ISTRAŽIVANJE MIGRACIJA

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WILLIAM BERTHOMIÈRE

CNRS, MIGRINTER – MSHS, Poitiers william.berthomiere@univ-poitiers.fr

The Emergence of a Cosmopolitan Tel Aviv: New Dynamics of Migrations in Israel

SUMMARY

During the 90's, Israel and the Palestinians were unable to reach a Peace agreement and this unsuccessful period led to the production of a new Israeli ethnoscape. With increased Israeli border closures (within the pre-1967 limits) to Palestinian workers, the Israeli government had to authorize the entrance of foreign workers from Eastern Europe (Romania, Poland) but also from Asia (Thailand, the Philippines). These new "faces" of Israel aroused fears concerning their "settlement" and gradually caused a debate, which underlined the social cleavages of Israel. This debate took on more importance as immigrants from West Africa and South America (pushed to Israel by the globalisation) were added to this – first – group of non-Jewish immigrants. These regular and irregular immigrations raised the question about the Jewish identity of the State and at the same time have drawn the limits of an Israeli cosmopolitanism. Using the example of Israel, the aim of this paper is to contribute to knowledge about the forms of emergence of "new cosmopolitanisms" and to critique a concept elaborated to describe the tension existing between national discourse and globalisation.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Israel, migration, nationalism, identity, cosmopolitanism

During the past decade Israel has come into line with a new temporality called the *time of the world*. This recent period takes root in the stalemate of the peace process started in Oslo (1993) and its migratory repercussions. The observer of mobilities in Israel is now induced to forget the usual pattern so far provided by the analytical framework defined by the system of Jewish migrations. In parallel with the factors intrinsic to the sphere of relations between Israel and the diaspora, extrinsic factors are now operative. The young State of Israel – which seemed to be established within an "extrainternationalism" in a relational system, turned towards the sole Jewish community and articulated around the territorial centralism it formed, and a periphery synonymous with diaspora – is today caught up in the world system.

Today, Israel receives thousands of non-Jewish legal and illegal immigrants, originating from all over world (mainly Romanians, Thais, Filipinos but also Colombians or even Nigerians and Ghanaians). This new migratory aspect of Israel is experiencing is a double process, perfectly synchronic: first, it is the result of Israel closing the borders to Palestinian workers and the consequent lack of labour in the farming and buil-

ding sectors; this aspect also stems from the migratory reconfigurations that occurred in the last ten years in Europe with the construction of the "Schengen fortress". In this process of reconstruction of European immigration space, and the accompanying shift to the Mediterranean as the centre of gravity of north-south mobilities, Israel has appeared as an immigration space with a high potential, in line with Barcelona, Naples and Istanbul.

Characterised by the image of a "metropolitan Nation-State" Tel Aviv has been at the very heart of these reconfigurations of Israel's social landscape. Whether it is considered, on a daily basis, with the multiplication in urban spaces of signs that these new city-dwellers are part of the social space, or from an institutional point of view with the emergence of associations for the defence or promotion of non-Jewish immigrants (as *Kav La'oved* or *Mesila*), Tel Aviv has acquired a genuine cosmopolitan dimension. Far from promoting the idea of communitarianism these new immigrations turn Tel Aviv into a world-city where identities and memberships are negotiated in an Israeli society torn between particularism and distinctive identities.

The Israeli case shows the necessity of contributing to the knowledge of the forms of emergence of these "new cosmopolitanisms" and to question a notion that tries to describe the tension between national and global views (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002). From a conceptual point of view this analysis shares for a large part Ulrich Beck's thoughts in his article entitled *The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies* (2002).

A "current" cosmopolitanism induced by the failures of the peace process

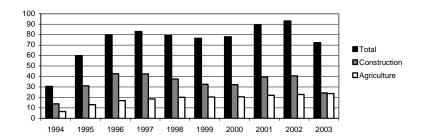
The perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict effectively forced the economies of both belligerents into a relation of dependence just after the 1967 war (Rosenhek, 2003). The impossibility for Palestinians to develop their economy, owing to the occupation of their lands, and Israel's need for labour, facing the housing demand to accommodate the new Jewish immigrants, have given birth to a local economy that rapidly spread beyond the construction sector. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's the Palestinian employment curve was modelled on Israel's economic growth curve. This social and occupational organization, whereby Israel's Jewish population was allotted skilled jobs, leaving depreciated or "3D" jobs – dangerous, difficult and dirty – to Palestinians has continued since, in economic terms, wage costs borne by companies were relatively low and in social terms there was apparently "no obstacle to underpay Palestinians" since these populations as residents of the West Bank and Gaza did not have to bear the cost of living in Israel (Borowski and Yanay, 1997).

