of refugees under international law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herzog, B. (2009). Between nationalism and humanitarianism: the global discourse on refugees. *Nations and Nationalism*, 15(2), 185–205.
- Hobal, R. (2012). Huldai leads campaign against infiltrators. *Haaretz* 24/5/12. <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.1715256> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Hopkins, D. J. (2010). Politicized places: explaining where and when immigrants provoke local opposition. *The American Political Science Review*, 104(1), 40–60.
- Ignazi, P. (2003). *Extreme right parties in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ilan, S. (2007a). Israel considering deportation of Sudanese refugees to Kenya. *Haaretz* 26/6/2007. <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/875197.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Ilan, S. (2007b). Court demands the release of refugees from Kziot. *Haaretz* 15/8/2007. <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1434278> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Ilan, S. & Isascharoff, A. (2007). ‘Ramon: Renegotiate peace agreement with Egypt.’ *Haaretz* 12/7/2007.
- Israeli Association for Civil Rights—ACRI (2012). *The State of Human Rights in Israel 2012*. <http://www.acri.org.il/en/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ACRI-Situation-Report-2012-ENG.pdf>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Jackman, R., & Volpert, K. (1996). Conditions favouring parties of the extreme right in Western Europe. *British Journal of Political Science*, 26(4), 501–522.
- Kaminski, B. (2007). Israel plans to deport Sudanese and African Refugees to Egypt. *Epoch Times* 3/7/07. <http://www.epochtimes.com.il/news/content/view/6159/85/> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Karapin, R. (2000). Major anti-minority riots and national legislative campaigns against immigrants in Britain and Germany. In R. Koopmans & P. Statham (Eds.), *Challenging immigration and ethnic relations politics* (pp. 312–347). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kritzman-Amir, T. & Kemp, A. (2008). Refugees and asylum-seekers in Israel: between the administrative procedure and the civil society. *Mishpat Hevra Ve'tarbut*, 2008, 55–90. [Hebrew].
- Kemp, A. (2010). *Reforming policies on foreign workers in Israel*, OECD social, employment, and migration working papers, no. 103 <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/workingpaper/5kmjnr8pbp6f-en>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Kemp, A. & Raijman, R. (2008). “Workers” and “Foreigners”: the political economy of labor migration in Israel. Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute & Hakibbutz Hameuchad Jerusalem [Hebrew].
- Kitschelt, H. (1995). *The radical right in Western Europe: a comparative analysis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Knesset of Israel (2006a). Plenary Debate 24 May 2006. Resource document. Jerusalem: The Knesset. http://knesset.gov.il/tql/knesset_new/knesset17/HTML_28_03_2012_04-57-19-PM/20060524@02977706@015.html. Accessed 1 February 2014. [Hebrew].
- Knesset of Israel (2006b). The committee for the foreign workers problem, 25 December 2006, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/protocols/data/html/zarim/2006-12-25.html>. Resource document. Jerusalem: The Knesset. Accessed 1 February 2014. [Hebrew].
- Knesset of Israel (2007). Plenary debate. 17 October 2007. Resource document. Jerusalem: The Knesset. http://knesset.gov.il/tql/knesset_new/knesset17/HTML_28_03_2012_04-57-19-PM/20071017@05712807@002.html. Accessed 1 February 2014. [Hebrew].
- Knesset of Israel (2012). The Law for the prevention of Infiltration (Third Amendment, Temporary Provision). Jerusalem: The Knesset.
- Knigge, P. (1998). The ecological correlates of right-wing extremism in Western Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, 34(2), 249–279.
- Koopmans, R. (1996). Explaining the rise of racist and extreme right violence in Western Europe: grievances or opportunities? *European Journal of Political Research*, 30(2), 185–216.
- Koopmans, R. & Statham, P. (1999). Ethnic and civic conceptions of nationhood and the differential success of the extreme right in Germany and Italy. In M. Giugni, D. McAdam, & C. Tilly (Eds.), *How social movements matter* (pp. 66–96). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kritzman-Amir, T. (2009). Otherness as the underlying principle of Israel's asylum regime. *Israel Law Review*, 42(3), 623–647.
- Kubovich, Y. (2012). Molotov cocktails thrown at homes of African refugees in south Tel Aviv. *Haaretz*. 27/4/12. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/molotov-cocktails-thrown-at-homes-of-african-refugees-in-south-tel-aviv-1.426877>. Accessed 1 February 2014.