At the end of 1987, the Palestinian uprising known as the first *Intifada*, completely disturbed this economic "balance". The start of a cycle of violence in which Palestinian revolts and Israeli repression followed one another had the effect of progressively making Palestinian access to the workplaces in Israel more and more difficult. This temporary, and later extended, inaccessibility led Israeli entrepreneurs to find their workforce elsewhere. Demands for the recruitment of foreign workers were sent to Israeli authorities which, despite their reluctance, had no choice but to accept. The signature of the start of the s

ning of the Declaration of Principles in Oslo (1993), which could have led to a revival of the recruitment of Palestinian workers – as the "architects" of peace would suggest – could not bring about this recovery. The deadlock made up by the non-implementation of the agreements signed only broke the ties that could have still existed between both economies and increased the importation of foreign labour. This recourse to foreign workers was all the more necessary as the demand in housing was strong since Israel, after the collapse of the Soviet block, had to absorb the migratory wave of Jews from the former USSR.

With the multiplication of terror attacks after the Agreement signed in Oslo, the number of Palestinian workers kept decreasing; benefiting foreign labour. Between 1989 and 1996 the number of work permits given to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza decreased from 105 000 (6.7% of employees in Israel) to 19 000 (0.9%) while work permits delivered to non-Palestinian workers increased from 3 400 (0.2%) to 103 000 (5%) (Bartram, 1998). The building and farming sectors which were hit the most by the closing of the Occupied Territories show the highest concentrations of foreign labour (see Figure 1). To these two principal recruitment sectors the Domestic labour sector can be added. This sector is characterised by migration of Asian women coming mainly from the Philippines – as in Lebanon (Jureidini, 2002) and most neighbouring countries. Recruitment areas of foreign workers (legal) are mainly located in Eastern Europe with Romania (16 600 workers in 2000) and Asia with Thailand (8 000) and the Philippines (7 600). As in numerous other countries these *pull* factors have induced a new influx of immigrants (Berthomière, 2003).

Figure 1: Foreign workers per sector of activities, 1994–2003 (monthly average in thousands)



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005.

For Israel, the 1990's were defined by the establishment of a new migratory regime and the emergence of a veritable replacement migration. This situation recalls other older but also more recent and geographically closer situations, as in the Gulf States, and highlights the gradual emergence of a "current" cosmopolitanism stemming from the social-political reconfiguration experienced in the Israeli-Palestinian scene

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¹ Made up of over 80% of women (in 2000), this migratory channel is the oldest. It started during the 1980's.

throughout the decade. This process is all the more apparent in analysis as it is coupled with the integration of Israel within trans-national migratory networks. Long left aside from the north-south migratory logics, Israel now appears, for part of the migrants from developing countries, as an immigration space with a strong economic potential.

As a counter-effect of the policy of "fortification" of the European Community, notedly established by the Schengen Agreements, Israel has now given the title of an immigration country: as have its Greek, Italian or Turkish neighbours. Though a few years ago this country could not imagine – due to the conflict – that it could one day attract populations beyond its own diaspora, it now attracts workers, employed legally or illegally, from Colombia Nigeria, Ghana, Moldova, Ukraine, Thailand, the Philippines and more recently China. According to the estimates provided by the government for 2002, almost two thirds of the 240 000 foreign workers could be working illegally in the country.

Mainly metropolitan, the landscape of the great Israeli cities gradually became tinged with this emerging diversity of the country's population. In Jerusalem these "new faces" of Israel were perceptible in the central market area - the Mahane yehuda. On the day of the shabbat foreign workers go there to do their shopping and gather around a table to enjoy a rest and discover their new workplace country. In Tel Aviv, where a large a large part of migrants are concentrated (most notably illegal migrants) the area around the railway station displays this new social reality. Made up of industrial wastelands and decrepit houses this area (Neve Sha'anan) has become the urban centrality of this new population. Providing both accommodation and a job for part of the migrants - owing to the presence of numerous small businesses (wholesalers, second hand product dealers, etc.) and a market area – shops dedicated to this new population have integrated within the area's economic fabric. (Disco-) bars with names recalling the origin of the workers, such as the *Transilvania* or the *Bucovina*, have been opened. The central street of the pedestrian area is the place where an illegal market started in which clothes or second hand electrical appliances are sold, while the economic recovery of the shops along this street was mainly due to the telecommunication market. These telephone shops bear witness to the presence of these new residents with windows displaying numerous telephone cards or discounts for calls to Africa or Central Europe.

Indeed, from a "current cosmopolitanism" incidental to a labour replacement policy, Israel is faced with a situation of "cosmopolitanization". Whether from signs reading "Kingdom of Pork" or from noticing that South-Americans were immediately followed by Chinese populations, these activities lead Israeli people to confront, on a daily basis, the local and global aspects characterizing our contemporary societies. For the Israeli government the presence of foreign workers can only be imagined in a temporary dimension. The idea of a long-lasting settlement cannot be envisaged even if foreign workers are an accepted component (which does not mean a recognized component) in Tel Aviv. The experience of this cosmopolitan situation today finds an institutional answer:

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² At a different level, the rural areas where also concerned by the foreign workers presence but it didn't reached the same impact. This group of migrants was less visible as they were accommodated inside the farms.

the setting up of an "immigration administration" considered as an *expulsion Unit*. Since its inception in September 2002, one third of foreign workers may have left the country (about 80 000 people). But the question resulting from this cosmopolitan situation goes beyond the simple question of a fight against the "settlement" of migrant workers. Rather, it suggests that the "identity equation" is at the heart of a debate in Israel.

A process of "cosmopolitanization" of Israel: the issues

The "cosmopolitanization" Israel is facing is, as Ulrich Beck (2002) suggests, a globalisation process *from within* the society. This cosmopolitan situation reveals the reconstructions of the Israeli identity, which occur through a reconsideration of national narrations and a reformulation of the modes of identification to the national project. Two social processes govern the understanding of this reformulation: the growing individualism of the Israeli society and the transformation of the relation with migrants.

The emerging question of Israeli cosmopolitanism within the academic community is clearly one of the consequences of the loss of meaning of collective feeling, as it was developed in the national narrations when the State of Israel was created. In a way the Zionist project was a victim of its own success in economic terms and cannot, as many other societies in the world, escape modes of production and consumption which favour - or even enhance - individualism. This society is much more based today on liberal foundations promoted by economic globalisation than on structures inherited from the collectivist model of the kibbutz. Inevitably jeopardizing this economic transition through the failure of the peace process, the 1990's induced the entry of a foreign labour which very soon became a source of wealth. Foreign workers provide a cheap labour force whose limited social status enables, in many cases, their exploitation. In large part, the fight of the government against foreigners working illegally in Israeli territory is a consequence of a failure to observe the rights of workers. Being viewed as a labour source to fulfil menial chores by many bosses, has led workers to leave their employers because of unacceptable working conditions. Recruited for jobs that are subjected to legislation similar to that of the Gulf countries (with the kafala), foreign workers are bound to a single employer (except for home helpers). Any decision to leave this employer has the immediate effect of making the foreign employee an illegal worker. According to official sources, almost half of the illegal workers came into Israel with legal working contracts. In this way, Israeli nationalism against the "growing" presence of foreigners is really only a reaction against an endogenous social production.

The identity equation is even more intrinsic. It reveals the process of "cosmopolitanization". Acting as a mirror, the debate stemming from this new otherness allows for a better understanding of the anchoring points of today's identity negotiation. With the emergence of these new faces the Zionist project is now reconsidered. Largely raised via other ways – notably through the works of the New Historians – the question of the Jewish identity of the State is at the heart of the debate on immigration in Israel. The debate is all the more intense as the "play of words" has considerably changed since the word *aliya* (Jewish immigration) was complemented by the word *hagira* (non-Jewish immigration).