- Lior, I. (2010). Hundreds protest against presence of refugees in south Tel Aviv. *Haaretz* 22/12/2010. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/hundreds-protest-against-presence-of-foreigners-refugees-in-south-tel-aviv-1.331908>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Lior, I. (2012). 'Demonstrators attack African migrants in south Tel Aviv.' *Haaretz*, 24/5/12.
- Lubbers, M., Gijsberts, M., & Scheepers, P. (2002). Extreme right-wing voting in Western Europe. *European Journal of Political Research*, 41(3), 345–378.
- Magnezi, A. (2012). Employers of infiltrators to face tougher punishment. *Ynet News*, 10/6/12. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4240588,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Mamos, A. (2010). The refugees want to stay in Eilat. *Ynet News* 11/7/2010. <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3918106,00.html> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Mamos, A. (2011). 96 African infiltrators nabbed in Eilat. *Ynet News* 18/5/11. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4070511,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Maor, E. (2013). South Tel Aviv Residents to Weinstein: Thanks for coming. *Megafon* 5/8/13. <http://megafon-news.co.il/asys/archives/169065> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Meranda, A. (2009). Interior Minister Yishai: Hundreds of thousands of foreigners will bring AIDS and drugs. *Ynet News*, 31/10/09. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3798143,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Ministry of Industry, Trade and Employment—MITE (2005). Undocumented foreign workers in Israel. Jerusalem: State of Israel [Hebrew].
- Ministry of the Interior (2011). The immigration and population agency continues to encourage infiltrators who illegally penetrated the country to return to their countries voluntarily. Resource document. <http://www.piba.gov.il/SpokesmanshipMessages/Pages/2011-8877.aspx> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Morris, B. (1993). *Israel's border wars 1949–1956: Arab infiltration, Israeli retaliation, and the countdown to the Suez War*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Natan, G. (2009). *The Processing of infiltrators from the Egyptian border*. Jerusalem: Knesset Research Unit [Hebrew].
- Neocosmos, M. (2008). *From 'foreign natives' to 'native foreigners' explaining xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa*. Oxford: CODESRIA.
- Nesher, T. (2012). Netanyahu: Israel could be overrun by African infiltrators. *Haaretz* 5/21/12. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/netanyahu-israel-could-be-overrun-by-african-infiltrators-1.431589>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Nieftagodien, N. (2008). Xenophobia in Alexandra. In S. Hassim, T. Kupe, & E. Worby (Eds.), *Go home or die here: violence, xenophobia and the reinvention of differences in South Africa* (pp. 65–78). Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press.
- Norris, P. (2005). *Radical right: voters and parties in the electoral market*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Paz, Y. (2011). *Ordered disorder: African asylum seekers in Israel and discursive challenges to an emerging refugee regime*. UNHCR, Policy Development and Evaluation Service.
- Rosenhek, Z. (2007). Challenging exclusionary migration regimes: labor migration in Israel in comparative perspective. In S. Willen (Ed.), *Transnational migration to Israel in global comparative context* (pp. 217–232). New York: Lexington Books.
- Rubin, O., & Merom, O. (2012). *Asylum-seekers and refugees in Israel: homelessness and housing shortages*. Tel Aviv: Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Support Organization.
- Sabar, G. (2004). 'I'm a black Christian illegal migrant worker in Jewish Israel': African Christianity in Tel Aviv. In K. Aviad (Ed.), *Religiosity in the Israeli context* (pp. 30–78). Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press [Hebrew].
- Sabar, G. (2007). The rise and fall of African migrant churches: transformations in African religious discourse and practice in Tel Aviv. In W. Sarah (Ed.), *Transnational migration to Israel in global comparative context* (pp. 185–202). New York: Lexington Books.
- Sabar, G. (2008). *"We're not here to stay": African migrant workers in Israel and back in Africa*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press [Hebrew].
- Sabar, G. (2010). Israel and the 'Holy Land': the religio-political discourse of rights among African migrant labourers and African asylum seekers, 1990–2008. *African Diaspora*, 3(1), 42–75.
- Sarig, M. (2008). *Eluding and obscuring: the formation of the legal category of enemy-refugee in Israel*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University.
- Schnell, I. (1999). *Labor Migrants in Southern Tel Aviv–Jaffa*. Jerusalem: Floresheimer Institute for Policy Studies [Hebrew].