Figure 2: Immigration in Israel by period, continent of origin and distribution by main geographical areas (%)

Period of immigration	Last continent of residence					Distribution by main geographical areas (%)	
	America and Oceania	Europe	Africa	Asia (2)	Total	Europe- America	Africa- Asia
15 V 1948 – 1951	5,140	326,786	93,951	237,352	687,624	50	50
1952-1954	2,971	9,748	27,897	13,238	54,676	24	76
1955-1957	3,632	48,616	103,846	8,801	166,492	32	68
1958-1960	3,625	44,595	13,921	13,247	75,970	64	36
1961-1964	14,841	77,537	115,876	19,525	228,793	41	59
1965-1968	9,274	31,638	25,394	15,018	82,244	50	50
1969-1971	33,891	50,558	12,065	19,700	116,791	73	27
1972-1974	26,775	102,763	6,821	6,345	142,753	91	9
1975-1979	29,293	77,167	6,029	11,793	124,827	86	14
1980-1984	25,230	35,508	15,711	6,912	83,637	73	27
1985-1989	19,301	36,461	7,700	6,563	70,196	80	20
1990-1994	17,220	553,622	32,157	5,900	609,322	94	6
1995-2002	35,778	371,483	21,282	55,605	484,336	84	16
2003-2004 (1)	6,083	18,233	5,509	4,255	34,083	71	29
15 V 1948–2004	233,021	1,784,836	488,172	424,160	2,961,744	68	32

⁽¹⁾ for 2004, data for the period 01/01 to 31/07

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005.

In Israel a member of the diaspora who decides to settle in the country is not carrying out an immigration but an aliya: a term with religious origins describing the ascent towards Zion and describing everyday the "return" of Jewish people from the diaspora. This notion of biblical origin took its full political dimension during the XXth century with the resurgence of the Jewish national question with a fresh impetus notedly given by Th. Herzl's diplomatic activity, which affirmed political Zionism. The term aliya echoed in the diaspora establishments throughout the world and thus described the choice of over two and a half million Jewish people (see Figure 2). In Israelis' everyday life the aliya has thus been very much present and, indeed, has been in legislation because Israel issued the Law of Return as early as 1950, therefore authorizing any Jewish person to come into Israel. This law was coupled with a Law on Nationality (promulgated in 1952) allowing any Jewish immigrant to be granted Israeli citizenship. Along decades the *aliya* curve kept decreasing and a new term was created: yerida. An antonym of aliya meaning descent and describing Israel's Jewish emigration. The yored, the one who "descends" is by definition badly considered since he "questions" the national project even if a total freedom of movement predominates in Israel. This term has however been integrated in the debate owing to the fact that in the mid-1980's Israel experienced a negative migratory balance twice.

⁽²⁾ including the former Asian republics of the USSR since 1996

With this development of lexicon describing migrations, the "play of words" lies in the connection between the terms aliya and hagira. Russian and Ethiopian immigrations, by their nature, have created a continuum between the two terms, which had no connections since hagira only concerned a limited number of people. In both groups (most notably that of the former USSR) more than a third of the population has chosen a spouse not belonging to the Jewish community, and thus have integrated the question of non-Jewish immigration within Israeli society in an endogenous way (Berthomière, 2002). Progressively, faced with the importance of these migratory waves, the notion of aliya and the Jewishness of these new Israelis have been questioned by traditionalist groups, which the defenders of a secularisation of the State have not failed to answer. These migratory waves have in a way bridged a gap between two terms but have also given a particular edge to the social frontiers dividing the camps of the "traditionalists" and the "progressists". By widening the outlines of the Israeli identity to the limits of the "close stranger" (the spouse, the son by marriage, the grandson...) the connection with the question of the growing presence of foreign workers was easily established. The emphasis laid on the last migratory waves and their consequences was all the more important as the aliya decreased during the 1990's (less than 35 000 people in 2002) and as the former USSR potentially made up the last great source of emigration to Israel. For the last four years the upsurge of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (with the second *Intifada*) has helped to make the demographic question and, by extension, the question of the future of the Israeli national project the centerpiece of pointed discussions. Thus the debate continues to grow and the actors (mainly from universities or the intellectual community) today rely on these new faces of Israel to defend their social project. The "cosmopolitanization" of Israel is now an element in political argumentation used as much by the post-Zionists as by the neo-Zionists. The entry of Israel owing to the economic situation - in the international migratory system is interpreted as the emergence of a time of the world (Berthomière, 2003) which for the neo-fundamentalists symbolizes "a materialistic and westernized Israel which would have betrayed its national mission". On the contrary this process of "cosmopolitanization" serves the post-Zionists' objectives who claim they belong to a movement open to the world.4 In this way Israel is a society in the grip of a cosmopolitan "revolution" and in this social spectrum with sharp limits the Israeli identity is being redefined.

However even if one accepts the approach that the effects of a cosmopolitan situation reveals a questioning of identity, there is much risk in describing a social reality that is in no way considered as such by the Israeli population. It is therefore important to avoid an over-intellectualisation of daily life by projecting, as Ulrich Beck emphasized (2002), "the cosmopolitan intentions of the scholar". Our interviews performed on this

³ Uri Ram quoted by Uri Ben-Eliezer (1999).

⁴ As Uri Ram (1998) defined it, the neo-Zionist axis "represents a retreat to a sense of identity, a nationalist, racist and anti-democratic trend that tries to heighten the barriers around its national Israeli identity (...) This is based on both violence of the israelo-arab conflict and the low level of integration in the capitalist economy". On the other hand, he defines the post-Zionist axis as "(...) a libertarian trend which aims at reducing the barriers of the national identity and at integrating the 'Other'". See also Ram (2000).

theme with the Israeli population or foreign workers emphasize that a large part of these populations can not see any tangible reality; that this comes close to being a "monologue", or even a utopia. In comparison the risk is equivalent to that of a study which would consider Amos Gitaï's filmmaking as a reflection of a social analysis shared by a majority of Israelis. On the whole it is a limit placed on the understanding of social facts envisaged under the notion of cosmopolitanism. Giving priority to an approach which would differentiate between "what relates to a philosophical debate on *cosmopolitanism of the de facto cosmopolitan situations* in the society" as Marie-Antoinette Hily and Christian Rinaudo (2003) suggested, would presumably allow one to avoid any pit-falls.

Conclusion: "cosmopolitanization" versus banal cosmopolitanism?

As Laurent Dornel (2003) emphasized during the conference "On cosmopolitanism in the Mediterranean: from the reference model to present realities", cosmopolitanism develops and disappears over the years. No evolutionary perspective should be considered. As Marie-Antoinette Hily and Christian Rinaudo (2003) suggested, by leaving this question out of the post-Zionist/neo-Zionist debate, i.e. in its "fragile" dimension as a social interaction established in a relation of domination, it is possible to describe a cosmopolitan Tel Aviv in its everyday nature. The paradox is then that the Israeli population does not agree with the ideas of a "cosmopolitanism of elites" and produces a *de facto* cosmopolitanism that can be defined as a *banal cosmopolitanism* as there would be a daily *banal nationalism*, as evoked in the work of Michael Billig (1995).

In this relation of co-presence, the daily life of Israeli civil society sees a development of the Israeli ethnic-national identity at the micro-local level. This new Other, who for the State has limited rights (for he will not be integrated) is nevertheless an everyday employee, colleague, or neighbour. If it is still difficult to consider cosmopolitanism as such, the understanding of the Other in the diversity of cosmopolitan situations is essential (Gastaut, 2002). The social relations established in the professional sphere between home helpers (and their families) and the Israeli elderly, or at school, (as in the school near the coach station, where over a third of pupils are foreign workers' children) or also in associations (Kemp *et al.*, 2000) allow to better understand this process of "cosmopolitanization". Despite the pressures of the State to reduce the presence of the Other to the minimum, as with the *Closed skies*⁷ procedure, this process remains implemented. In a way the coercion exerted by the State legitimates this presence and in no way can stop any expression of the experience of otherness. Besides, it remains highly unlikely that the situational character of this presence can be reversed (Bartram, 2000). The low cost of this labour makes it a resource that should not be given

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⁵ Organized by the CMMC (Arts and Human Sciences University of Nice), on 11th–13th December 2003.

⁶ While suggesting this I have discovered that this was also suggested by Ulrich Beck in the text previously quoted. I agree with his definition, making cosmopolitanism an "intaglio" nationalism.

⁷ Programme begins in October 2002 with the aim of limiting the entrance of new foreign workers by the replacing of some of them by those who are under arrest in the Israeli prisons.

up, even if a peace agreement enabled access of Palestinians to Israel. The emergence of a national debate on the possibility of granting Israeli citizenship to a part of the children of the foreign workers and permanent work permits to their parents demonstrates that Israel is facing questions that European countries encountered during the 1980's. By discovering the myth of the notion of temporary migration Israel is *de facto* entering the international migration system and is being pushed towards the logic of guest worker migration, since Jewish migration is drying up and the needs of the economy are increasing.