- Shafir, G. (1996). *Land, labor, and the origins of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, 1882–1914* (updated ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Shafir, G., & Peled, Y. (2002). *Being Israeli: the dynamics of multiple citizenship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sides, J., & Citrin, J. (2007). European opinion about immigration: the role of identities, interests and information. *British Journal of Political Science*, 37(3), 477–504.
- Sinai, R. (2006a). HCF forbids holding Sudanese refugees in administrative detention. *Haaretz* 9/5/06. <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1103971> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Sinai, R. (2006b). No warrants, no rights: this is how refugees are held in Israel. *Haaretz* 15/6/2006. <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1112585> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Sinai, R. (2006c). Recommendation to release Sudanese refugees that entered Israel. *Haaretz* 9/8/06.
- Sinai, R. (2008). Ehud deport infiltrators, Aliza helps them. *Haaretz* 23/2/08 <http://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1308070> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Sofer, R. (2008). Olmert: We must curb infiltrations from Egypt. *Ynet News*, 23/3/08. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3522476,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Soplamvi, A. (2011). Government to mull infiltrator detention facility. *Ynet News* 7/12/11. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4158634,00.html>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- State Comptroller of Israel (2007). *Annual Report 56b*. Jerusalem: State of Israel [Hebrew].
- State Comptroller of Israel (2013). *Annual Report 56c*. Jerusalem: State of Israel [Hebrew].
- Toker, A. (2012). South Tel Aviv, A wave of marriages between Jewish women and Eritreans. *Arutz 7*, 12/9/2012, <http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx/244107> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Tsurkov, E. (2012). ‘Cancer in our body’: on racial incitement, discrimination and hate crimes against African asylum seekers in Israel January–June 2012. Hotline for Migrant Workers. [Hebrew] <http://hotline.org.il/wpcontent/uploads/IncitementAndHateCrimesReport.pdf>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- United Nations (2011). *Israeli settler violence in the West Bank—Fact sheet*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Resource document. http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_settler_violence_FactSheet_October_2011_english.pdf. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Van der Brug, W., Fennema, M., & Tillie, J. (2005). Why some anti-immigrant parties fail and others succeed. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(5), 537–573.
- Vialer-Pollak, D. (2010). MK Katz hid a report that falsifies Netanyahu’s claims of a flood of refugees. *Haaretz*, 19/2/2010. <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.1189846> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Vialer-Pollak, D. (2012). Yihia is not alone: 46 cases of violence against foreigners this year. *Walla* 5/11/12. <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=90/2582788> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Willen, S. (2010). Darfur through a shoah lens: Sudanese asylum seekers, unruly biopolitical dramas, and the politics of humanitarian compassion in Israel. In B. Good, M. M. J. Fischer, S. S. Willen, & M.-J. D. Good (Eds.), *A reader in medical anthropology: theoretical trajectories, 54 emergent realities* (pp. 505–521). Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wimmer, A. (1997). Explaining xenophobia and racism: a critical review of current research approaches. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20(1), 17–41.
- Wimmer, A. (2013). *Ethnic boundary making: institutions, power, networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wolf, I. (2008). Barak opposed to changing firearms regulations. *First Class News*, 24/2/08. <http://www.news1.co.il/Archive/001-D-155113-00.html> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Wolf, P. (2010). PM in the south: 99 % of infiltrators are labor infiltrators. *Walla* 28/11/10. <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=9/1760874> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Wurgfat, N. (2011). We Have Slandered. *Haaretz* 7/10/11 <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/we-have-slandered-1.388697>. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Yacobi, H. (2010). Let me go to the city: African asylum-seekers, racialization and the politics of space in Israel. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 24(1), 47–68.
- Yagna, Y. (2012). Yishai: A state that does not want infiltrators will not let them work. *Haaretz*, 22/5/12. <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.1713736> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Yaron, H., Hashimshony-Yaffe, N., & Campbell, J. (2013). Infiltrators or refugees? An analysis of Israel’s policy toward African asylum-seekers. *International Migration*, 51(4), 144–157.
- Yerushalmi, S. (2012). Special interview with Eli Yishai: It’s Us or Them. *Maariv*, 1/6/12. <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/373/346.html> [Hebrew]. Accessed 1 February 2014.
- Yiftachel, O. (2006). *Ethnocracy: land and identity politics in Israel/Palestine*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Zolberg, A. R., & Woon, L. (1999). Why Islam is like Spanish: cultural incorporation in Europe and the United States. *Politics and Society*, 27(1), 5–38.