The micro-local analysis then suggests that there is a new path to be explored between a *cosmopolitan situation* and *cosmopolitanism*. If this was explored in vain the lessons learned from the Mediterranean model of cosmopolitanism would, however, still have to be defined. Far from being a secondary subject, it is necessary to analyse this model of the port-city as a metaphor of social borders and of ethnocentrism that can be produced by Mediterranean societies (Brogini, 2002). The port/the centre, uptown/down-town; these dichotomies have an analytical value when they are considered from the perspective of the modalities of extension or crossing the limits of the free zone (tax free) or the trading sector where the Other remains "confined".

From the philosophical point of view to the micro-local observation the study of cosmopolitanism reveals all the complexity of the relation to the Other and emphasizes this notion as an awareness of how rich the otherness is while suggesting that it requires an effort to distance from the "comfort" of being ethnocentred.

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William Berthomière

NASTANAK KOZMOPOLITSKOGA TEL AVIVA: NOVE DINAMIKE MIGRACIJA U IZRAELU

SAŽETAK

Tijekom devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća Izrael nije uspio postići mirovni sporazum s Palestincima i to neuspješno razdoblje stvorilo je nov izraelski etnopejsaž. Nakon sve češćih zatvaranja granica Izraela palestinskim radnicima (uz granične crte iz 1967.), izraelska vlada morala je dopustiti dolazak stranih radnika iz Istočne Europe (Rumunjske, Poljske) te iz Azije (Tajlanda i Filipina). Ta nova »lica« Izraela potaknula su strahove u vezi s njihovim »naseljavanjem«, i postupno je došlo do rasprave koja je istaknula društvene rascjepe u Izraelu. Ta je rasprava poprimila veću važnost kad su se prvoj skupini nežidovskih imigranata u Izraelu pridružili doseljenici iz Zapadne Afrike i Južne Amerike (koje je globalizacija usmjerila prema Izraelu). Ti zakonski i ilegalni doseljenici problematizirali su pitanje o židovskom identitetu države i istodobno odredili granice izraelskoga kozmopolitstva. Koristeći se primjerom Izraela, cilj je ovog rada pridonijeti znanju o oblicima nastanka »novih kozmopolitstava« te iznijeti kritiku pojma koji je bio razrađen da bi opisao postojeće napetosti između nacionalnog diskursa i globalizacije.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Izrael, migracija, nacionalizam, identitet, kozmopolitstvo

William Berthomière

L'ÉMERGENCE D'UNE TEL AVIV COSMOPOLITE : UNE LECTURE DES NOUVELLES DYNAMIQUES MIGRATOIRES D'ISRAËL

RÉSUMÉ

Au cours de la décennie 90, la non-résolution du conflit israélo-palestinien a eu pour effet de modifier le paysage migratoire d'Israël. Avec la fermeture de plus en plus permanente des frontières du pays (dans ses limites de 1967) aux travailleurs palestiniens, Israël a dû autoriser le recours à une main-d'œuvre originaire d'Europe de l'est (Roumanie, Pologne) mais aussi d'Asie (Thaïlande, Philippines). Progressivement, ces nouveaux « visages » d'Israël ont suscité avec la peur de leur « installation », un débat de société qui a souligné les clivages sociaux d'Israël. Ce débat a pris d'autant plus d'importance qu'aux premiers immigrants non juifs sont venus s'ajouter ceux venus d'Afrique de l'ouest et d'Amérique du sud (avec l'insertion d'Israël dans le « système monde »). Ces immigrations régulières et irrégulières ont posé sous un nouvel angle la question de l'identité juive de l'Etat et soulevées dans le même temps celle des contours d'un cosmopolitisme israélien. A partir du cas israélien, il convient donc de contribuer à la connaissance des formes d'émergence de « nouveaux cosmopolitismes » et d'exercer la critique sur une notion qui tente de décrire la tension qui existe entre discours national et globalisation.

MOTS CLÉS: Israël, migration, nationalisme, identité, cosmopolitisme